

February 8, 2022 – Foster Youth Panel – YAC (Youth Advisory Council)

Thank you, **Demarco Mott** and **Marcel Rivas**. What a treat it was to hear and learn directly from Demarco, who aged out of the system and remains involved. His experience and knowledge were inspiring to all of us. Those of us who participated were fortunate because notes won't convey the passion Demarco shared with us.

- The **“YAC”** is a body of current or former young people ages 13+ selected by a child welfare system of care partners committee to advise on issues of Citrus FCN's policy or administrative actions which impact youth directly or indirectly.
 - Members of the YAC are former foster youth, current foster youth, or those adopted from the system.
 - They provide feedback and policy recommendations to Citrus.
 - It is a youth-led committee. (Demarco is the chair).

- **Suggestions for GALs**
 - Talk to your youth! They will tell you what they want and need if you give them the space to tell you.
 - When you meet with your youth, don't give them only 1 option.
 - Be open and natural.
 - Kids are not ungrateful; they just have never been able to be in control. They are always told where to live, they are moved from place to place, schools often change, etc.
 - Then when they are ready to age out these same kids are expected to make all their own decisions.

- **Extended Foster Care (EFC)**
 - For kids who have aged out in the legal custody of DCF AND are in high school, working on a GED, enrolled in college or vocational school OR working at least 80 hours a month OR have a diagnosed and documented disability.
 - In order to stay in the program, they must: meet w/ a case manager monthly; attend court hearing every 6 months.
 - If they leave the program and want to get back in, they have to submit an application to Citrus.
 - EFC is often the best option (although most youth want PESS) because there are still court hearings.
 - In EFC, if financial needs of the youth exceed \$1,256 monthly -- Citrus can help. PESS is a fixed amount of \$1,256.
 - EFC has more flexibility -- they can be working only part time (only need 80 hours a month to qualify).
 - Much more assistance available in EFC because youth still have a Judge.
 - EFC is for youth ages 18-21 (22 with a disability).
 - Most of the kids in EFC don't have a high school diploma or GED yet.
 - EFC allows youth who have aged out of foster care to have a network of support and they can be working.
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- **PESS**
 - Eligibility: Kids turn 18 while in legal custody of DCF and have spent at least 6 months in foster care before turning 18 OR they are at least 18 and were adopted after age 16 from foster care or placed in Permanent Guardianship after

spending at least 6 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately preceding their placement or adoption AND

- They earned a standard high school diploma or its equivalent AND
 - They are attending a college or vocational school that is Florida Bright Futures eligible.
 - PESS is available until age 23.
 - They receive \$1,256 monthly for all expenses -- books, room, board, etc.
 - They are eligible for tuition waiver but still responsible for all other living expenses.
 - Most youth want PESS because they want to be done with the system. Speak to them and explore all the options.
- **More Tips for Successful Visits with Youth:**
 - When you do your visits with older youth -- find a way to have some time alone with them.
 - Sometimes the problem is in the room! No child wants to be in the hot seat. If they have a problem in the home and the foster parents are in the room, they aren't going to tell you.
 - Make it a warm visit
 - Give the youth a sense of individuality.
 - "In order to believe in ourselves, we need to know that people are listening."
 - There are housing vouchers available to help youth -- contact Citrus -- there are several different programs.
 - Kids need to be taught basic life skills -- budgeting, laundry, cooking, cleaning, opening a bank account, transportation (K2I, buses, Metrorail), etc. These are skills that should be taught by a foster parent but may not be. Work with your youth -- find out what they know. If they say they don't know something, it's because they don't know it!
 - Kids hate staffings. They feel like they are being interrogated by the FBI. Attend staffings with the youth -- let them talk about what is important to them and their needs.
 - Kids hate having their photo taken every month by the case manager, even though they know it's a requirement.
 - If you feel like your youth aren't receiving the basic life skills they need, call the agency and find out who the IL specialist is -- call them and work together.
 - FFCR (Foster Care Review) is independent but works within the court system, advocating for the teen as a roundtable. They do thorough advocacy, not just rubber-stamping things.
 - To nominate youth for the YAC, the form is attached above or email YAC@citrusfcn.com.
 - "Adulting is hard".

Citrus Family Care Network
Youth Advisory Council (YAC) Nomination Form
Send Completed forms to: YAC@Citrusfcn.com

Name of Youth: _____ DOB or Age: _____

Contact number: _____ Email address (if available): _____

Strengths of Youth (Why should he/she be considered for the YAC):

Name of Person Nominating Youth: _____

Relationship/ affiliation with Youth: _____

Contact Information for Nominating Person (Phone and e mail address): _____

SUBJECT: YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/01/19 REVISED DATE: 08/08/19

PURPOSE: This document describes the authorized procedures for the development, member selection, annual goals/ outcomes for the Citrus' Family Care Network ("FCN") Youth Advisory Council ("YAC"). The Youth Advisory Council is a body of young people selected by Citrus FCN to advise on issues of Citrus FCN's policy or administrative actions which impact youth directly or indirectly.

SCOPE: Citrus FCN Youth Advisory Council

PROCEDURES:

1. **YAC Meetings**
Citrus FCN YAC is scheduled to meet regularly, at minimum quarterly, and it is primarily composed of youth ages 13 to 23 that have a history in Florida's Judicial Circuits 11 and 16 (Miami Dade and Monroe). Former Youth are eligible to be considered for YAC membership.
2. **YAC Membership Composition, Selection and Rotation**
The council will consist of a minimum of 5 youths. Members shall serve terms of a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years. After three years of service, members will be able to be considered to rejoin the YAC after a one year, twelve months, rotation period.
3. **YAC Nominations**
Submission of YAC membership nominations can be made by any member of the community. Nominations will be received at YAC@Citrusfcn.com. The committee, composed of a minimum of three members to be appointed by the Citrus FCN Director or her designee, will review at minimum once per year all nominations and make a unanimous or consensus eligibility determination. In case, were the selection committee feels that further input or feedback is needed to make a recommendation, the guidance of the Citrus FCN Director or her designee will be requested.
4. **YAC Leader:**
The Council shall have a leader, to be selected also by the Citrus FCN YAC Nominee Review Committee. The leader will be responsible for

preparing and facilitating all meetings and other administrative and logistical type functions of the YAC.

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**FAMILY CARE NETWORK
CITRUS HEALTH NETWORK, INC.**

**POLICY & PROCEDURES
POLICY NO.: YS 01**

SUBJECT: YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

EFFECTIVE DATE: 07/01/19 REVISED DATE: 08/08/19

5. YAC Goals

- A. Provide recommendations/ input/ feedback to enhance or support the organization, in general, and the Youth Services department, in specific.
- B. Provide recommendations/ input/ feedback to enhance or support the child welfare system of care system's delivery of services.
- C. Conduct Outreach in the community to support the organization's efforts in terms of recruitment of foster and adoptive parents.

6. YAC Leader and Member Stipend

- A. A stipend of \$50.00 will be provided to each YAC member for the costs associated with their attendance and participation at the, minimum quarterly, YAC meetings.
- B. A stipend of \$100.00 will be provided to the YAC leader for the costs associated with her/his coordination, attendance and participation at the, minimum quarterly, YAC meetings and other functions/ activities that will be pre-approved by Citrus FCN on an "as needed" basis.

TOOLS: Citrus FCN Youth Advisory Council Nomination Form

