

Kentucky's Leading Foster Care Agencies Join to Support True Up Movement

Priorities: Educating Foster Youth, Improving System

LOUISVILLE (Oct. 20, 2011) – More than 80 foster care leaders, alumni and youth joined together today in support of True Up, a new movement to help foster youth become successful, independent adults.

“Education is the force to break the cycle of poverty,” Frank Harshaw, Founder and Chairman of True Up, told the group gathered at the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville.

True Up is a youth-driven collaborative partnership in Louisville supported by eight non-profit agencies including Bellewood Home for Children, Boys and Girls Haven, Brooklawn, Home of the Innocents, Maryhurst, St. Joseph's, Sunrise Children's Services and fiscal agent, Metro United Way of Louisville.

True Up is a movement driven by foster care youth and alumni who are committed to helping others and inspiring the community's support for change, Harshaw said. True Up prepares foster youth through education and experience-based learning in the following core areas:

- Furthering Education
- Relationship Building Skills
- Career Mapping
- Financial Management
- Mobility & Transportation

At the collaborative meeting of the foster care agencies today, several youth alumni leaders in True Up explained why the movement is crucial to building independent adults.

Willie Wells, a former foster child and now, at 24, a True Up Youth Advisory Council member, said, “It's a rocky road for many of us in foster care. With True Up, maybe we can smooth out some of those rocky roads.”

Heather Walker, 33, spent her teenage years going through a revolving door of more than a dozen foster care placements, a process that left her angry, unsure and unprepared at age 18 to build a life on her own. “I had a voice, but no one seemed to hear it,” said Heather, now a True Up youth alumni leader.

True Up aims to amplify those voices to make changes in the foster care system and the lives of foster youth. “We plan to tell our stories to elected leaders in the upcoming legislative session and to work with them for needed changes,” Harshaw said.

To find out more about True Up, visit our new website, www.trueuplouisville.com, and listen to foster care leaders, alumni and youth in our online video.