



CITY OF LIFE LAUNCHES COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

You are receiving this first issue of the City of Life Community Newsletter because you have been part of the team that has worked with us to help hundreds of foster youth make their transitions to adulthood over the past few years.

Some of the foster kids have created success stories for themselves and others, unfortunately, have not. Over the past 4 years dozens of people have met regularly with City of Life to create and implement the strategic plan for Orange and Osceola Counties and then to have it measured by the recently completed Environmental Scan report.

Both of these documents are available on our website; <http://www.cityoflifeorlando.org> . We recommend you browse the website to see the results that have been produced and the needs that still need to be addressed.

All that being said, here are some quick recent highlights related to foster youth adult transitions that we want to bring to your attention.

DARDEN RESTAURANTS YOUTH INITIATIVE

Darden Restaurants hosted a career learning event on Veterans Day, 2009. Foster youth learned about careers in the hospitality industry. More than 35 foster youth experienced first-hand the development of new products in the Darden test kitchens during this day-long career event, sponsored by operators of restaurants including Red Lobster and Olive Garden. On hand was Darden's CEO, Clarence Otis to share his personal success story and how he succeeded against the odds. This was an inspiration to many of the youth.



2009 Career Day

Content provided by Family Services of Metro Orlando. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/fsmetroorlando/sets/72157622844111006>

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD LAUNCHED in ORANGE and OSCEOLA COUNTY



Orlando Magic

Over the past three months, a foster youth Advisory Board has been successfully started here in Central Florida's Ninth Judicial Circuit. There have been attempts to get it done before but now after much hard work and important collaborations, the foster youth have begun to meet regularly and prepare to give their views about the system that is in place to support and service their needs.

Under the leadership of Intervention Services and Family Services of Metro Orlando, there have been three meetings with more scheduled to take place in the coming months. Recognition should also be given to the Orlando Magic for their strong support of this effort as well.

The goal has been and will continue to be, to have the youth meet on an independent basis so they can report their wants, needs, challenges and problems to the leaders in the community who work with them as they move through childhood to a successful transition to adulthood.

For further information about the group call Melissa Norris at Intervention Services 407-331-8002 or contact her via e-mail at mnorris@isifl.org.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION - EDUCATIONAL PATH for FOSTER YOUTH

Orlando Vo-Tech has been doing a wonderful job of reaching out to foster youth in their teen years to advocate the value of a career-oriented education. We all know the dismal statistics related to foster kids as it is related to them going to 4 year colleges....only 2% graduate...assuming they get there in the first place.

Certainly the local community colleges are doing everything they can to encourage and support foster youth to continue their college educations at their institutions. They reach out to high school youth, encourage site visits, bring kids to the schools on excursions and set up continuing support for them at the schools.

However, another great opportunity for the foster kids is to find their way to a job at age 18 and beyond via the trade school or vo-tech path. Orlando Vo-tech has more than 30 former foster youth enrolled in various programs right now.

They can study and prepare for careers as varied as television and broadcasting, health care, transportation, construction, health care and many others.

Once enrolled in Orlando Vo-Tech these youth get special support services from a highly trained and motivated team of administrators, counselors and instructors so they can increase their chances for success.

This is an unfolding success story as it relates to foster youth and we are glad to bring it to your attention at this time.

CITY OF LIFE RECEIVES GENEROUS DONATION

City of Life has received a 21" Sea Ray fiberglass Mercruiser 5.0 EFI 220 HP with stern drive power as a donation and is offering it for sale. This party boat seats over 10 people and comes fully equipped with Bimini full canvas, full carpet, pump-out head, swim ladder, dive platform, stereo AM/FM CD player, SS prop, pullout sprayer, forward transom, tables for cockpit and forward, battery on/off switch, compass, 8 life vests, toilet, boat hook, first aid kit, cover, fire extinguisher, and 2 anchors w/50ft anchor line. Boat received a full overhaul and servicing 11/2009. The boat is docked at Inlet Harbor Marina and is priced to sell.



2001 Sea Ray
210 Sundeck

Please spread the word about the boat to people you know who want a perfect holiday gift for the family at a really great price. For interested buyers, contact Tom Phillips 407-353-2255 or tom@philcoconstruction.com.



RBC Wealth
Management

LIFE SKILLS TRAINING GETS BOOST FROM RBC AND CITY OF LIFE FOUNDATION

The important task of teaching life skills to foster youth is in the hands of Family Services of Metro Orlando and Integration Services Inc. They work year round to help foster youth get prepared to live independently as successful adults.

There are many parts of providing training in the many life skills that teenagers need when they turn 18. How to manage their health care, how to rent or buy an apartment/home, how to shop for and prepare food for themselves and their families and of course, how to manage their finances.

In the area of financial services, Intervention Services has partnered with City of Life Foundation under the leadership of Pat Buffa of RBC Wealth Management. Pat has arranged for teenage foster youth to be able to get training in opening and handling bank accounts and other financial services. RBC is hosting these sessions at their local branches to make them more convenient for the foster youth to attend.

This kind of partnership between the corporate community and the social services world is a good example of how coordination and cooperation can improve the services that are provided to our foster youth.