

Indiana Independent Living News

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Youth Advisory Boards to Start

History: New Independent Living service standards came into effect October 1, 2002 (see Fall Newsletter). Among the areas defined in the service standards was the initiation of Youth Advisory Boards. Indiana included Youth Advisory Boards in the service standards for many reasons. One prominent reason is the affect Youth Advisory Boards can have on Independent Living policies and the foster care system.

Youth Advisory Boards offer a new forum for youth to combine their voices into one focused venue for change. Six independent living providers decided to rise to the challenge of creating a Youth Advisory Board. The county seats for the YABS are Lake, St. Joseph, Allen, Tippecanoe, Howard, Delaware, Vigo, Johnson, Ripley, Washington and Vanderburgh.

Each of the providers must develop a board that is representative of the foster care spectrum.

The target population :

1) Youth Advisory Board members,

ages 14 to 21, are current participants in independent living programs or have successfully completed an independent living program.

2) Youth involved with the juvenile justice system, adopted teens, teens involved with drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, parenting teens, homeless youth, unattached youth, and youth that represent the ethnic and cultural diversity that were previously placed in foster care between the ages 14 and 18.

3) Youth returning for assistance from previous service providers, private foster home agencies or residential facilities.

Referral Process: Youth who meet the eligibility criteria and show an interest in the Youth Advisory Board can be referred through two sources. One is through the youth's Family Case Manager (FCM). The youth and the FCM complete the state approved referral form. From there it is faxed to the Ball State Social Science Research Center to be

(See Youth Advisory Boards continued on page 2)

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Mentoring By Modem

Email offers new venue for mentoring

Research shows that youth in well-structured, (traditional) mentoring programs demonstrate better grades and test scores, increased school attendance, higher college enrollment rates and improved self-esteem and behavior overall. They also have a decreased likelihood of dropping out of school, using drugs or alcohol, or becoming a teen parent. Mentoring has also often provided a source of guidance for youth to help improve their outcomes.

But the supply of traditional mentors may not be enough to serve the needs of children leaving foster care as young adults, particularly males. To fill the gap, the Orphan Foundation has created the "eMentoring" program. The program connects youth with a mentor via e-mail.

"Kids these days are so tuned into e-mail" says Kathy Moore, an eMentor. "It's less threatening to open up in e-mail than to talk in person."

The eMentoring program serves about 160 students. Both potential mentors and participants complete profile histories. The profiles are then compared and matched. The Orphan Foundation's goal is to serve 400 students by the end of 2003, and 2,500 students by 2004.

eMentors go through a screening process that includes an FBI background check. Their eight-hour training includes "netiquette", the proper role of a mentor, and the special characteristics of the foster care population, many of whom have been abandoned by adults throughout their lives.

Rather than trade personal e-mail addresses, students and eMentors correspond through a secure Web site. The site includes software that raises a red flag when certain words-like "depression" or "suicide"-appear in an e-mail. Caseworkers are alerted to those messages and can intervene if necessary. Pairs don't exchange phone numbers. Meeting face-to-face is prohibited-until the student graduates from college.

"A lot of people have physically disappeared," David Ahlgren a participant says. That's one reason that eMentoring could be a good alternative for foster youth. Because the program is more convenient for mentors, they may be more likely to stick around, rather than come and go from young people's lives. Even if they move geographically, they can still be involved.

For more information, check the Connect for Kids website, www.connectforkids.org.

Source Julee Newberger, Connect for Kids

(Youth Advisory Boards continued from page 1)
compiled in a database.

The Center then forwards the information to the Youth Advisory Board contact. The provider will then make contact with the youth to confirm the details regarding the Youth Advisory Board.

The other method is to receive a referral via the youth's IL provider. The IL provider contacts the FCM to touch base regarding the referral. The IL provider then completes the Youth Advisory Board referral and sends it to the Social Science Research Center. The process is the same from that point.

Once the Youth Advisory Boards have recruited members, the next hurdle will be balancing the local

needs and the state's goals. As the Youth Advisory Boards begin to form, the young people will determine their local needs and also the mission and goals for the state as well. The state hopes the YABs will take ownership of the mission and goals to initiate change in the system. YAB members will be encouraged to attend youth legislation day at the state.

If you would like more information or know of a youth you would like to recommend, please contact:

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It is the duty of youth to bring its fresh powers to bear on Social progress. Each generation of young people should be to the world like a vast reserve force to a tired army. They should lift the world forward. That is what they are for.

*Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Author*

WorkOne Centers

A New Partnership

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development helps people prepare for rewarding careers and jobs through lifelong learning. The services are offered through WorkOne offices and WorkOne Express offices. Both offices offer a complete line of employment services. After an initial screening, WorkOne Centers not only help determine the best career for the participant, they also focus on educational and skill needs and aspirations.

WorkOne offers a unique partnership with the Chafee Foster Care Independence Programs. WorkOne targets youth who are at risk. Youth who are enrolled in independent living programs are automatically eligible for WorkOne services. Youth can receive comprehensive career counseling and skills training.

WorkOne has sixteen regions throughout of the state. They are:

- ◆ Lake County Workforce Service Area-*Serving Lake County*
- ◆ Kankakee Valley WSA-*Serving Porter, LaPorte, Newton, Jasper, Starke, and Pulaski Counties*
- ◆ Northern Indiana WSA-*Serving St. Joseph, Elkhart, Marshall, and Kosciusko Counties*
- ◆ Northeast WSA-*Serving Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wells and Whitley Counties*
- ◆ Tecumseh WSA-*Serving Benton, White, Carroll, Warren, Tippecanoe, Clinton, Fountain, and Montgomery Counties*
- ◆ North Central WSA-*Serving Fulton, Miami, Wabash, Cass, Howwrd, and Tipton Counties*
- ◆ Madison-Grant WSA-*Serving Madison and Grant Counties*
- ◆ East Central WSA-*Serving Blackford, Jay, Delaware, Randolph, and Henry Counties*
- ◆ Western Indiana WSA-*Serving Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Vigo and Clay Counties*
- ◆ Circle Seven WSA-*Serving Boone, Hamilton, Hendricks, Hancock, Morgan, Johnson, and Shelby Counties*
- ◆ Marion County WSA-*Serving Marion County*
- ◆ Southeastern WSA-*Serving Wayne, Rush, Fayette, Union, Decatur, Franklin, Ripley, Dearborn, Ohio, Jefferson, and Switzerland Counties*
- ◆ South Central WSA-*Serving Owen, Monroe, Brown, Bartholomew Jackson, and Jennings Counties*
- ◆ Shawnee Trace WSA-*Serving Sullivan, Greene, Knox, Daviess, Martin, Lawrence, Gibson, Pike and Dubois Counties*
- ◆ Southern Seven WSA-*Serving Orange, Washington, Scott, Crawford, Harrison, Floyd, and Clark*
- ◆ Southwest Indiana-*Serving Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Spencer and Perry Counties*

If you would like more information regarding WorkOne and the services offered or the locations, please visit www.in.gov/dwd/.

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White Oleander Reality Check

White Oleander is the current film chronicling the odyssey of teenaged Astrid through the Los Angeles' child welfare system, and her conflicted relationship with her incarcerated mother Ingrid. Four writers for Foster Care Youth United (FCYU) who were in foster care themselves, critiqued the movie to see if Hollywood could get foster care right.

Some had seen trailers of the movie and worried that Michelle Pfeiffer looked a bit too glamorous behind bars and Alison Lohman too wholesome to capture the gritty truths of growing up in the system. But in the end, the four young women dubbed the movie "real" and "traumatic". They gave it eight thumbs up, but not without reservation. Check out what they had to say at the Connect for Kids website.

By Kendra Hurley

New Website for Youth

A major new website designed specifically for youth transitioning out of the foster care system was launched September 19, 2002. FYI3.com is a website to help young people develop the skills they need to be in control of their own lives and to become leaders in the community. The site seeks to empower young people to become:

-Involved-through message boards, contests and feedback forums

-Informed-offering news, legislation, a glossary, FAQs, and a list of rights and responsibilities pertaining to foster care

-Independent-with listings of opportunities, resources and scholarships in dozens of communities.

The site also features stories profiling former foster youth who have achieved success, and will serve as a venue for numerous youth advisory boards around the country.

The site is a collaboration between the FosterClub website and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

Visit www.fyi3.com today!

Source: www.fyi3.com press release 9/17/02

*Happy Holidays from the Social Science Research Center****Congratulations Hamilton Center!***

Hamilton Center held the first Youth Advisory Board meeting November 11, 2002. Five members attended and discussed topics ranging from education and family to eliminating drug use among youth in care. The board will also take steps to elect officers.

Look for more information regarding this and other boards in the future.

SSRC IL Website

Have you had the chance to visit the Ball State Social Science Research Center's website lately?

The website contains links to all of the Chafee Independent Living Providers, Chafee Room and Board providers and Youth Advisory Board providers. The website also has links to this month's newsletter as well as past newsletters.

Check it out TODAY!

www.bsu.edu/ssrc/il