



Connecting teens, creating families, changing lives

Rebuilding and looking forward

Dear Pamela:

The past few days have been the perfect metaphor for how many of us are feeling - is it still winter or have we turned the corner to spring? Or put another way - are we easing out of the worst of the pandemic or is there another variant soon to come?

Some of us are better positioned to withstand more alone time if it comes - with secure housing and steady work that can be done from anywhere.

It is more complicated for most of the DCFYI youth. Those who are still in foster care are guaranteed housing and that basic needs will be met. But nationally, there were not enough foster homes before the pandemic; fears around covid led more foster parents to close their homes, resulting in agencies having fewer placement options (including in states where the number of children in foster care has increased).

Child welfare agencies are also experiencing staff illness and resignations. One of our teens asked about a friend participating with us, in part because to the best of the friend's knowledge, he has not had an assigned social worker for three weeks since the last one quit. It took us multiple emails and phone calls to help another DCFYI teen figure out who her new social worker was when no one even informed her that her last social worker had left.

DCFYI Orientation Monday, March 7th

Learn more or take the next step to being a mentor, weekend host parent, adoptive parent, or event driver.

Open Table info sessions

Tuesday February 15;
Thursday February 17.

Learn more about our new [Open Table](#) program. Join the next training classes, starting soon.

RSVP from the [website calendar](#).



[Non-profit in Rhode Island](#) creates housing for former foster youth.

[Introducing: DC Futures](#), D.C. launches tuition program for degrees in high-demand fields.

[When a sudden](#), small expense threatens an entire college career.

[Tips for helping](#) foster youth aging out of the system work on their job skills.

[Illinois bill proposes](#) to add mental health checks for children entering the foster system.

[Four sisters](#) on top-ranked basketball team, and that's not the best

For youth who have aged out of care, the last few years have been even harder - lost jobs, lost housing, difficulty resolving issues (replacing IDs or birth certificates, accessing medical care or government services or programs) because offices are closed and remote workers are dealing with their overwork and other stressors. And while lots of employers were hiring entry level jobs in the fall, omicron and economic uncertainty seems to have reduced job openings for those who are still looking (or looking again).

I have often thought over the last two years about young people who don't have a community like this one to rely on. More than one DCFYler has shared recently that they didn't know where they would be if not for their mentors, host parents, and the rest of the DCFYI community.

I am so grateful to all of you who have made the commitment to be in youths' lives, who have supported us financially (including the Fund for Critical Youth Needs which has kept many young people fed, housed, and able to get to new jobs!), and now to those who are joining us as Open Table volunteers.

We are deeply grateful that you have chosen to share your love, not just today but every day of the year. Thank you for being part of the most amazing community,

Susan

Upcoming Events

Hike and Campfire -Saturday, February 19.

March event - Saturday March 26

All events continue to be outdoors for now.



We are watching covid numbers and vaccination rates to

and that's not the best part of their story.

Help us expand DCFYI's reach and find more weekend host and adoptive parents for wonderful teens. Like our social media pages and comment and share posts so other people will see them.

Thank you!



[Your support](#) means more teens in foster care will have lifelong connections with caring adults and find adoptive families.

determine whether we should not meet (ie, cancel an event) and when we can safely return to indoor events.

Events are on the DCFYI [website calendar](#).

Happy Valentine's Day!



Thank you for bee-ing an integral part of the DCFYI community! We are so grateful for you and all the wonderful people who keep us going and wrap love around DCFYI youth.

We should say talented DCFYI youth - including the teen who designed this graphic for us.

Do you know a Social Media Pro?

We are looking for a social media expert to build DCFYI's social media presence, ensuring our ability to find more volunteers and raise the funds to create lasting adult relationships for more teens in foster care.

Please share [the RFP](#); proposal deadline extended to February 25.