

United Way of the Greater Triangle

Dr. Stan Holt, Vice President of Community Impact

Fostering Youth Opportunities

In Durham, Johnston, Orange and Wake Counties there are roughly 1,600 youth in foster care at any one time. At age 18, these young people “age out” of foster care and are expected to be independent members of the community. Roughly 65-70 young people age out of the foster care system each year and are considered to be adults by the State of North Carolina. Few of us are truly self-sufficient at the age of 18, even with a wide variety of resources. Research shows that young people in foster care are far more likely than their peers in the general population to endure homelessness, poverty, compromised health, unemployment, incarceration and other adversities after they leave the foster care system.

- More than one in five will become homeless after age 18;
- Merely 58 percent will graduate high school by age 19 (compared to 87% nationally);
- Fewer than 3 percent will earn a college degree by age 25 (compared to 28% nationally); and
- One in four will be incarcerated within two years of leaving the system.

Approach: United Way of the Greater Triangle wants to change these outcomes for foster care youth. Our goal is to increase the stability of young people leaving foster care so that they become successful adults. We want to accomplish this by creating an integrated service delivery model that engages diverse partners around specific, targeted young people. The success of these young people is dependent upon the following:

- A permanent adult to rely on and a family network
- Education and training that leads to stable employment
- Employment opportunities
- Safe, stable housing
- Health care
- State and local policies that promote the above opportunities

Goal: Young people aging out of the foster care system will become self-sufficient by the age of 24.