



Call for Stories

DID YOU GROW UP IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE? ARE YOU A TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH (AGE 16-25)?

Whether you were placed in a foster home, group home, or with relatives, we need your story. Avenues of Independence, Inc. is a non profit organization dedicated to implementing solid solutions for the neglected needs of youth who are transitioning into adulthood.

Tell us how your life was impacted by placement and the services that you received as a child. Tell us what you felt was lacking before and after you turned eighteen and emancipated. Your story is an opportunity to increase awareness of the problems facing children who grow up in placement, offer support to your peers, provide suggestions and solutions to the problems, encourage those who are in a position to help, and to become a published author. Please review the story guidelines and submit your story for consideration to be included in *Safe Landing – Life During and After Foster Care*.

STORY GUIDELINES

1. Questions to be addressed:
 - What was your experience growing up in out-of-home placement? How old were you when you were removed from your parents' care, about how many placements did you have, what were the circumstances of those placements ending? Do you have any regrets about previous placements ending?
 - What are your plans for the future?
 - *If you are not yet 18* What are your concerns or fears about your ability to live independently as an adult?
 - *If you are 18+ and Emancipated:* What challenges did you face once you turned 18 and were emancipated?
Consider: were you at any point homeless, unemployed, without a high school diploma, "forced" to drop out of a school/training program
 - Did you participate in an Independent Living Skills Program prior to being emancipated? Why or why not?
 - Did you or are you currently receiving assistance in any of the following areas: Independent Living Skills Training Programs, housing, educational/vocational training

- Do you believe your situation will improve (if you are not yet 18) or would have improved (if you are 18 and emancipated) if you were provided supportive services such as housing, Independent Living Skills Program, educational/vocational assistance, mentoring, etc. after turning 18. If so, how would your life be different?
2. Stories must be true. Stories should not exceed 3 type-written pages. Use single spaced, New Times Roman 12pt font, and no extra frills.
 3. Write freely. Slang terms and phrases are ok. Although correct use of grammar makes for easier reading and understanding, you are not being judged by rules of English. Stories are considered for publication based on the content. Tell it as though you are talking to a friend rather than a formal presentation. "Keep It Real."
 4. The stories should make people think, laugh, or cry. The story should tell the good and the bad. You want people to *feel* what it is like to have walked in your shoes.
 5. Please do not include names or other identifying information of those who you feel negatively impacted your life. Simply state their relationship to you, i.e. parent, social worker, teacher, probation officer, etc. This is not an opportunity to "bad mouth" any person or agency.
 6. You may write a special thank you to those who aided you in the journey to adulthood.
 7. Although published stories will not include specific information identifying the author, no anonymous submissions will be accepted.
Authors must include the following information with their story:
 - Name, age, and ethnicity
 - Contact Information: mailing address, phone number, and email address
 - City and State of current residence and/or where you spent your years in out-of-home care
 8. If compensation is provided, the amount will be determined at a later time.
 9. Preferred Submission Method:
ELECTRONICALLY: send to shareyourstory@avenuesofindependence.org
In the Subject line please type: Story Submission-Your First Name & Last initial
If you don't have access to the Internet, consider visiting a public library to utilize the computers and internet there. If you must mail your story, it **MUST** be typed on plain white 8 1/2" x 11" paper, in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1" margins on each side.
MAIL: Avenues of Independence, Inc. Attn: Story Submissions PO Box 561706, Los Angeles, CA 90056.
 10. Deadline for submission: June 30, 2008
 11. Send questions to shareyourstory@avenuesofindependence.org
In the Subject Line please type: Story Submission- QUESTION

Although writing and journaling can be therapeutic, this call for stories is in no way to be used as a replacement for seeking mental health treatment. The author does not accept responsibility for the mental health or other needs of those who submit stories. If you have unresolved issues or situations that are, or may impact your ability to function, you are strongly encouraged to seek mental health or other supportive services.