



Spreading the Word
Proactive Communications
for NYTD

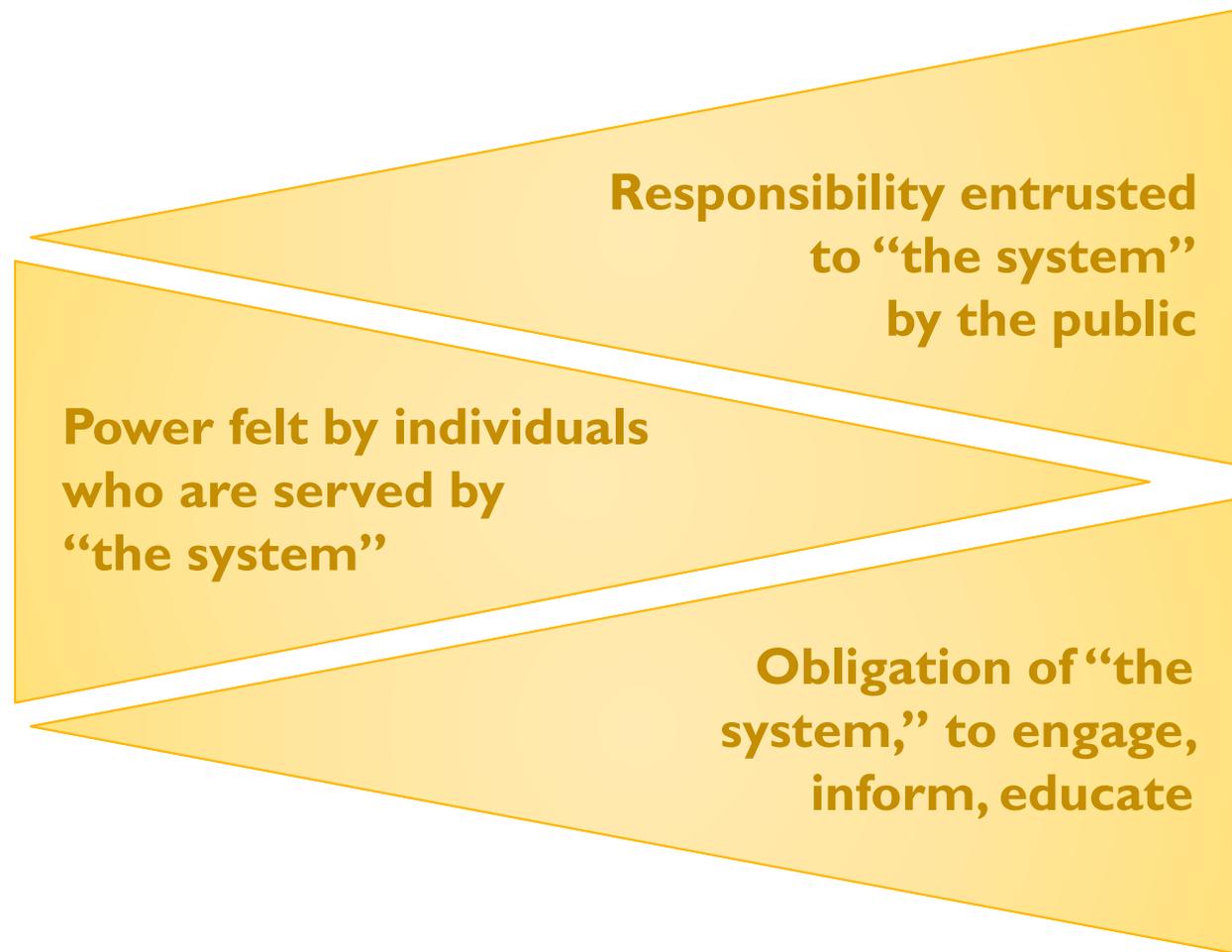


Underlying Beliefs

Child Welfare...

- is a community responsibility
- must be accountable and responsive
- can always be improved
- must be as open and transparent as law allows (while respecting confidentiality and privacy)

**Transparency is a responsibility to the public
and to youth and families involved**





Child welfare must be inclusive and engage:

- Youth and families
- Other interested parties, including the general public

Tap into experiences, expertise, generosity



Communications/Engagement Strategies

- Give a voice to people served
- Create a culture of customer service
- Establish effective two-way communications
 - Shift away from “agency outward” information flow
- Develop ways to engage, build relationships with and solicit input from those served and interested parties.



Guiding Communications Engagement Strategies

- Be proactive
- Thereby, more effectively
reactive



Effective Communications Practices

- Are strategic and “planful” (tied to mission and goals)
- Reflect uniqueness of organization and community served
- Facilitate partnerships and relationship building
- Involve youth and families
- Identify important interested parties



Effective Communications Practices

- Develop effective, engaging messages
 - Often best framed by those served
- Are accurate, relevant, memorable
- Develop effective communications channels
- Are flexible and evolving, adapting to needs, goals and communication preferences



Important people to engage/inform

- Those served (children, youth, families)
- Media
- Public officials
- Funded providers and allied professionals
- Staff
- Advocacy bodies (eg., Citizen Review Panels)
- Tribes
- General public (including unserved, underserved populations)



Communications Channels— ways to communicate

Media Relations

- Build relationships with media
- Write media advisories, letters to editor opinion pieces, etc.
- Capitalize on reactive responses
 - Opportunities to educate
- Engage media proactively through invitations to events and activities
- Educate media about lives and struggles of families/youth so media accounts are nuanced and culturally sensitive
- Maximize use of website



Communications Channels

Electronic Communications (Traditional)

- Website
 - “Go to” place for interested parties
 - Easily accessible contact information
 - Easy to navigate, intuitive
- Intranet—for staff
 - Resources and announcements
- Distribution lists/Listserve to internal/external parties, web alerts



Communications Channels

Electronic Communications (Social Media)

Considerations

- Growing communications preference—especially with youth
- Participatory nature—promotes transparency/empowerment
- Types
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Blog
 - YouTube



Communications Channels

Publications

- Including those youth or family-centric
- Rights publications

Targeted-letters; information pieces; briefings

Complaint/concern mechanisms

Community engagement

- Events/town meetings
- Awareness campaigns
- Donation acquisitions to support children, youth, families and even agency



What does this mean for you?

- Examine current engagement/communications efforts and reach out to those responsible in state
 - Public Information Office
 - Web Master
 - Legislative Affairs
 - Involved counties/local government
- “Communications staff” cannot be proactive and do their job if they’re out of the loop
- “Communications staff” need you to develop effective messages



“Communications staff” are valuable partners to engage/inform and reach youth about:

- Current programs
- NYTD
- Opportunities



“Communications staff” are valuable parties to educate interested parties about

- Current work done to support transitioning youth and future plans
- Foster care and lives of transitioning youth
- Reports documenting poor outcomes (eg., Chapin Hall; Adoption Institute)
- NYTD
 - Goals and process
 - Anticipated outcomes and how outcomes will inform local work



Optimum Scenario:

A system that engages youth and families.

A system that has an involved and informed public knowledgeable about child welfare's operations, mission and goals, challenges, and opportunities.

Such a system is well supported and better able to weather negative news/criticism.



Examples of Effective Communications across the States

Youth focused websites:



California (<http://calnytd.org/>)



What is it? NYTD is a unique opportunity for foster youth to share their experiences to improve foster care services. The survey asks you to use your voice to benefit the kids coming up after you. Sharing your experiences will help leaders in government make the best possible decisions about foster care policies and services. Your participation will help make sure that the full diversity of the foster youth community is heard.

Eligible youth should take this opportunity to participate in this groundbreaking project. The federal and state government wants to know about your unique experiences and needs. Be heard!

California (<http://calnytd.org/>)

National Youth In Transition Database of South Carolina - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.nytdstayconnected.com/

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Favorites DHS Homepage

N National Youth In Transition Database of South Carolina



Home About Us Education News and Events Contact Us FAQ Resources

Frequently Asked Questions

Youth Compass

Brochure Download Today!

Youth Compass

Are you getting ready to transition out of care? Are you looking for a job? Are you looking for an apartment?

Do you need information about health care, schools, and other services in your county?

The Youth Compass will provide you with a list of helpful resources to you get started on the right track!

Just click on your region, find your county, and browse the listings. The journey begins with you and we're here to help you along the way....take a look!



Scholarships Click Here




Start

Internet | Protected Mode: On

2:49 PM 7/5/2011

South Carolina (<http://www.nytdstayconnected.com/>)

NYTD | North Dakota Youth - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.nd.gov/ndyouth/nytd

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

NYTD | North Dakota Youth

North Dakota nd.gov Official Portal for North Dakota State Government

YOUTH North Dakota Youth

Home • About Us • Contact Us • FAQ • News

Search

- Addiction Recovery
- Careers & Employment
- Crisis
- Cultural
- Education
- Entertainment
- Health
- Housing
- Independent Living
- Money Management
- Youth Success Stories
- Youth Tips
- Foster Care
- Foster Parents
- Contacts

NYTD- National Youth in Transition Database

NYTD



What is the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)?
The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) beginning October 1, 2010 asks states to collect demographic information via a survey from current and former foster care youth.

What data must be collected and reported by States?
NYTD requires States to engage youth feedback via a short survey.

1. States will conduct a survey of youth in foster care at age 17 and will conduct a follow up survey with these same youth at ages 19 and 21 to report information about various outcomes.
2. States will collect and report outcomes information on a new cohort of youth every three years. Our first cohort of youth are **North Dakota FOSTER**

Internet | Protected Mode: On

9:22 AM 7/7/2011

North Dakota (<http://www.nd.gov/ndyouth/nytd>)



What is the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) beginning October 1, 2010 asks states to collect demographic information via a survey from current and former foster care youth.

What data must be collected and reported by States?

NYTD requires States to engage youth feedback via a short survey. States will conduct a survey of youth in foster care at age 17 and will conduct a follow up survey with these same youth at ages 19 and 21 to report information about various outcomes. States will collect and report outcomes information on a new cohort of youth every three years. Our first cohort of youth are **North Dakota FOSTER CARE YOUTH** who turn age 17 from October 1, 2010 –September 30, 2011. North Dakota will ask to survey you at age 17, and again at ages 19 and 21.

Survey Incentives!

North Dakota will provide incentives to youth who participate in the survey. **At age 17 = \$10 gift card. At age 19= \$20 gift card.** If you have completed the first two surveys than **at age 21= \$50 gift card.**

Why should you be involved with NYTD?

This is your chance to make sure that your voice is heard! Your involvement in NYTD will encourage your peers to participate, positively impact your own life, and, ultimately, improve services for younger foster care youth in North Dakota. We know that the outcomes of many youth who leave care are not always that positive. By participating in the survey and staying in contact with your state you can help change future outcomes. Get involved with NYTD!

How do I stay in contact with North Dakota. Who should I contact?

Contact the North Dakota Independent Living Administrator at 701-328-4934 or [Contact Us](#).

North Dakota (<http://www.nd.gov/ndyouth/nytd>)

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

What is NYTD?

NYTD stands for the National Youth in Transition Database. NYTD is a federal program that will help assess a State's performance in helping youth achieve positive outcomes by looking at independent living services and outcome measures through surveys.

NYTD represents an opportunity for youth to participate by providing information about their experiences within the State's foster care system.

How do I Participate?

Foster Care youth who reach the age of 17 between 10/1/10 and 9/30/2011 are eligible to participate in a survey that measures outcomes in six broad areas: financial self-sufficiency, experience with homelessness, educational attainment, positive connections with adults, high-risk behaviors, and access to health insurance.

Youth who participate in the survey at age 17 have the opportunity to participate again at ages 19 & 21.

How do I Get More Information?

If you want to find out more about the NYTD program, just email NYTD@Illinois.gov and they will be happy to provide more information. Of course you can always talk to your caseworker about the NYTD program and how you can participate in the survey process.

Resources:

- Email the NYTD Coordinator at NYTD@illinois.gov
- Talk to your Caseworker
- [One Page Informational Sheet on NYTD](#)

Illinois (<http://www.youthincare.illinois.gov/Main/YouthInTransitSurvey.shtml>)

Stay-The-Course for Education - IL DCFS Get Goal'd - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.youthincare.illinois.gov/Education/Education.shtml

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Stay-The-Course for Education - IL DCFS Get Goal'd

What's New

Disclaimer / Privacy Notice

- Alternative Schools Network**
High School, GED, and mentoring; Includes the *Extralearning Online*, *Project New Futures*, and *Added Chance Employment Programs*
- Project STRIVE**
Help staying in school and making transitions to high school and college
- GEAR UP**
Help getting ready for college
- TRIO Programs**
Tutoring, counseling, financial aid, and information to help you succeed in school and in college
- Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago (LAF)**
Legal support for you, your family, and/or your caseworker when dealing with special education
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)**
Information on getting money for college. Also, see ISAC's www.whatsnextillinois.org for help with career planning, high school or college planning, and/or financial aid planning.
- ISACorps** ISACorps members will be assisting students in career exploration, college selection, test preparation, scholarship searches, application completion and the college financial aid process.
- Education Advisors**
Someone to help and represent you at school
[Education Advisor Contact List](#)
- Care Package Program**
Care packages delivered to you
- Foster Care Alumni Groups on Campus**
Support and friendship with others on your college campus who have been foster kids
- High School to College**
Help staying in school and some funding
- Educational Opportunity Center**
Assists Chicago adults seeking to advance their educational credentials

Did You Know.....

Are you thinking about going to college, a trade school, or vocational program? Do you need help with all the enrollment paperwork? And, the financial aid forms?

Counselors at Introspect will work directly with you to help decide where you should go to school, what courses or area of study you should choose, test preparation, and the whole financial aid process!

DCFS youth in care from anywhere in the state are eligible for services.

You can contact Introspect directly for assistance or services.

Introspect can be reached at 773 287-2290. Their email address is choward@introspectyouth.org



Last Updated: January 20, 2011

Done

Internet | Protected Mode: On

8:52 AM 7/15/2011

Illinois (<http://www.youthincare.illinois.gov/Main/YouthInTransitSurvey.shtml>)

NYTD Educational websites

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Missouri Department of Social Services website. The page title is "National Youth In Transition Database". The header features the Missouri Department of Social Services logo and the names of Governor Jay Nixon and Director Ronald J. Levy. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main navigation menu includes links for Home, Children, Families, Health Care, Youth, and Local Offices. The content area is titled "National Youth in Transition Database" and contains the following text:

In 1999, the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) was established which provides States flexible funding to carry out independent living programs that assist youth in care as well as those transitioning to adulthood. The law also requires the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop a data collection system to track the independent living services provided to youth and to develop outcomes that measure States' performance in preparing youth for their transition from foster care to independent living. To meet this requirement, ACF published a proposed rule in the Federal Register in July 2006 and issued a final rule in February 2008. The data collection system is called the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD).

Compliance and Reporting Standards

To comply with NYTD standards, States' data submissions must meet certain file format requirements and data accuracy standards. States must also meet a youth participation rate standard for the NYTD outcomes survey. **States that do not comply with these data standards, may be penalized between one and five percent of their annual Chafee Foster Care Independence Program allotment.** The State agency must report outcome information on at least 80% of the youth who are in foster care and at least 60% of the youth who are not in foster care (discharged) on the date of outcomes data collection. These percentages apply to outcomes data collection for the follow-up population. States will also report financial assistance they provide, including assistance for education, room and board and other aid. Data on our states independent living services will be collected continuously. States must begin collecting NYTD data on October 1, 2010 and must transmit their first semiannual data file no later than May 15, 2011. NYTD will follow the same reporting schedule as AFCARS.

Reporting Population

The served population is each youth who receives an independent living service paid for or provided by the CFCIP agency during the reporting (six month) period regardless of age, foster care status, or placement type. This does not have to be a service provided by utilizing Chafee funds. If it is a service that is an independent living service that is paid for or provided by the State agency in a six-month report period, then the State is required to report it. In Missouri, the served population for reporting would be youth 14-21 in care and those youth that obtained legal guardianship or adoption after the age of sixteen.

Reporting Activities

The NYTD regulation requires States to engage in two data collection and reporting activities. First, States will collect and report basic demographic data on each youth and the independent living (IL) services provided to them by the State in thirteen broad categories:

Missouri (<http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/chafee/nytd.htm>)

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website. The page title is "DFPS - National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) in Texas". The URL in the address bar is http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Transitional_Living/nytd.asp. The page features a navigation menu with links for "Find Services", "News & Information", "Rules & Statutes", and "Business Information". A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area is titled "National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) in Texas" and includes a "What is NYTD?" section with a paragraph explaining the program's establishment in 1999. Below this is a "What will Texas report?" section with a list of 13 categories of data to be collected. The page also includes a sidebar with various service links and a footer with the date 7/15/2011.

TEXAS
Department of Family and Protective Services

Find Services | News & Information | Rules & Statutes | Business Information

Child Protective Services 7/15/2011

DFPS Home > Child Protection > Transitional Living > This Page

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) in Texas

What is NYTD?

In 1999, Congress established the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). This program gives states flexible funding to assist youth in transitioning out of foster care. The law also requires the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop a data collection system to track the independent living services provided to youth and to develop outcomes that measure states' success in preparing youth for their transition from foster care to adult living. To meet this requirement, the National Youth in Transition Database data collection system was created.

What will Texas report?

NYTD requires us to engage in two data collection and reporting activities.

First, we will collect and report basic demographic data on each youth and the independent living services provided to them by Texas in thirteen (13) broad categories:

- independent living needs assessment
- academic support
- post-secondary educational support
- career preparation
- employment program or vocational training
- housing education and home management training
- budget and financial management
- health education and risk prevention
- family support and healthy marriage education
- mentoring
- supervised independent living
- room and board financial assistance
- education financial assistance

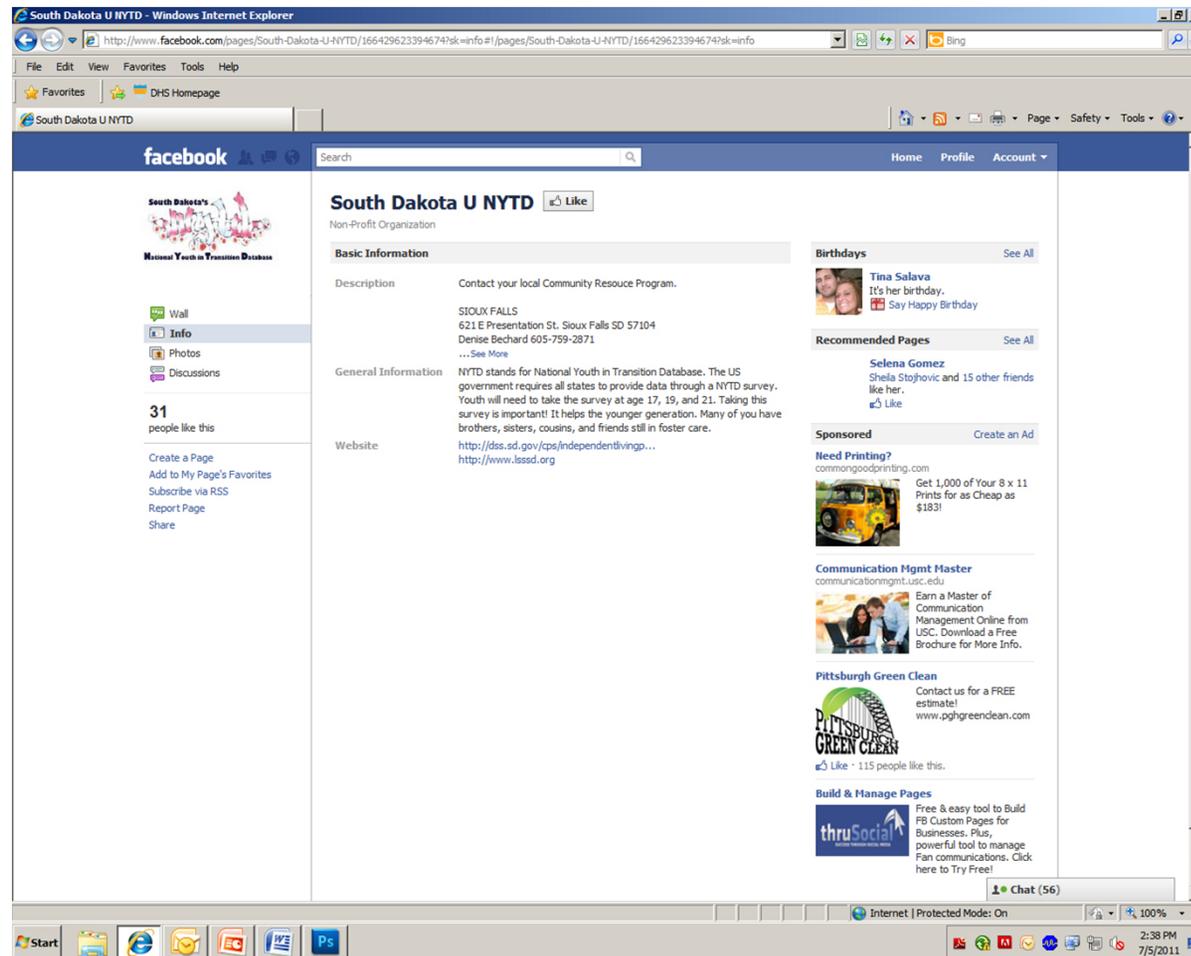
Second, we will conduct a baseline survey of youth in foster care at age 17 (within 45 days after their birthday) and will conduct a follow up survey with a random sample of these youth at ages 19 and the same sample again at age 21 to collect and report information about the following youth outcomes:

social self-sufficiency

Start | Internet | Protected Mode: On | 9:02 AM 7/15/2011

Texas (http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Transitional_Living/nytd.asp)

Social Media engaging youth



South Dakota (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/South-Dakota-U-NYTD/166429623394674#/?pages/South-Dakota-U-NYTD/166429623394674?sk=info>)

NYTD Florida (NytDFI) on Twitter - Windows Internet Explorer

http://twitter.com/#!/NytDFI

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

NYTD Florida (NytDFI) on Twitter

twitter Search Home Profile Messages Who To Follow

NYTD Florida
@NytDFI Florida
NYTD (National Youth in Transition Database) is an important survey for 17 year olds leaving foster care. Floridians can do it online or on the phone/paper!
<http://www.nytdyouth.org>

+ Follow

Tweets Favorites Following Followers Lists

NytDFI NYTD Florida
rollingstone.com/music/albumrev...
28 Jun

NytDFI NYTD Florida
Want to make your own decision about Beyonce's newest album? Send your updated contact info and you could win a giftcard to buy it yourself!
28 Jun

NytDFI NYTD Florida
Did you take your NYTD Survey already? Tell us what you think @Next Generation Conf in Orlando this weekend or post your thoughts here!
14 Jun

NytDFI NYTD Florida
New month = new chances to win! Send your updated contact info to throw your entry into the gift card drawing!
1 Jun

NytDFI NYTD Florida
CONGRATS to KS of Brevard; JS of Polk; CB of Leon; EP of Sarasota; SU of Miami-Dade/Monroe; LD of Okeechobee. Enjoy ur \$50-\$200 gift cards!
25 May

About @NytDFI
11 Tweets 2 Following 3 Followers 1 Listed

Following · view all

About Help Blog Mobile Status Jobs Terms Privacy Shortcuts Advertisers Businesses Media Developers Resources © 2011 Twitter

Internet | Protected Mode: On 100%

Start Start Mail Internet Explorer Office Word PowerPoint Photoshop 9:29 AM 7/7/2011

Florida (<http://twitter.com/#!/NytDFI>)

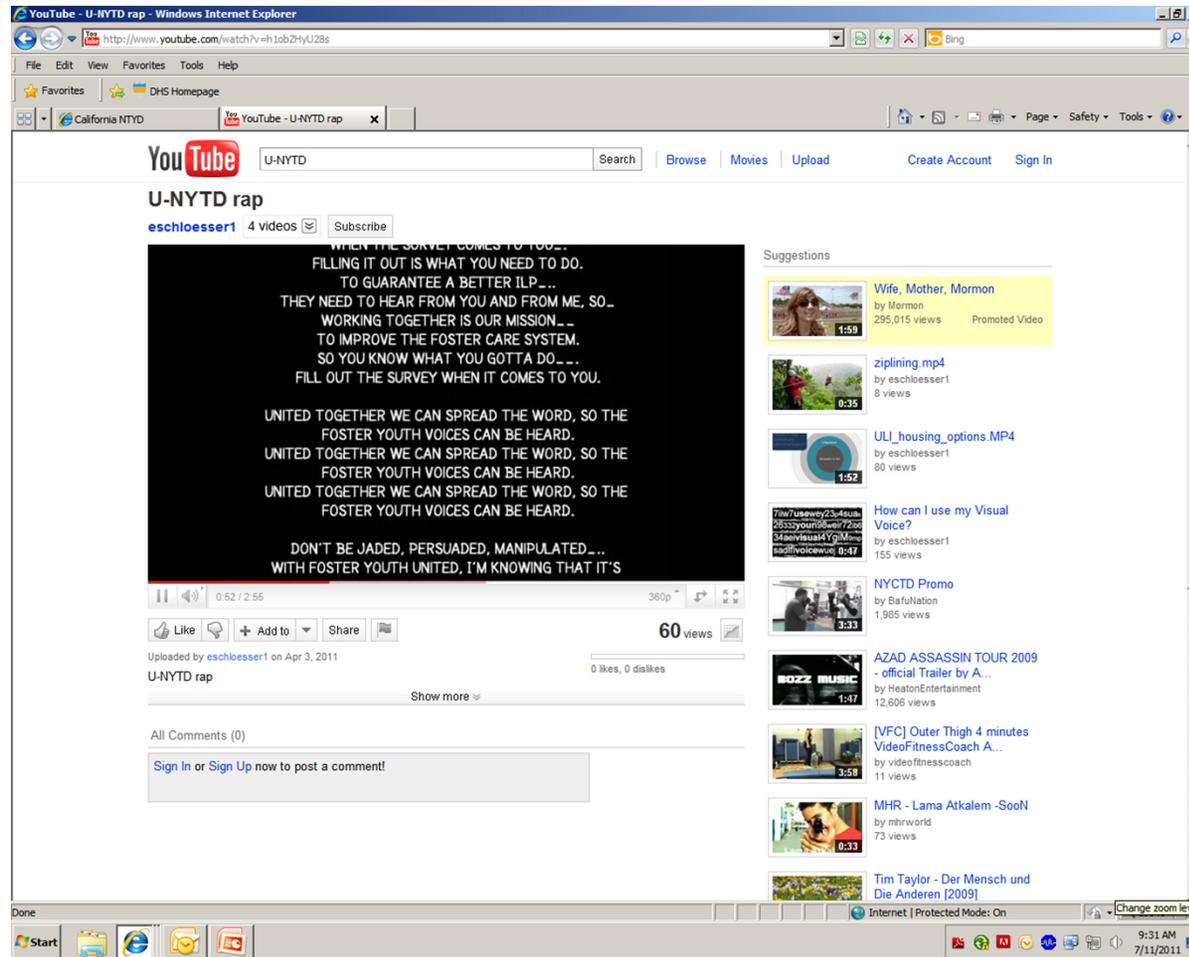


Finish a survey in '10 or '11? Msg me with updated contact info and you could win up to \$200 in gift cards this month!

23 Mar via web

☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply

Florida (<http://twitter.com/#!/NytdFI>)

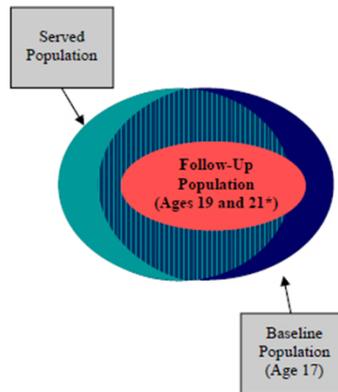


Two talented California foster youth alumni—Janay and Kim—wrote and performed a powerful song about the importance of the NYTD project.

California (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlobZHjU28s>)

Publications

REPORTING POPULATIONS



* Youth are in the follow-up population regardless of their foster care status at ages 19 or 21 and regardless of whether they received independent living services. Youth who participated in the data collection at age 17 but not at age 19 are part of the follow-up population at age 21.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONNECT TO:

State of Nevada
Division of Child and
Family Services
4126 Technology Way, 3rd Floor
Carson City NV, 89706
(775) 684-4400
(775) 684-4455
www.dcss.nv.gov

FosterClub
www.fosterclub.com/nytd

Facebook Page
www.facebook.com/nevada.life

NYTD



National Youth in Transition Database

*Stay connected...
You can make a
difference!*



Nevada (http://www.dcss.state.nv.us/Documents/NYTD_AdultBrochure-Final.pdf)

I have a disability, what college resources are available to me?

If you had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in school, your coordinator should be able to help you plan for college.

Colleges and universities can help students with additional needs find resources and support to get through college. You may also want to check out:

- Financial Aid for Students with Disabilities www.finaid.org/otheraid/disabled.phtml
- Resource Guide for Persons with Disabilities www.dcu.org/streetwise/ability/ed-financial.html
- College Funding Strategies for Students with Disabilities www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/select/Postsecondary_for_Students

What will it be like to go to college?

Everyone's college experience is different. It's often a good idea to visit the schools you're interested in to see how it feels. You may decide you want to live on campus, get your own apartment or live at home. Connecting with other youth who have been in foster care or a mentor can help make your transition to college easier. Colleges do offer tours if you want to check it out.

Your social worker should be able to help you connect with youth or a mentor, or call the Children's Administration Foster Care to College Program Manager at 360-902-8487. Also check out Foster Club at www.fosterclub.com or Foster Care Alumni of America at www.fostercarealumni.org.



My friend told me that if you have a criminal record or a drug conviction, you can't get financial aid. Is that true?

No, that may not be true. If a student has a criminal record, he or she would probably be able to get financial aid. In some instances, drug-related convictions matter for financial aid if someone was convicted as an adult. Any convictions before the age of 18 do not affect a student's financial aid eligibility. Check with the Financial Aid Office at the college if you have any concerns.

Information and Financial Support for College

Gear Up
www.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html

TRIO
www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html

Casey Family Programs
www.casey.org

College Success Foundation
www.collegesuccessfoundation.org

Higher Education Coordinating Board
www.hecb.wa.gov

Orphan Foundation of America
www.orphan.org

Washington Financial Aid Association
www.wfaa.org

Support for Current and Former Foster Youth

Foster Care Alumni of America
www.fostercarealumni.org

Foster Club
www.fosterclub.com

Foster Care to College Partner Agencies

DSHS Children's Administration
1115 Washington Street, SE, Box 45710
Olympia, WA 98504
360-902-7916

College Success Foundation
1605 NW Sammamish Road, Suite 100
Issaquah, WA 98207
425-416-2022

Higher Education Coordinating Board
Box 43430
Olympia, WA 98504
360-753-7800

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504
360-725-6049

Casey Family Programs
1300 Dexter Avenue, North, Suite 300
Seattle, WA 98109
206-282-7300

Treehouse
2100 24th Avenue S. #200
Seattle, WA 98144
206-767-7000

The Washington State Foster Care to College Partnership is made possible through the generous contributions from:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation | Lumina Foundation for Education |
| Casey Family Programs | The Norcliffe Foundation |
| DSHS Children's Administration | Northwest Children's Fund |
| | The Stuart Foundation |

For information about programs in your local area, contact:

You Can Go To College!



Information and resources for youth who currently are or have been in foster care in Washington State



You also be eligible for Independent Living (IL) and Transitional Living (TL) Services can help you with many of your day-to-day needs. If you plan to go to college right away, you may be able to stay in foster care until your birthday. For information about IL or TL, e-mail dshts.wa.gov.

Your social worker, Foster Care to College mentor or Financial Aid Office at the colleges you are considering can help you apply for these programs, and explain possibilities for money available to you who have been in foster care.

If you are a parent or about to become a parent, how can I go to college?

Many high schools have programs for pregnant and parenting teens. Many colleges have programs as well, including on-site childcare. Check with your local high school or college district for resources available.

If you are currently working, you may also be eligible for assistance from the Working Connections Foster Care Program. To find out more information call 360-446-1114 or go to www.childcarenet.org.



Scholarships and grants for foster youth stop at age 21. You may lose out if you wait. College and career training programs will be available to you throughout your life and many people do return to school as adults.

I don't think my grades are good enough to go to college.

- Grades and test scores matter, but colleges look at other things too, like activities, family situation and potential. Community colleges accept students no matter what your grades are.
- Talk to your school guidance counselor to find out what you can do to improve your grades and how the school can help you.

I'm working on my GED. Can I still go to college?

Yes! Many high schools and colleges have programs to help you complete your GED and get into two- and four-year colleges once you're done.

Even if you aren't enrolled in high school but are working on your GED, you should be able to get help from the guidance counselor at your local high school.

I don't know where to start to get into college.

If you want to learn more about how to choose a program, fill out an application or pay for college, you can attend a four-day summer program called Make it Happen! To learn more call 1-877-655-4097 or go to www.collegesuccessfoundation.org.

housing, food and other living expenses. Make sure you also check with the Financial Aid Office of the college or program you're considering.

- Federal and state financial aid, go to www.fafsa.org
- The Governors Scholarship for Foster Youth, go to www.collegesuccessfoundation.org to apply for up to \$5,000 per year
- Casey Family Scholars, go to www.orphanfoundation.org to apply for up to \$10,000 per year
- Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program, call 1-877-433-8388 or email ETVWASH@dshts.wa.gov to apply for up to \$5,000 per year

TEXAS FOSTER CARE HANDBOOK FOR YOUTH

ACCESS GRANTED

DFPS

The mission of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is to protect children, the elderly and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by involving clients, families, and communities.

MISSION

The Department of Family and Protective Services:

- ★ is recognized for innovative, effective services.
- ★ Builds strong, effective partnerships with clients, communities and state leaders.
- ★ Provides effective leadership that is accountable for its actions and communicates openly with clients and stakeholders; and
- ★ Supports staff who are highly motivated, diverse, ethical, well trained, and professional.

VISION

- ★ We protect the unprotected.
- ★ We involve clients, families and communities in decision making.
- ★ We provide quality services.
- ★ We are innovative and strive for excellence.
- ★ We are ethical and accountable.
- ★ We promote diversity.
- ★ We value our staff.

VALUES

CPS RIGHTS OF CHILDREN & YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

AS A CHILD OR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE YOU HAVE THE RIGHTS LISTED BELOW & THESE RIGHTS SHOULD BE SHARED WITH YOU BY YOUR CASEWORKER & CAREGIVER

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN & YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

AS A CHILD OR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE, I HAVE THE RIGHT:

- ★ To good care and treatment that meets my needs in the least restrictive setting available. This means I have the right to live in a safe, healthy, and comfortable place where I am protected from harm, treated with respect, and have some privacy for personal needs.
- ★ To know:
 - Why am I in foster care?
 - What will happen to me?
 - What is happening to my family (including brothers and sisters) and how Child Protective Services (CPS) is planning for my future?
- ★ To speak and be spoken to in my own language when possible. This includes Braille if I am blind or sign language if I am deaf. If my foster parents do not know my language, CPS will give me a plan to meet my needs to communicate.
- ★ To be free from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- ★ To fair treatment, whatever my gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, medical problems, or sexual orientation.
- ★ To not receive any harsh, cruel, unusual, unnecessary, demeaning, or humiliating punishment. This includes not being shaken, hit, spanked, or threatened, forced to do unproductive work, be denied food, sleep, access to a bathroom, mail, or family visits as punishment. I will not receive remarks that make fun of me or my family or any threats of losing my placement or shelter.
- ★ To be disciplined in a manner that is appropriate to how mature I am, my developmental level, and my medical condition. I must be told

PAGE 4

Allegheeny County Department of Human Services

myQuestmyFuture

Destination: Education

- Allegheeny County Education/Colleges
- Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency
- Federal Student Aid
- Vocational and Technical Schools
- Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council

Destination: Employment

- Employment and Training for Youth
- CareerLink Pittsburgh
- Job Corps Pittsburgh
- Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Employment and Training Programs
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Destination: Home

- DHS Independent Living
- Allegheeny County Housing and Homelessness
- Allegheeny County Utility Assistance
- Allegheeny County Food Assistance
- Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Housing Programs

Destination: Life Skills

- Social Security Administration
- PA Driver and Vehicle Services
- The Bridge of Pittsburgh

Destination: Money Savvy

- YMCA Wealth Development
- Mon Valley Initiative
- My Money My Life



Destination: Health & Health Insurance

- Medical Assistance Transportation Program
- Allegheeny County Health Department
- Planned Parenthood of Western PA
- CONTACT Pittsburgh
- Allegheeny County Health Department Dental Program
- Pennsylvania Medicaid
- Pennsylvania adultBasic

Destination: My Healthy Kids

- Allegheeny County Early Childhood Education Programs
- Alliance for Infants and Toddlers
- Healthy Start, Inc. Pittsburgh
- Allegheeny County Health Department Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program
- Pennsylvania Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Destination: Legal Rights

- DHS Independent Living
- Allegheeny County Early Childhood Education Programs
- Alliance for Infants and Toddlers
- Healthy Start, Inc. Pittsburgh
- Allegheeny County Health Department Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program
- Pennsylvania Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

EDUCATION:

- Allegheeny County Education/Colleges www.allegheenycounty.org/education.aspx
- Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency www.pennstate.edu/peaa 800.233.0537 student financial aid options
- Federal Student Aid www.fafsa.ed.gov 800.433.3243 application for federally funded student aid; must be a high school graduate, must also have personal income tax and financial information available to fill out forms
- Vocational and Technical Schools www.vtss.edu research/vtss.edu/vocational.html schools in the County
- Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council www.gplc.org 412.661.7323 basic reading and arithmetic, CED preparation, English as a Second Language classes and other workplace preparation classes
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation www.dli.state.pa.us/lead/ovr/vr.htm 800.442.6371 888.870.4374 (TTY) services for people with disabilities to prepare for, start, and maintain employment; includes diagnostic services, vocational evaluation, training, counseling

EMPLOYMENT:

- Employment and Training for Youth www.allegheenycounty.org/etf 412.350.5701 provider and resource information for transition-aged youth
- Allegheeny County Housing and Homelessness www.allegheenycounty.org/housing 412.350.3837 low income and affordable housing, rental assistance, etc.
- Allegheeny County Utility Assistance www.allegheenycounty.org/ua 412.565.2146 help paying utility bills for income-eligible based on income
- Allegheeny County Food Assistance www.allegheenycounty.org/food training and workshops emergency food assistance, food stamps, food pantries
- Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Employment and Training Programs www.ugl.org 412.227.5021 employment counseling and placement, workshops, stabilized employment program for accepted applicants
- Mon Valley Initiative www.monvalleyinitiative.com 412.227.4802 housing counseling for home buyers, counseling sessions for assistance in keeping your home
- My Money My Life www.mymoney.org 412.281.1100 financial literacy program for ages 16-19 in Allegheny County

HOUSING ASSISTANCE:

- DHS Independent Living www.allegheenycounty.org/dhs 412.350.5701 provider and resource information for transition-aged youth
- Allegheeny County Housing and Homelessness www.allegheenycounty.org/housing 412.350.3837 low income and affordable housing, rental assistance, etc.
- Allegheeny County Utility Assistance www.allegheenycounty.org/ua 412.565.2146 help paying utility bills for income-eligible based on income
- Allegheeny County Food Assistance www.allegheenycounty.org/food training and workshops emergency food assistance, food stamps, food pantries
- Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Employment and Training Programs www.ugl.org 412.227.5021 employment counseling and placement, workshops, stabilized employment program for accepted applicants
- Mon Valley Initiative www.monvalleyinitiative.com 412.227.4802 housing counseling for home buyers, counseling sessions for assistance in keeping your home
- My Money My Life www.mymoney.org 412.281.1100 financial literacy program for ages 16-19 in Allegheny County

LIFE SKILLS:

- Social Security Administration www.ssa.gov request a new or replacement Social Security Card; please have other documentation in order to receive card
- PA Driver and Vehicle Services www.pa.gov 800.732.4600 driver's license or photo ID requests
- The Bridge of Pittsburgh www.thebridgeofpittsburgh.org 412.325.0951 assists transition aged youth with skills for adulthood; must be current or former CYP youth

HEALTH AND HEALTH INSURANCE:

- Medical Assistance Transportation Program www.allegheenycounty.org/ma/transport.aspx 888.547.6287 transportation for non-emergency medical services, low income, any age
- Allegheeny County Health Department www.allegheenycounty.org/health information on STDs as well as free clinic information
- Planned Parenthood of Western PA www.ppanet.org 800.230.7526 contraceptive and gynecological medical care, testing and treatment of STDs, HIV testing, free pregnancy testing, pregnancy counseling
- CONTACT Pittsburgh www.contactpgh.org 412.820.4357 Suicide and Supportive Listening Crisis Hotline
- Allegheeny County Health Department Dual Program www.allegheenycounty.org/dual 412.578.8378 provides preventative and corrective care for children through age 20; clinics located in areas of "high-need"
- Pennsylvania Medicaid www.pennstate.gov/medicaid 412.565.2146 free healthcare coverage for low-income Pennsylvania residents
- Pennsylvania adultBasic www.allegheenycounty.org/adultbasic 800.462.2742 low-cost healthcare coverage for uninsured Pennsylvania adults 19-64

MY HEALTHY KIDS:

- Allegheeny County Early Childhood Education Programs www.allegheenycounty.org/earlychildhood.aspx 866.214.5437 school readiness, academic awareness and social interaction for infants, toddlers, and preschool children; federal income guidelines apply
- Alliance for Infants and Toddlers www.aift.org 412.885.6000 early intervention services for infants and toddlers with or at risk of developmental delays
- Healthy Start, Inc. Pittsburgh <http://www.healthystartpgh.org> 412.247.4009 provides access to services related to lowering infant mortality rates and promoting healthy infants and mothers
- Allegheeny County Health Department Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program www.allegheenycounty.org/wic 412.350.5901 provides access to services related to lowering infant mortality rates and promoting healthy infants and mothers
- Pennsylvania CHIP www.pennstate.gov/CHIP 800.986.5437 health insurance for uninsured kids ages 0-18 in Pennsylvania, regardless of parental income

LEGAL RIGHTS:

- Allegheeny County Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service www.allegheenycounty.org/bar 412.261.5555 assistance in locating a lawyer for a specific legal matter; matches potential clients and attorneys and 30-minute conference for \$25
- Court Appointed Special Advocates of Greater Pittsburgh www.casapgh.org 412.294.3606 assistance for youth in the court and child welfare system; appointed by the Court
- Neighborhood Legal Services Association www.nlsa.org 866.761.6572 legal services for low income residents of Allegheny County for non-criminal cases
- Juvonilla Love Center and KidVoice Guide for Youth in Substitute Care <http://www.juvonilla.org/> 412.291.3100 rights guidebook for youth involved with child welfare

GET INVOLVED:

- Allegheeny County Volunteering www.allegheenycounty.org/volunteering opportunities with real world educational experiences and stipends
- UnitedWay www.unitedwaypgh.org 412.255.1155 wide variety of volunteering opportunities; enter zip code to find closest project
- Allegheeny County Voter Registration www.allegheenycounty.org/voterregistration.aspx 412.350.4500 information on registering and voting in elections; need Driver's License or Social Security Number; see website for further details
- YouthPlaces www.youthplaces.org 412.434.0831 neighborhood after school program with academic/social programming; generally from ages 12-18
- Boys and Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania www.bgcwpa.org 412.276.3151 educational, vocational and social programming
- YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh www.ymcawest.org 412.833.5600 variety of youth programming available

Produced by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Office of Community Relations

Dan Onorato
Allegheny County Executive



Pennsylvania (Allegheny County)

Targeted stakeholder NYTD messages



National Youth in Transition Database
Information for Caregivers About the Survey

What is the survey: The federal government requires all states to collect information on youth in or leaving foster care. NYTD surveys are being requested in all States to collect information on how youth leaving foster care are doing and how resources are used.

Who Completes Survey: All youth, aged 14-23, who receive services through their involvement with the state complete one survey. Some youth in foster care who are turning age 17 during certain federal fiscal years complete a separate survey. This 17-year-old group is referred to as the Baseline Group. A portion of those 17-year-olds will be randomly chosen to complete a survey again at ages 19 and 21. In the event the youth is one of the randomly selected 17-year-olds, someone will contact them when they turn 19 and again when they turn 21 to complete the additional surveys.

How Will Information be Used: Data will be used to evaluate and improve programs that help foster youth become independent adults.

Benefits of Participation: Completing the NYTD survey allows the youth to use their experience to improve the future for other foster youth. The state must have a certain level of participation and compliance with the survey in order to not lose federal money that funds youth programs and services. Each year the state must keep up with some 17-year-old youths so they can be surveyed again at ages 19 and 21. In order to assist with locating these youth there will be a yearly reunion for the Baseline Group.

Survey Is Voluntary: The youth's participation is voluntary and there will be no penalty to them if they choose not to participate. While completing the survey, the youth may decline to respond to any questions they do not want to answer.

Confidentiality: The youth's name and personal information will not be released outside the department in a way that will identify them. The information will be compiled into a data report based on all the youth responses to the surveys.

Youth Can Stay Connected:
The youth are being asked to contact their local DCFS office each time their contact information (address, phone number, email) changes. They are given the name, phone number, and address of the local office to contact.

Check out the Youth Link at DCFS
www.dcfslouisiana.gov/YouthLink

More Information: Contact Christy Tate, DCFS NYTD Liaison at (phone) 225-342-4447 or (email) Christy.Tate@La.Gov.

Louisiana (http://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/assets/docs/searchable/Child%20Welfare/YouthLink/NYTD_Caregivers_Flyer.pdf)



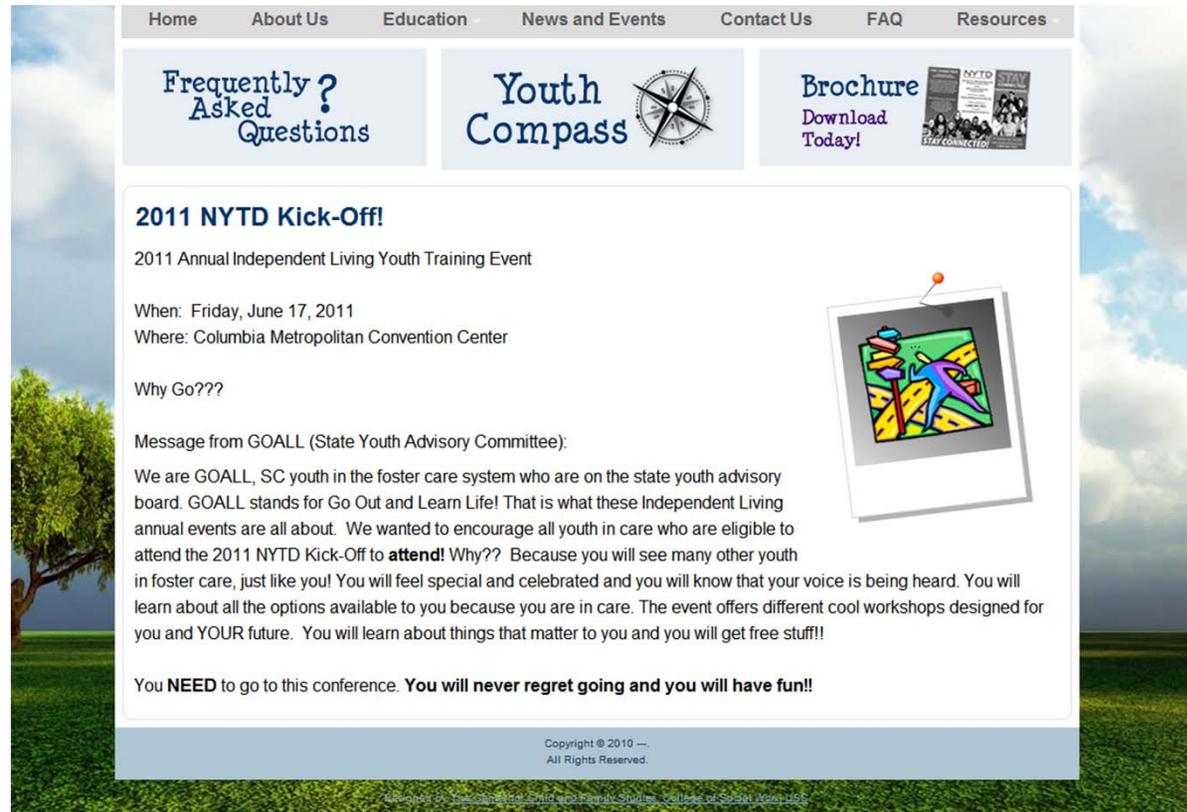
Talking Points on NYTD for Case Managers to Use When Communication to Youth

- We are asking that you take a survey. This survey will record your status at this point in your life regarding some important areas, like school, employment, a support system, etc.
- The survey results become part of a nation-wide information gathering project called National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). Across the country, we are gathering information from youth who are 17 so that we can improve services.
- We know that it is hard for young adults, especially those who don't have a lot of support from parents. As part of the transition to adulthood, you will be provided with independent living services. The Department of Children and Families wants to ensure that youth have received these services. The surveys will tell us if we need to do more and what we need to do to make our services better.
- The survey does not ask about your parents or your family. It doesn't ask why you went into foster care. It will ask about employment, school housing, and finances.
- I will work with you to register you for the survey and complete it if you need help. You'll take the survey by connecting to the FosterClub web site. I think you'll like the web site because it is a web site for youth in foster care and has information for youth who have left the foster care system. We'll set you up with an account and they'll send you information.
- FosterClub will contact you when you are 19 and when you are 21 through emails, instant messaging or the site itself to ask you to fill out another survey. These surveys are let us know how you are doing.
- The information is confidential and will be used as what we call "aggregate data." That means it your answers are combined with the answers from other youth and looked at as a whole. Your personal information will not be studied separately.
- I'd also like to make a contact list, so we know how to reach you regarding independent living services you might be eligible for once you leave foster care. This can be a friend or relative – anyone you think you will keep in touch with. The way our independent living program can keep in touch with you about any services you may be able to receive.
- One last thing - when you take the survey again at age 19 and 21, your name is entered into a drawing for a chance to win a gift card.

Department of Children and Families
Division of Safety and Permanence
Bureau of Permanence and Out of Home Care
9/2010/sz

Wisconsin (http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num_memos/DSP/2010/2010-11attach5.pdf)

Events



The screenshot shows a website with a navigation bar at the top containing links for Home, About Us, Education, News and Events, Contact Us, FAQ, and Resources. Below the navigation bar are three main sections: 'Frequently Asked Questions', 'Youth Compass' (with a compass icon), and 'Brochure Download Today!' (with a brochure image). The main content area features a heading '2011 NYTD Kick-Off!' followed by the text '2011 Annual Independent Living Youth Training Event'. It lists the date as 'Friday, June 17, 2011' and the location as 'Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center'. A section titled 'Why Go???' contains a message from GOALL (State Youth Advisory Committee) encouraging youth in foster care to attend the event. The message states: 'We are GOALL, SC youth in the foster care system who are on the state youth advisory board. GOALL stands for Go Out and Learn Life! That is what these Independent Living annual events are all about. We wanted to encourage all youth in care who are eligible to attend the 2011 NYTD Kick-Off to **attend!** Why?? Because you will see many other youth in foster care, just like you! You will feel special and celebrated and you will know that your voice is being heard. You will learn about all the options available to you because you are in care. The event offers different cool workshops designed for you and YOUR future. You will learn about things that matter to you and you will get free stuff!!'. Below this message is a Polaroid-style image of a colorful path leading to a goal. At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: 'Copyright © 2010 --- All Rights Reserved.' and a small URL: 'http://www.nytdstayconnected.com/component/content/article/22-news-and-events/91-2011-nytd-kick-off.html'.

Home About Us Education News and Events Contact Us FAQ Resources

Frequently Asked Questions Youth Compass Brochure Download Today!

2011 NYTD Kick-Off!

2011 Annual Independent Living Youth Training Event

When: Friday, June 17, 2011
Where: Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center

Why Go???

Message from GOALL (State Youth Advisory Committee):

We are GOALL, SC youth in the foster care system who are on the state youth advisory board. GOALL stands for Go Out and Learn Life! That is what these Independent Living annual events are all about. We wanted to encourage all youth in care who are eligible to attend the 2011 NYTD Kick-Off to **attend!** Why?? Because you will see many other youth in foster care, just like you! You will feel special and celebrated and you will know that your voice is being heard. You will learn about all the options available to you because you are in care. The event offers different cool workshops designed for you and YOUR future. You will learn about things that matter to you and you will get free stuff!!

You **NEED** to go to this conference. **You will never regret going and you will have fun!!**

Copyright © 2010 --- All Rights Reserved.

<http://www.nytdstayconnected.com/component/content/article/22-news-and-events/91-2011-nytd-kick-off.html>

“Complete a survey at age 17, again at 19 and again at 21, and receive gifts and gift cards.”

South Carolina (<http://www.nytdstayconnected.com/component/content/article/22-news-and-events/91-2011-nytd-kick-off.html>)

MR. SMALLS THEATRE
presents

WE ROCK WORKSHOP FINAL SHOW

THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 2011

To show off the musical abilities of youth involved with DHS, including current and former foster youth, honed through their participation in the "We Rock Workshop" through Creative.Life.Support.

Doors at 7:00

All Ages

Featuring live performances by the
"We Rock Workshop"
Singers, Emcees & Dancers

With Special Guests:

LIZ BERLIN

(of Pittsburgh-based band Rusted Root,
CEO of Mr. Smalls & Creative.Life.Support)

KELLEE MAIZE

(emcee, singer, songwriter, CEO of Nakturnal Productions)

General admission: \$25.00

VIP admission: \$45.00

(includes a T-shirt and a CD of their recorded songs)

Tickets are available at the Mr. Smalls Box Office
Online at www.ticketweb.com/mrsmalls
-or- Charge by phone 866.468.3401

Mr. Smalls Theatre
400 Lincoln Ave.
Millvale, PA 15209

(412) 821 4447
info@mrsmalls.com
www.mrsmalls.com

All Proceeds will benefit the
Allegheny County Music Festival Fund



Pennsylvania (Allegheny County)

Media Relations



ALLEGHENY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

NEWS

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS • HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING
FIRST FLOOR • ONE SMITHFIELD STREET • PITTSBURGH, PA 15222
DAN ONORATO, ALLEGHENY COUNTY EXECUTIVE • MARC CHERNA, DHS DIRECTOR
DHS WEB SITE: WWW.ALLEGHENYCOUNTY.US/DHS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DHS, Mr. Smalls sponsor "We Rock Workshop" concert to benefit Allegheny County Music Festival Fund

On Thursday June 30, 2011, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) and Creative Life Support, the non-profit arm of Mr. Smalls Funhouse, are sponsoring a concert at Mr. Smalls Theatre in Millvale to raise funds for the Allegheny County Music Festival Fund. Youth involved with DHS, including current and former foster youth, will show off musical abilities honed through their participation in the "We Rock Workshop."

The "We Rock Workshop" is a residency program led by Liz Berlin of Pittsburgh-based band Rusted Root that teaches youth to open up creatively through music. In the workshop, youth participants explore the creation of music and look for meaningful ways to incorporate music into their lives. The 10-week program culminates with the recording of original songs created by the participants and a final showcase of their talents at the "We Rock Workshop" fundraiser concert.

The youth who participated in the most recent "We Rock Workshop" have just completed eight weeks of recording workshops at the Mr. Smalls Recording Studio, during which they recorded five songs. They are currently participating in performance workshops to prepare for the upcoming concert.

To purchase tickets, visit www.ticketweb.com and search for: We Rock Workshop. General admission for the concert is \$25.00. VIP admission is \$45.00 and includes a T-shirt designed by the youth and a CD of their recorded songs.

Pennsylvania (Allegheny County)

Programs Aim At Keeping Kids In Stable Homes

Kristian Foden-Vencil | July 7, 2011 | Portland, OR

[Share](#) [Discuss](#) [Download](#) 

Kids in Oregon are twice as likely as children nationwide to be placed in foster care. And child advocates say that's a problem.

Mainly because national statistics on the success of foster kids aren't good -- a quarter have been homeless at least once by age 23, and almost half have been on food stamps by the same age.



Kristian Foden-Vencil

Marquez shows scars from abuse suffered while in foster care.

In fact, the feds are pushing states to reduce their reliance on foster care.

In Oregon, several new programs have been set up to keep children in stable family homes.

Nico Marquez was taken away from his mother when he was three. She worked as a prostitute, he says, and had drug problems.

He says that over the last 15 years, he's lived with 15 different families and says some were abusive.

"I always found, what I called 'the crazies.' So, I started developing aggression to anyone who tried to get close to me. Now I'm very soft spoken and a laid-back guy. But mainly it was I didn't like people getting close to me because I just got hurt all the time. So a lot of it stemmed from that," Marquez said.

The Department of Human Services confirms Marquez was in the system and had moved multiple times. But for privacy reasons, the agency says it can't confirm any allegations of abuse. Marquez says he experienced both verbal and emotional abuse.

RELATED ARTICLES

- [After Fan Falls To His Death: Time To Stop Tossing Things Into Stands?](#)
- [Cancer Patient Gets First Totally Artificial Windpipe](#)
- [Brutal Cartels Make Crossing U.S. Border Even Riskier](#)

MORE IN:

- [General News](#)

Oregon (<http://news.opb.org/article/programs-aim-keeping-kids-stable-homes/>)

Report: Foster teens fall through cracks, cost to society called 'tremendous' - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11203/1162135-454.stm

Monday July 25, 2011 Updated: 8:36 a.m. Search post-gazette.com: [] [search] Text Size: A | A | A

post-gazette.COM LOCAL / STATE
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

NOW | NEWS | LOCAL | SPORTS | LIVING | A & E | BUSINESS | OPINION | MULTIMEDIA | BLOGS Shopping | Cars | Jobs | Real Estate | Classifieds

State Region Neighborhoods Marcellus MyGov

Report: Foster teens fall through cracks, cost to society called 'tremendous'
Friday, July 22, 2011
By Paula Reed Ward, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Every year in the United States, nearly 28,000 children age out of the foster care system without having any permanent family ties.

A new report released Thursday concluded that a large number of those young adults are left without adequate services, resources or support systems to allow them to become productive citizens.

"The cost to society is tremendous," said Adam Pertman, executive director of the New York-based Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, which released the report.

To reduce the number of those who remain in the system until adulthood, the report recommends that human service agencies work harder to achieve permanent homes for older children who enter the system.

"It is a disturbing trend that more and more young people are aging out of care without any permanent connections," the report concludes. "Every youth who emancipates without reunification

Pa. children in foster care: on the decline

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE, BY AGE GROUP					
AGE GROUP	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
0-1	2,230	2,228	2,061	1,939	1,663
2-5	3,850	3,728	3,638	3,224	2,890
6-9	2,992	2,817	2,617	2,279	1,861
10-12	2,305	2,119	1,877	1,587	1,333
13-15	4,753	4,208	3,601	2,857	2,369
16-17	4,495	4,131	3,893	3,464	2,783
18-20	1,337	1,249	1,370	1,429	1,395

TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE, SEPTEMBER 2006 TO MARCH 2011

21,685 21,076 19,606 17,498

22,007

featured HOMES

SQ. Hill 120 Aylesboro Ln...
\$499,000
Ross-colonial,cul-de-sac,nbrhd.assc.269,000.00, 412-487-6983/buyers Agnts.welcome
Cyndsees@gmail.com
\$269,000
West Deer Township Open House July 24...
\$250,000
Peters TWP 4 Bedroom Colonial \$279,999.
Updated...
\$279,999
Bellevue House FOR Sale AS IS \$6,000...
\$6,000

featured RENTALS

MT Lebanon Large 1 & 2 Bedrooms....
\$525
North Huntingdon 3BR Ranch, 1.5 BA,
Appliances...
\$1,100
North Hills: Beautifully Renovated 3Bd Home
In...
\$1,200
Observatory Hill - Www.vitaluna.us 6br 2bath
Colonial...
\$1,599
North Versailles 2br, HW Flr, C/a, Gar...
\$650

Done Internet | Protected Mode: On 100% 8:52 AM 7/25/2011

Pennsylvania (<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11203/1162135-454.stm>)



Enhancing Media Relations

- Even in face of significant changes, media are extremely important/influential
- “Communications staff” need subject matter expertise you offer
 - Proactive—pitching stories, press releases about innovations and initiatives
 - Reactive—“calls out of the blue”
- What can you shed light on?
 - Technical processes and data analysis
 - Case practice and youth service offerings
 - “Authentic voices” of life in foster care and journey toward independence



Enhancing Media Relations

- Each jurisdiction—different rules/practices for tapping expertise (especially media interviews), but professionals and foster youth can inform messages
- With interviews, “Communications” offers:
 - Opportunity
 - Support and training
 - Context
 - Ground rules for media
 - Parameters regarding expertise of those interviewed



Necessities For Youth Working with Media

- Training (consider FosterClub)
- Informed consent and knowledge of rights
- Full understanding of
 - Proposed story
 - Media outlets' scope, audience, format
 - Reporter's research (including social media)
 - Perpetuity of stories
- Interview buddy—trusted adult to run interference; safe environment
- Post-Interview reflection/decompression
- Educated reporter; sensitivity to ground rules/limits



Final Thoughts

- The public has a right to know about our work and efforts to improve those we serve.
- Be proactive. Establish communications practices that inform and are informed by youth and families and other interested parties.
- We all communicate; how can you help spread the word?



Resources

- Positioning Public Child Welfare Guidance: <http://www.ppcwg.org/>
 - Particularly sections on strategic partnerships and communications
- FosterClub: <http://www.fosterclub.com/>
- Guide for Media: Ten recommendations for journalists interviewing young people from foster care: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-News-Contacts-FosterCare-MediaGuide_291536_7.pdf
- Working with Families—Working with Media: <http://www.allegHENYcounty.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=34613>
- Dart Center: Covering children and trauma: http://dartcenter.org/files/covering_children_and_trauma_0.pdf



Contacts

Karen L. Blumen

Deputy Director Office of Community Relations

Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Phone: 412-350-5707

Email: Karen.Blumen@AlleghenyCounty.us

Name

Title

Organization

Phone: ###-###-####

Email:

Name

Title

Organization

Phone: ###-###-####

Email: