



## Foster Care to Adulthood: C2i A Program Model for A Thriving Life Post Foster Care



# Meet the C2i Team

- Jessica Rogers, Executive Director
- Talicia Jackson, ILS Manager
- June Barker, ILSC and C2i Alumni

## Mission:

*Connections to Independence exists to provide unique programming and advocacy for foster care youth, ages 14-24 to promote a successful & healthy transition to independent living as they reach adulthood.*

# Why we were created

- Connections to Independence, was a youth program established in 2002 and was housed at an adult education institution
- Created to address the high percentage of youth, especially youth of color, who were in foster care and reconnecting with the system post emancipation, through:
  - Criminal justice
  - Child protection cases of their own
  - Welfare
  - Homeless shelters
- Stabilize youth's placements

# C2i Focus: 5 core components

- Education
- Housing
- Employment
- Financial Literacy
- Personal Wellness

C2i has created facilitator guides for each focus area, along with pre and post surveys. We will hopefully be ready to pilot some train the trainer workshops Spring of 2021.

# **Extended Age Services to 24: Why they were developed**

- **Fostering Connections legislation was created to allow youth currently in care and emancipated youth to reconnect with services until they turned 21**
- **C2i received a multi-year grant to work with youth until 24**
  - Ability to provide continued services and support to our current youth until they turn 24 as opposed to 21
  - Youth being able to stay connected with caring adults in the community
  - Ability to reach out to older youth who were in need of C2i services and support

# Program Model

- Year round programming and services (transportation provided)
- Youth referred to C2i by county social workers. (others can refer as well) Independent Living Skills Counselors (ILSC) assigned small case loads and on call 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week/ 365 days a year
- Individualized meetings/outings with youth on a monthly basis (school visits, job hunting/site visits, personal time (working out, going out to eat birthday celebrations etc)
- Develop Independent Living Plans (ILP) by meeting youth where they're at with individual goal setting.

# Program Model Cont...

- Making youth our client by being the “youth’s” advocate
- Becoming a multifaceted part of the youth’s circle of support
- Develop genuine/organic relationships and trust with youth
- Focus on youth’s strengths not weaknesses
- Providing a stable and safe environment that is a unique place for youth to connect with others like themselves



# Programming: Developing a healthy Mind, Body & Soul

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday: One on ones, school visits, quarterly circle of support meetings, etc
- Tuesday: general programming on various ILS topics
- Thursday: Personal Development –topics are youth driven
- School breaks and monthly: Social and Physical Development through activities and events

# Programming: All About Me Summer

- Personal and physical wellness
- All about me topics: Invisible Me, Love Me, Finding My Path, Cause and Affect
- Programming 4 days a week
- Tuesday: Programming on unit topic
- Wednesday: healing through art
- Thursday: Kente Circle: licensed marriage and family therapy clinic
- Friday: Weekly workouts with personal trainer

## **2019 Outcomes for all C2i youth: average length of time receiving services of 3 years**

1. 92% of youth's placements were stabilized prior to emancipation
2. 95% not in criminal justice system
3. 97% no open child protection cases of their own
4. 92% of youth have graduated from high school or received GED
5. 60% went on to some type of post-secondary education programs

# How and Why C2i Achieves High Outcomes:

Staff develop genuine, trusting relationships between staff and youth by

1. Never giving up on our young people
2. Meeting youth where they're at
3. Having a small case load
4. One on one time with our young people
5. Provide a stable and safe environment that is a unique place for youth to connect with others like themselves
6. C2i become a stable and consistent part of youth's lives
7. Matching youth with an ILSC for their duration in the program
8. C2i becomes involved in ALL aspects of youth's life and circles of support
9. Help youth learn how to become their own best advocate
10. Celebrate each milestone. No accomplishment too small to celebrate

# June Testimonial



# Videos and Q & A



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE\\_WVEIhRRY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE_WVEIhRRY)

***Connections to Independence is not something youth participate in, it's a realization of how youth will actually live their lives.***

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