



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

July 30, 2007

CONTACT: Leslie Ridgeway (619) 685-2239

FORMER FOSTER YOUTH HELP PEERS ADJUST TO INDEPENDENT LIFE *New Website Offers Resources, Support for Youth Leaving Foster Care System; Site to be Launched on July 30 at 12:30 p.m.*

Former foster youth played a key role in designing a new website intended to support youth after they have turned 18 and left the foster care system.

The website, Fostering Change (www.fosteringchange.org) was launched at a kick-off event on Monday, July 30. Former foster youth, in focus groups, reviewed and shaped the site, which is designed to point foster youth toward resources for education, housing, employment, transportation, health, safety, crisis management and more.

Early reviews of the site by former foster youth are encouraging, including "The website is awesome!" and "I was able to find what I was looking for and it was not difficult."

"It makes sense that former foster youth should have a hand in developing this new site," said Greg Cox, First District Supervisor. "They know the unique challenges that exist. This site puts them in a better position to become independent and live successful lives."

The site was developed by a partnership including the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), Child Abuse Prevention Foundation (CAPF), Futures Foundation and BetterWorld Together Foundation.

The Fostering Change website is a work in progress. Beginning July 30, an incentive program to attract visitors to the site and solicit their feedback will be launched.

Achieving independence is a milestone for any young person. For former foster youth, who have already experienced a lifetime of challenges, the Fostering Change website provides a one-stop shop of resources and support.

- more -



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION
July 30, 2007

“The ...webpage has an abundant amount of information with beneficial resources and accurate descriptions,” wrote Sophia on a website feedback form. “This site will definitely be a helping hand to our youth outside the hours of 9 to 5.”

HHSA’s Independent Living Skills Program (ILS) is designed to help eligible youth become self-sufficient by offering training in independent living skills through community agencies that the County contracts with. Training in money management, work readiness, applying for college, career planning, decision-making and personal growth are available.

ILS special events for youth include “Independent City,” an all-day event offering opportunities to practice independent living skills where youth can do everything from open a bank account to finding an apartment within their budget. A variety of job fairs also are offered.

For information on ILS, call the free ILS hotline at (866) ILS-INFO (457-4636).

###