



March 25, 2020

Virtual Coaching Meets a Critical Need for Foster Youth in Response to Coronavirus

(BREAKING - Southwest Missouri) I Pour Life has deployed the only virtual coaching and curriculum available to older foster youth preparing to age out of state care. While facilities and state programs continue to focus on relief and housing needs for the coronavirus, I Pour Life is preparing foster youth who are in compromising circumstances to take critical steps toward future independence.

The state and youth care workers have implemented precautionary measures that limit outside contact for older foster youth. The decision was important for physical health and strategies to flatten the coronavirus curve, however, foster youth in state care are now cut off from community connection and support, like I Pour Life, that has become the family they've never had. In response, I Pour Life has mobilized youth LifeCoaches to connect daily with the youth, aged 15-24, to provide stability, hope, and a positive voice amidst other news passing through residential facilities. Coaches want youth to be thinking, "How do I see myself at the end of the coronavirus season? What will I accomplish to ensure I have the skills and mindset to be successful after the state-mandated isolation?"

LifeCoaches from I Pour Life teach youth to have a future-focused mindset while working on measurable outcomes that include advancing education, relational and personal health, financial literacy, maintaining stable housing, and other critical topics that foster youth need to understand for a thriving independent future.

Due to numerous transfers while in foster care, many youth fall behind on their academics due to new districts where credits don't transfer, encountering bullying or isolation, or other mental health barriers. This Spring, 30 of the 120 foster youth being coached by I Pour Life have caught up on their educational requirements and were preparing for high school graduation prior to the coronavirus outbreak. Through virtual coaching, youth are given strategies and practices to ensure their education stays on track while preparing for further education or employment.

LifeStrengths is the only program that has maintained all services and coaching through virtual portals to the vulnerable population of older foster youth. To support older foster youth during the coronavirus outbreak, visit lifestrengths.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

Inadequate development programs for foster youth aged 15+ have left just over 5,000 youth in the State of Missouri isolated from the social connections and resources necessary to launch into self-sufficient adulthood every year. This group of young people is one of the most at-risk populations in the United States.

Only 3% of these youth will ever be adopted or reunified.

Public surveys have conveyed the following results for foster youth aging out of government care:

- 1 in 3 will enter prison
- 31% will be homeless by the age 21
- 42% will not graduate high school

BUT...

Through I Pour Life's LifeStrengths youth development program, we are seeing:

- 98% youth graduate or on track to do so
- 80% secure stable housing
- 96% avoid criminal involvement
- 91% youth get a job or are enrolled in school

LIFESTRENGTHS

LifeStrengths is the nationally recognized positive youth development model that utilizes evidence-based curriculum and rigorous one-on-one coaching to advance at-risk and foster youth to a place of self-sufficiency as they age out of government care.

LifeStrengths provides weekly meetings with youth over one year, allowing development in workforce readiness, advancement in education, and life skills that are required to move away from government subsidies and into a thriving future.

Youth continue to advance in their development of responsibility and decision-making, therefore youth never "age out" or "exit" the LifeStrengths program, but are provided ongoing opportunities for continued coaching through Young Professionals groups, Financial Literacy simulations, and Successful Living workshops.

LifeStrengths has been recognized by the [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#) and [America's Promise Alliance](#) for leadership and innovation in advancing foster youth to independence.

I POUR LIFE

I Pour Life is an international nonprofit based in Springfield, Missouri that develops people for stronger communities. Through evidence-based curriculum and training, we teach individuals with social and economic disadvantages how to identify and apply their unique strengths to become self-sufficient.

I Pour Life has active development and training programs in Missouri, USA and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

ipourlife.org/lifestrengths

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