

You can make a difference in a child's life:



By supporting our work, you are helping to create security and stability for nearly 2,000 CFP youth and families. From donations to mentoring, fostering, or joining our staff, there are many ways you can make a difference in the lives of the youth and families in need.



We invite you to join us on May 16th at Topgolf in Canton to celebrate National Foster Care Awareness Month. Scan the QR code to register, or visit www.c4p.org/Topgolf24 and be part of this worthwhile event!

Please visit our website www.c4p.org to make a donation, purchase an item off our wish list, or inquire about becoming a foster parent, mentor, or volunteer today.

Visit www.c4p.org for employment opportunities.

Questions? Email Eve at Erabinowitz@c4p.org.

Join us on     @CFPkids



Communities for People
418 Commonwealth Avenue
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Spring 2024 Newsletter

Life Changing Foster Care Services



Craig Gordon, CEO

With 20,000 youth transitioning out of foster care without a permanent family each year, it is critical to continue to advocate and develop innovative programming and

supports for this vulnerable group of young adults. In the last 5 years, Communities for People's (CFP) newest programs have been designed to provide additional and continued support to youth and young adults aged 16-22. We work to better prepare them for the challenges of young adulthood when they are lacking the benefits of a family safety net.

As an organization, CFP is committed to enhancing awareness, providing access to essential benefits, and advocating for investments in vital

support services. In doing so, we pave the way for a brighter future for our youth. Together, we can ensure they are empowered and supported throughout their journey to independence.

Thank you for being a part of CFP's community, and for recognizing the importance of our work to better prepare the youth in our care for the future together.

Meet CFP's Foster Care Services Directors

Angela is the Families for Children Program Director in RI. She has a passion for working with youth and families and has done so in both educational and social work settings throughout her career of over 17 years. Additionally, Angela is a foster parent herself. For the past three years, she has been dedicated to providing education, advocacy, and support to CFP's foster families and youth. She is a staunch advocate for youth and the rights of resource families.

"I love working in foster care in this capacity. This is hard work that is all heart work. Getting to do this work everyday feels like I'm making a difference in lives of youth and families."
-Angela



Angela M. Watson, Ed.D
Program Director
Families for Children



Jay Turillo
Program Director
Intensive Foster Care

Jay is the Intensive Foster Care Program Director in MA. He has proudly served CFP for 25 years, with 15 years dedicated to foster care. He has worked with children and families involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in MA his entire career. Beyond supporting kids and foster families, Jay is also committed to changing the overall system for the better. He regularly speaks to legislators and other state policy makers to advocate for changes to the MA child welfare system.

"I've never felt like I was just doing a 'job.' Despite its challenges, I never stopped believing I'm lucky to have the opportunity to make a positive impact on the life of a child every day."
-Jay

Youth Development Services (YDS)



A voter registration event held for YDS youth in March.



Youth Development Services (YDS) provides transition-age youth (average age 19) with additional support to help develop life skills as they are transitioning out of state care.

YDS services help youth hone their independent living and life skills. Services include:

- *Impact Mentors*
- *Financial Literacy and Vocational Training*
- *Speak Youth Advisory Board*
- *Double Up Matched Savings*

All YDS programs are designed to create a safe space for youth to receive support from adults and peers, and develop meaningful,

trusting relationships. CFP staff work with community partners statewide to maximize opportunities for youth.

This year, YDS is hosting Rhode Island's first Youth Summit (funded in part by the Department of Children, Youth & Families) for 16 - 20 year olds who have been in the foster care system. The theme of this event is *Embrace the Journey* and youth will be connected with various community resources and opportunities. This event is also planned by YDS youth, so it is a very unique event. If you are interested in sponsoring the Youth Summit, please contact Eve at erabinowitz@c4p.org.

Our Dorm Program provides a transitional living environment between group home living and independent living for youth ages 18 – 22. This program is for youth involved with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and/or Department of Youth Services (DYS). Eligible youth have shown progress in skill development but are not fully prepared for an outreach-supported living program.

Youth are typically involved in school or work and preparing themselves for adulthood. This program is unique in that the young adults have more independence with the security of continued staff support.

The Dorm Program

CFP's second Dorm Program, which recently opened.



Due to circumstances beyond their control, youth in this program are not able to be reunified with family or other lifelong connections, and adoption is not an option.

The need for a program like this is so great that CFP recently opened a second location, and is already in the process of updating another unit in the same building to expand its capacity. CFP takes pride in making all of its residential programs look like a warm and inviting home.

Meet Suelly from Youth Development Services (YDS)

Suelly is in her second year as a full-time student at the Community College of RI (CCRI), and has been a committed member of SPEAK, the YDS statewide Youth Advisory Board. Last year, Suelly was selected for a competitive Allstar Internship with Foster Club of America. During her internship, she had a great time working with other youth from similar backgrounds, and left feeling she had learned a tremendous amount about herself. She is grateful to her CFP Outreach Workers Verrie and Tameka for consistently encouraging her to apply herself and believing in her.

Suelly speaks highly of her time on the SPEAK Advisory Board and believes it gives youth an outlet to think about something besides what is going on in their personal lives. She appreciated



Suelly is a YDS participant and SPEAK Advisory Board Member.

the opportunity to learn about the child welfare system and how it supports her and her peers. It helps youth with experience in foster care use their voice for something good.

In January 2023, Suelly was a new college student and struggling with the transition. She attended a SPEAK meeting, and her advisors and peers greeted her with open arms which reassured her that SPEAK will always be there for her.

Once Suelly completes her second year at CCRI, she plans on transferring to Rhode Island College. While she is not certain on a career yet, she is currently studying psychology and is sure that she wants to help others. Suelly wants to give other youth a voice and make a positive impact.

"I've been a foster care advocate for so long, and I don't know if I see myself doing something else... I'm still exploring all my options."

Meet Anthony from the Dorm

Anthony was in a foster home for a couple years before coming to the Dorm Program. Most youth thrive in family settings, but some require more specialized support. While living in a foster home, Anthony found himself mostly playing video games, eating, and sleeping. He was faced with mental health challenges, including anxiety, and was not attending school.

At his DCF worker's recommendation, Anthony entered Communities for People's Dorm Program in May of 2023 and has been living there since. The encouraging and supportive staff in the Dorm Program utilize trauma-sensitive approaches along with a proven program structure that has proven key to Anthony's turnaround.



"Joyce tells me to go out and she pushes me forward. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. But the times it does work, I always end up having fun."

He has become more social and willing to meet new people, is attending school regularly, and goes out more. Staff like Joyce Selman, the

Dorm Program Director, have utilized effective approaches to help Anthony be open to forming connections. They take turns with domestic duties like cooking dinner. Anthony learned to make lasagna at the Dorm and has learned he enjoys cooking. Honing independent living skills has been empowering for him.

Currently, Anthony is enrolled in the *YouthBuild Just a Start* to learn about construction. He also volunteers at a soup kitchen on Wednesdays. Ultimately, Anthony dreams of becoming an electrical engineer or a graphic designer. He says the Dorm Program is a necessary because it is a place for youth who may otherwise be struggling to learn more skills, find better jobs, and join the community.