

Preparing Our Foster Youth for a Successful Tomorrow

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aging out of foster care

a pipeline to poverty

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The Scope

- Nearly 30,000 youth age out annually nationwide
- Nearly 250 youth aged out in Arkansas last year

Outcomes - The Midwest Study

	Age	Females	Males
Homeless Episode	24	40%	
Unemployed	26	47%	
Avg. Income	26	\$13,989	
Ever Incarcerated	26	43%	74%
No Health Insurance	26	41%	
PTSD Symptoms	26	58%	
Depression Symptoms	26	25%	
Graduated College	26		11%

(Courtney, Dworsky, Brown, Cary, Love & Vorhies, 2011)

“Melissa’s Story”

- Entered Foster Care age 6 and experienced multiple placements, hospitalizations, interventions.
- Exited care on 18th birthday from behavioral hospital
- Within 3 weeks, Melissa was homeless and was victimized by her biological father

“Melissa’s Story”

- Through **IA**, now working in her first job, has increased GED scores by 60%,
- Asked Transitional Coach, “How are you?” for first time.

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core beliefs



Core Beliefs

- The solution lies in the context of relationships
- Young adults learn best by doing; hands on = brains on!

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Core Beliefs Cont'd

- At times, we provide the opportunity to fail safely
- Program activities and development should be youth driven
- We choose to focus on the hidden potential

Our Primary Partners

Partner	Service Provided
Methodist Family Health	Mental Health; Programmatic Support
Centers for Youth & Families	Mental Health, Wraparound, Substance Abuse Counseling
Little Rock School District	Education
Our House Shelter	Temporary Housing; Education
UALR TRIO Programs	College Prep
Workforce	Job Placement; YouthBuild
Arkansas Coalition for Transitional Supports	Advocacy and Planning



what we do
supporting youth in transition

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What We Do

Immerse Arkansas exists to prepare older and former foster youth for adulthood by connecting them to existing resources and sustainable networks of support.



Transitional Supports

- 3-Phase Transitional Program for 18-24yo
 - *Prepare*: Life Skills, Employment, Education
 - *Connect*: Supportive Network
 - *Succeed*: Showcasing Independence and Giving Back

Transitional Supports Cont'd.

- Semi-Supervised Housing
- Transitional Planning and Coaching
- Community Integration
 - 3-Tier Mentoring
 - Civic group or church attendance

How are we doing?

- 5 young men, 1 young woman
- Mean Age: 19 years old
- Mean Time in Program: 11 months

	Immerse Participants	Midwest Study, Age 19
Currently Employed	67%	41%
Enrolled in Educational Program	83%	39%
Arrested in Past Year	17%	28%
Counseling in Past Year	83%	21%

Programs We've Learned From

- Larkin Street Youth Services, San Francisco
- First Place For Youth, San Francisco
- Lighthouse Youth Services, Cincinnati
- Transition Resource Action Center, Dallas

Others In Arkansas

- Saving Grace, Rogers
- YouthBridge, NWA
- Vera Lloyd, Monticello
- Group homes with ILP add-ons

by the numbers

what does it cost?

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Cost of Intervention

- For youth with moderate needs
- Annual Immerse Arkansas cost per participant: \$16,000-\$18,000/yr, once to scale
- Average of \$45/day
- Can be offset by DCFS Board Payment if youth is still in care for cost of \$25/day

Cost of Non-Intervention

- From Cohen, 1998

	Lifetime Cost
Career Criminal	\$1.5-\$1.8 million
Heavy Drug User	\$483k-\$1.26 million
High School Dropout	\$469k-\$750k
Less Duplication	(\$283k-\$781k)
Total	\$2.2-\$3.0 million

next steps

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IA Mid to Long Term Goals

- Semi-Supervised Home for Young Women (LR)
- 8-12 bed emergency shelter for 18-24yo's
- Develop a Ft. Smith presence
- Expand LR drop-in center for "hub" of supports provided
- Evaluate cross-over with DYS and non-systems youth

Request to Committee

- Appropriation of funds for supportive services to older and former foster youth (ages 18-24)
- Consideration for future grants to increase program capacity