



FLORIDA Youth SHINE NEWS

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Pathways to Independence

My experience at the Department of Children and Families 2011 Pathway to Independence summit was astounding in every way, shape, and form. I was excited to see my FYS family and catch up with all of the new and returning members (there were 24 of us there!). I also really enjoyed meeting representatives from so many of the other child welfare organizations that were in attendance. And I especially appreciated listening to Secretary Wilkins speeches and felt a sense of confidence in his passion to bring change to the system.

Even with all my excitement, I was really nervous about the panel presentation I was part of. "Call for Help, Not Just 911" was all about encouraging the understanding of the emotions behind the behaviors of youth in care in an attempt to reduce the number of interactions with law enforcement. I knew it was important to stay calm because I was representing youth in care who are currently experiencing the same obstacles that I did just a few years ago. Knowing that was all the motivation and confidence I needed to be a part of such an awesome presentation.

The highlight of the whole conference was when my FYS family and I had the opportunity to meet with Secretary Wilkins. I was so proud of everyone for being so courageous and willing to share a piece of their story with him. The purpose of our meeting wasn't to gain sympathy, but to make sure our stories and experiences don't happen to any other kids while they're in care too. I was just so proud of my peers that my heart was bursting with joy. I was honored that he took the time out of his schedule to meet with us and learn from our shared experiences. After the meeting his wife, Tanya, pulled me aside and told me she loved our presentation and wished we could teach foster parents throughout the state. I had to hold back my tears because I knew that my whole FYS family had made a difference. Being at the Pathways to Independence summit was an amazing experience. I can't wait until next time!

- Stephen Satchell, Broward





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Manasota

Sent two new members to their first FYS event - welcome to the family Lexi and Liz!

Pensacola

Raised \$87 during their first fundraiser ever! They are already working on their next one to be held at Zaxby's!

ORlando

Recently had a member share her story at the Children's Legal Services Conference.

Miami

Participated in The Children's Trusts showing of the documentary "From Place to Place" and several members participated in a panel discussion after the movie.

Tallahassee

Planning a day of fun for several different group homes in the area to come together.

Pinellas/Pasco

Hosted an incredible life skills event called The Truly Amazing Race. Teams were challenged to travel all over St. Pete and complete different tasks meant to increase the teams skills in various real life scenarios like buying a car or leasing an apartment.

Palm Beach

Had their largest meeting turnout yet - 16 youth! They talked about normalcy and other issues for foster youth growing up in group homes.

Jacksonville

Hosted their first meeting back at Touchstone Village this month with a great turnout from their residents.

Nicole & Chauncey were honored at the FCF Northeast Florida Awards.

VERO Beach

Actively recruiting new members!

BROWARD

Shared with ChildNet what makes a good foster home & what new foster parents should know about the kids they will be caring for.

Hillsborough

Working to identify top normalcy concerns within their area.

"We Run the World (Girls)"

FYS at Committee Week in Tallahassee

That's the song Florida Youth Shine member's heard coming from Senator Detert's cell phone during a meeting in her office during the first Committee Week of the 2012 session (September 19-21). Senator Detert was just one of the 11 legislators that Florida Youth Members (all girls this time...see, we run the world!) had the opportunity to meet with to discuss the Independent Living legislation being proposed again this year. This bill focuses on the education for foster youth and the importance of keeping them stable in school, expanding foster care to age 21, helping youth remain in college with additional support until 23, and increasing accountability for all. FYS advocated pretty hard for this bill last year which did not get passed, now we are twice as determined to see it signed into law this year which is why we started so early. Educating different members of the House and Senate on why this bill is so important to youth in care is a really big part of how bills become law and FYS is always out there working to protect our brothers and sisters who are still in care. With members from our Hillsborough, Pinellas/Pasco and Tallahassee chapters we met Senators Rich, Storms, Detert, Negron, Olerich, and Altman; President Haridopolos's Chief of Staff; and Representatives Glorioso, Grimsley, Corcoran, and Hager. Each meeting was a unique and different experience, for some it was all about support and encouragement for others it took a little bit more convincing of the purpose and need for this legislation. Each FYS member had a chance to share their personal story and really show the legislators why this bill is so important to each of us in so many different ways. Thank you to all the members of Florida Youth SHINE that attended committee week and a special thanks to the legislators who support and stand behind children issues.



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Community Spotlight: Ready for Life

When Florida Youth SHINE expanded into Pinellas and Pasco counties last year, we had no idea what an incredible organization we would be bringing into our family as well. Ready for Life is a community supported non-profit geared toward helping teens age out of foster care “ready for life” and what an incredible job they do! By working with community partners, RFL is able to assist over 300 aging out foster youth a year by connecting them with resources in the community, supplying move-in kits to teens moving into their first apartments, and promoting the youth voice by having young adults sit on a variety of committees throughout the St. Pete area. In addition, they work closely with their local CBC (Eckerd Community Alternatives) and the Independent Living specialists at Camelot to support the local youth council and FYS chapter. We thank RFL and their staff for the unconditional support they give to all teens aging out of care in the St. Pete area and to the members of FYS. We are so proud to be working alongside you.

Upcoming Meetings

Broward
Monday, October 3
4:00pm @ FLITE Center
broward@floridayouthshine.org

Hillsborough
Wednesday, October 19
4:30pm @ HKI Family Place
hillsborough@floridayouthshine.org

Jacksonville
Saturday, October 22
1pm @ Touchstone Village
jacksonville@floridayouthshine.org

Manasota
TBA
manasota@floridayouthshine.org

Miami
Thursday, October 27
5:00 @ CHARLEE
miami@floridayouthshine.org

Pinellas/Pasco
Saturday, October 29
12:30pm @ Eckerd Comm. Alternatives
pinellaspasco@floridayouthshine.org

Pensacola
Friday, October 14
5pm @ Families First IL Offices
circuit1@floridayouthshine.org

Vero Beach
TBA
verobeach@floridayouthshine.org

West Palm Beach
Saturday, October 8
12pm @ Home Safe
palmbeach@floridayouthshine.org

Tallahassee
Saturday, October 15
11am @ Kool Beanz Cafe
tallahassee@floridayouthshine.org

Orlando
Thursday, October 27
6:30pm @ McDonald's on S. Orange
orlando@floridayouthshine.org

How to Donate

Florida Youth SHINE is funded and supported by Florida's Children First (FCF). Donations can be made to FCF on behalf of FYS and will contribute to the continued growth and success of our program.

- \$36** provides meals for a FYS during our quarterly meetings or speaking opportunities
- \$40** provides hotel accommodations for a FYS member during quarterly meetings or speaking opportunities
- \$50** helps provide professional clothing for a FYS member for public speaking engagements
- \$100** assists in providing transportation for a FYS member to advocate on behalf of all children in care

Florida's Children First, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) under the Internal Revenue Code and your gift is fully tax deductible within the limits of the law. Please consult your tax advisor. "A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE."

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