

Our Goal

The transition to adulthood can be a difficult time for any young adult. Learning to live on one's own for the first time introduces a new set of challenges that even the most well-off and well-educated young people find daunting. Young adults who have spent time in the foster care system have an especially difficult time learning to live independently.

Fostering Independence assists young people in their transition to independent adulthood through individually tailored services that address educational and employment needs, preparations for daily living through life skills training and the transitional support of safe, affordable housing.

"...The Fostering Independence Program has taught me many new skills that I would not have learned had I not been accepted into the program. I've learned to be more independent and do things for myself. This has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I am no longer a victim of my past. I am a survivor."

- Brandi
Fostering Independence Program participant

To make a donation, or to learn how to become a Fostering Independence sponsor, please contact Jenna Wachtmann, Resource Development Coordinator at (317) 639-6106 ext. 211, or visit <http://www.maryrigg.org/Donate.php>

WIDC and the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center are 501(c)(3) organizations. Your gifts are tax deductible, and so very appreciated.



GIVING FORMER
FOSTER YOUTH A
FIGHTING CHANCE



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A collaborative program of Mary Rigg
Neighborhood Center and West Indianapolis
Development Corporation



Statistics

In Marion County (Indianapolis), nearly 100 young adults are emancipated or “age out” of the state’s foster care system each year upon turning 18-years-old after experiencing years of unstable placements, being moved from foster home to foster home, and from family to family. They face the challenges of new adulthood, the search for post-secondary education, employment, housing, and economic self-sufficiency, often without a family to offer love and support.

National studies prove that the transition is very difficult for these young adults, as within 12-18 months of leaving foster care:

- 50% will be unemployed
- 33% will be on public assistance
- 40% will not have completed high school
- 40% of young women will become pregnant

Additionally, these youth are twice as likely as the general population to become incarcerated and are, in fact, the fastest growing segment of the homeless population at a current rate of 40%.

Our Services

The Fostering Independence program, a collaboration between Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center and West Indianapolis Development Corporation (WIDC), is a one-stop center that provides much needed services. Through independent housing (roommate-style apartments), employment, money coaching, and supportive social services, young adults aging out of foster care begin to build a foundation for successful adulthood.

Specifically, former foster youth can find help in getting (and keeping) a job, finishing high school, enrolling in and paying for college, accessing health care, opening and maintaining a savings (IDA) account, managing a budget, and making a concrete plan for the future.

Services include:

- Assessment
- Independence Action Planning
- Life Skills Classes
- Job Placement and Coaching Services
- Roommate-Style Apartment Housing
- Education Assistance and Advocacy
- Crisis Intervention
- Mentoring

Program participants are referred by a variety of referral partners including Damar Services, Inc., Adult & Child, The Villages, Children’s Bureau, Inc., as well as other sources. Participants enter into a contract agreement with Fostering Independence/ Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center stating that they will participate fully in all program services, for example, all participants are required to hold, at minimum, a part-time job. Participants pay gradually increasing rent, which starts at \$50/month.

How to Help

It is only through the contributions of the community that we can supply essential services that provide hope and help to young adults who have never had the consistent support and care that they need.

If we do not focus attention and resources on this population of young people now, at this crucial transitional moment in their lives, we will continue to exponentially incur greater costs in the form of homelessness, wasted potential, welfare dependency, crime, child abuse, victimization, illness and untold heartache.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sponsorships

The direct operating cost for each participant is approximately \$3,000 per year. Fostering Independence will accept up to eight participants per year, while each young adult is able to remain in the program for four years (as long as all requirements are being met by the participant).

Donations

Donations in any amount help offset the expense of participants’ emergency assistance and household necessities not covered by the sponsorships.

Many young adults who enter the Fostering Independence residential program come to us with few common possessions and resources. We do our best to provide residents with a welcome basket. Donations of the following are welcome and encouraged:

- towel sets
- twin size sheet sets
- blankets
- pillows
- laundry baskets
- soap holders
- bars of soap
- toothpaste
- shampoo
- conditioner
- bottles or boxes of laundry soap
- toothbrushes/toothbrush holders
- forks/knives/spoons
- deodorants
- razors
- lotion
- hangers
- can openers
- bowls
- plates
- lotion
- cups

