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George Junior Republic in Indiana administrators attend bill signing for SEA 366

DRIVER'S LICENSES FOR FOSTER CHILDREN BILL

On Wednesday, July 12, 2017, several George Junior Republic in Indiana staff members had the pleasure of participating in the ceremonial bill signing for **SEA 366 Driver's Licenses for Foster Children**. IARCA, in partnership with the Department of Child Services (DCS) and advocacy from Connected by 25, ultimately made the bill possible. A special thanks was sent to George Junior Republic in Indiana administrators and staff (Brandy Stark, Vicki Murgaw, and Megan Tribble) who brought youth to testify at the Senate hearing. The bill provided Senator Andy Zay his first legislative attempt at authoring a bill. With a strong commitment to youth, Senator Zay looks forward to ensuring that Indiana provides the support and opportunities to kids in foster care so that

they can have the same opportunities as all children.

Cathleen Graham, IARCA Executive Director, stated, "We also appreciated working with Representative Holli Sullivan as the House sponsor and appreciated her interest in learning more about the need for foster and adoptive families. So many legislators signed on in support of this bill after they heard the testimony of the young people and Dr. Hutchins. Congratulations to all who were involved in this effort, and many thanks to Governor Holcomb for signing this bill. If you have the opportunity to connect with your legislators this summer, please thank them for their support. This bill was one of only a few that had no legislator vote against it at any stage of the legislative process!"

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A copy of the Drug & Alcohol Program Annual Report is available for review through the Chief Financial Officer, whose office is located in the Administration Building on the George Junior Republic campus.

GEORGE JUNIOR REPUBLIC IN INDIANA THANKS DONORS

(JULY 2016 – JULY 2017)

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FROM THE DESK OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Each day, almost 100 Americans die after overdosing on opioids. The misuse of and addiction to opioids, including prescription painkillers, heroin, and fentanyl, is a national crisis which not only affects the public health of the United States but the economy as well. One study suggests that nearly \$100 billion per year is spent on healthcare, lost productivity, treatment, and criminal

justice involvement. Many experts are calling this the worst drug crisis in the nation's history.

While much of the focus has been on adults, the consequences of opioid addiction have an increasingly adverse effect on children as well. During the past few years, there has been a definite spike in children being removed from their homes due to parental substance abuse. This circumstance creates a greater need for in-home services, temporary shelter programs, kinship care, and foster care. Additionally, the demand for addiction therapists is at an all time high.

Fortunately, George Junior Republic in Indiana is well positioned to help youth and families combat a variety of complex issues, including parental substance abuse and the effects on children. Our staff is trained in multiple evidence-based practices, including motivational interviewing, trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy, and functional family therapy. These interventions, along with other help, keep families together and put them on a path to success.

Today, George Junior Republic in Indiana employs over 60 highly qualified case managers and therapists in 28 counties who provide direct service to youth and families in their own homes, schools, and communities. The staff works diligently to implement sustainable value change that will improve life functioning and prevent future system involvement. Approximately 800 youth and families are entrusted to our care each day. The work can be difficult, but the positive results are life changing.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard L. Losasso".

Richard L. Losasso
Chief Executive Officer

OLDER YOUTH CELEBRATE GRADUATION

The 2017 graduation party for the Indiana Older youth took place on June 2, 2017, at Ceraland Park. Approximately 50 high school OYS students graduated this year with 20 in attendance, representing 15 high schools from across the southeastern part of the state of Indiana. Also, staff members from the Department of Child Services attended and took the time to congratulate the youth they serve.

A picnic lunch was provided, and each graduate received a small gift. Several youth enjoyed paddle boating with a Department of Child Services or a George Junior Republic in Indiana worker.

Many of the youth made new friendships and had a great time hearing about the experiences of their peers. Graduates also had time to develop new relationships, enjoy a game of putt-putt, and explore the park.

Congratulations to the class of 2017!

ADDICTION DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE

Greeted with a loving bear hug, Doc recalls his days during his active addiction. "Although I was a client in the human service system, I had 59 failed drug tests before I decided to stop the cycle of abuse." Doc, who currently receives George Junior Republic in Indiana case management, therapy, and supervised visits with his children (ages 11, 7, and 6) states that if it was not for the support he received from his case manager, he is not certain if he would have made it as far.

"During my active addiction, my life was based on toxic relationships. I was physically violent, had self-serving behaviors, and used drugs to cope with my inadequacies as a parent and even as an addict. Although I am not proud of my behaviors during that time and the impact they had on my children, I am proud to say I have been clean for one year and thirty days."

But the fight to free him from drugs was not an easy one. Doc had to learn to live clean, and a large part of that was learning to live an honest lifestyle and to continue to move in a positive direction, even though others had given up on him. His positive direction is enforced through his work as a drug and alcohol counselor and as a recovery coach. "In these roles," states Doc, "I can share the hard facts about addiction and discovery to becoming clean. For me, to become an addict again means a death sentence. Most people don't realize that in 2016 there

were 445,000 individuals in the United States addicted. For these individuals, managing their lives is like juggling sand. As I work with addicts in recovery, I tell them what they need to hear, not what makes them feel good."

Doc learned the hard way that success as an addict means understanding the complexities of adulthood, controlling one's emotions, and understanding that to have the "good things in life," you must work hard and wait. He has also learned the importance of focusing on his ability to parent his children while helping others escape addiction.

"Addicts are discarded Americans," Doc states. "But, we are people. We come from every walk of life. We are rich and poor, and we may be your close friends. Addiction is killing people, and I am proud to be someone that is helping to change the lives of other addicts through counseling and support services. My future today is full of hope. I look forward to helping others out of the spiral of addiction and to become the full-time dad for my children. Thanks to the support I have received from my caseworker and my support system in the recovery community, anything is possible."

For more information about the George Junior Republic in Indiana Case Management, Therapy, and Supervised Visitation program, contact Brandy Stark at (812) 447-9580 or at bstark@gjr.org.



Older Youth Services (OYS) Supervisor Megan Tribble, enjoys a meal with OYS staff and youth

STAFF RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE

The Indiana Youth Advisory Board members were given the opportunity to nominate a supportive adult in their lives for the 2015-2016 Indiana Youth Advisory Board Outstanding Youth Supporter Awards. During the summer of 2016, two organizational staff members received awards. Angela Christianson (age 18, Bloomington, IN) nominated and presented Ginny Hardin with this award after a heartfelt speech describing how Ginny has positively affected her life. Hayden Cooper (age 21, Sellersburg, IN), Maeve Scott (age 19, Jeffersonville, IN), and Lexi Edwards (age 20, New Albany, IN) nominated and presented the award to Jean Curry. All three youth spoke about how Jean's

support has impacted their lives and helped them to achieve goals they never thought were possible.

Indiana Youth Advisory board members stayed at the Marriott Hotel. Indiana Youth Advisory Board members receiving services from George Junior Republic attended a dinner with their Older Youth Services team the night before the Symposium. During the dinner, youth were asked about their experiences with George Junior Republic and their thoughts on normalcy. Maeve Scott said, "George Junior Republic supported me, even when they didn't agree with my choices. They allowed me the opportunity to make my own decisions but were there to pick me if things didn't work out.



Ginny Hardin accepts award from her youth nominator

I am so happy to have the support of George Junior Republic and the Collaborative Care program." The youth and workers enjoyed each other's company, and new friendships were made.

This summer, Indiana Connected by 25 and the Indiana Youth Advisory Board hosted the Striving for Normalcy Symposium in Indianapolis, Indiana. Young people need normal social



Jean Curry receives award from her youth supporters

Older Youth Services Case Manager Candace Beatty accepts her award

experiences to promote healthy brain development. This symposium brought together youth and adults throughout the state to create a more supportive environment for youth in foster care. Indiana Youth Advisory Board members shared their experiences in foster care and ideas for helping current and future youth have more opportunities for normalcy.

At the conference Older Youth Services Case Manager Candace Beatty, was nominated and awarded the Outstanding Youth Supporter award. The award was presented by Daisey Dyer (one of her former clients). Candace was recognized for her commitment to the youth she serves. Daisey, who aged out of the program two years ago, is finishing nursing school and raising two children, spoke

about always being able to count on Candace for positive emotional support. In addition, Candace was recognized for her ability to engage youth in Indiana Connected by 25's Opportunity Passport and Micro Loan programs.

Congratulations to these amazing staff members.

A LOOK BACK TO THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The Older Youth Services Christmas party was a huge success! A special thank you to all the members of the community that helped provide gifts for thirty youth! The holiday party was held in Columbus, and sixty youth attended. Youth enjoyed a home-cooked Christmas dinner with turkey, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, corn, salad, and endless desserts. The youth also decorated Christmas cookies to take home to snack on later. Each youth had the opportunity to work on a special picture frame craft to take home. Gifts specifically tagged for

each youth were distributed. One young lady received a bath set from Bath and Body Works and some lip gloss. Upon receiving the gift, she stated, "This is the nicest gift I have ever received for Christmas. Most years I don't get anything, or my mom would buy something from the Dollar Store for me."

Members of the Indiana Youth Advisory Board also helped plan and prepare for the party. These youth represent former or current foster youth ages 16-23 who advocate at the state and national levels for youth in foster care. The board members helped wrap gifts, gave input on planning ideas, and surprised the George Junior Republic in Indiana staff with gifts showing their appreciation. It was a wonderful collaboration, and we are excited to have them involved next year as well!

Although they are still enjoying the summer heat, the Older



Older Youth Services Advisory Board Member Chris Rhine gives a Christmas gift to staff member Jean Curry

Youth program staff needs your help in making this year's Christmas party a success. Consider giving a tax deductible donation to support a teenager's opportunity to enjoy Christmas. Donations can be made online at support.gjr.org/Indiana or in the enclosed envelope.



Youth Advisory Board Members display gifts

INDIANA FUNDRAISING EFFORTS FOCUS ON YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

So many young adults rely on their families, siblings, or extended families for support, guidance, and financial assistance as they transition to adulthood. But, for youth in the foster care system, the only supportive resource they may have is a caseworker. It is common for youth aging out of the foster care system to be challenged in navigating the social service system. The Older

Youth Services program steps in to assist these young adults in learning to build and develop independence, stability, and independent living skills. With referrals directly received from the Department of Child Services and Juvenile Probation, Older Youth Services workers help to serve as educators, mentors, advocates, and system navigators.

Unfortunately, many of these youth are working hard to transition out of poverty or other unfortunate circumstances. All donations received will help to support the basic needs of older youth transitioning from foster care

For more information, contact Megan Tribble at 317-452-5592 or via email at mtribble@gjr.org.

FOSTER CARE TO INDEPENDENCE

The three smiling faces waiting for me at the restaurant presented as “all American girls” – all dressed in the latest styles and ready for an enjoyable dinner with guests. However, the smiles shining from their faces did not outwardly communicate their past struggles and personal challenges as youth previously in the Indiana foster care system. As they took the time to introduce themselves and share their stories, a common theme resonated – the importance of self-advocacy, stability, and advocacy.

Each took the time to reflect on her childhood in the Indiana foster care system. As they spoke, they reported excitement and joy when they shared in detail all they had overcome. One was able to become self-reliant from abusive relationships, while a second youth described how she learned to establish clear boundaries within her natural family network. “We are pleased with what they have accomplished,” stated one of the youth, “but, this is due to the support we received through the George Junior Republic Older Youth Services program.”

With assistance from an older youth caseworker, each received a listening ear, comfort, the opportunity to learn, and was accepted no matter if she made mistakes along the way. When asked about an important



Former foster youth Lexi Edwards, Lakia Clements and Meave Scott enjoy an evening out

lesson they learned during their participation in the program, the response was resounding. “Youth in the foster care system need to set boundaries in all areas of their lives.”

This message came through as each young woman shared her story. “Many youth in the system have to learn the hard way that they can’t always trust those they are closest to or their natural parents. Sometimes our natural families do not have our best interest in mind. It is easy for family members to come into our lives and lead us astray because they want something from us.” One woman shared how hard she had worked to save money, only to have her mom steal it from her during a period when they were reunited. When her money came up missing and she learned about her mother’s actions, sadness filled her heart. “Youth need to establish

clear boundaries and stick with them (no matter how hard).”

Today, these three young women have plans in place to be successful. One has plans to serve as a court appointed special advocate and finish college. Another looks forward to purchasing a car and maintaining her full-time job. The third is proud to have the skills to manage an apartment and maintain supportive personal and community-based relationships. Although each will have her own pathway, these young women are soundly transitioning to adulthood and “out of the system” because of the support they received through the Older Youth Services program.

For more information on how you can help a youth aging out of foster care, contact Susan Boland at 724-458-9330 or at sboland@gjr.org.



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SERVICES ENHANCE CLIENT WELL-BEING IN INDIANA

George Junior Republic in Indiana offers various services to meet the needs of the youth and families across the state. The Comprehensive Service program offers family-focused services providing structure, supervision, and support systems for children, youth, and families. With the goal of keeping children in their homes or supporting successful reunification, this service delivery model is focused on evidence-based practices while remaining flexible and creative.

Home-based casework services support families involved with the Indiana Department of Child Services or those on probation and are also available for pre-adoption and post-adoption services for

adoptive families at-risk or in crisis. With a focus on family resilience, preserving families, and promoting the well-being of all children, youth, and families, this program pairs a staff member with no more than 12 clients at one time.

Home-based therapy services is time-limited therapy that occurs in the natural location and environment of the family. It is often for therapy focused around abuse and neglect issues to both children and families.

Additionally, George Junior Republic in Indiana provides functional family therapy, supervised visitation, group home living, and older youth services. Through these comprehensive programs, the organization can serve



Recipient of George Junior Republic in Indiana Comprehensive Services

over 800 children and families each year across the state.

For more information regarding the Indiana service delivery model, contact the Director of George Junior Republic in Indiana Brandy Stark at bstark@gjr.org.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO GJR YOUTH

John entered the group home in Gas City in February 2016. Initially, he was admitted because he was having significant problems at the foster home where he was residing. Over time, he was able to cope with his social anxiety and was able to seek out and become fully employed at a local car wash. Although historically he was challenged to maintain relationships, John has

learned how to use his social skills appropriately in order to become successful, stable, and productive. With a combined SAT score of 1140, he is known by group home staff members to be a hard worker with a love of learning. Accepted to Ball State University, John will participate in the Summer Bridge program prior to starting the fall semester focused on a major in astronomy.

Congratulations to John on earning a George Junior Republic scholarship and on behalf of George Junior Republic in Indiana, we wish him long-term success.

To learn more about how you can contribute to the scholarship program, contact Susan Boland at sboland@gjr.org.