



# opening doors

California Connected by 25 Initiative  
August 2007 Update

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## *making a difference*

Marty was 21 years old, no longer ILP eligible, homeless and in critical need of services. He sofa surfed with friends until he wore out his welcome. He did have aspirations to go to college but had not had the information, resources and support needed - he was preoccupied with day-to-day survival. A friend urged him to call the county's Connected by 25 program. When he did he was immediately identified as a candidate for the Career Pathways Gateway program, was assessed and was a match. He begins pursuing his college aspirations this month at Mission College. The next challenge was housing. Thanks to the county's partnership with San Jose State University, as a full-time college student Marty can receive transitional housing services and live for up to two years in the campus dorm, also receiving a meal plan, case management, some money on his campus card for laundry and snacks, as well as some pocket money to pay for a bus pass and personal needs. After staff provided a clear and concise overview of these services to Marty, he appeared confused. He asked the staff: "Is this 'Connected by 25' thing for real? I really get all this help?"

In working together in our communities to build supports and services for transitioning foster youth, we are not just offering education, employment, or housing, we are building relationships, connections to the community and offering hope. As you go about your daily work, remember you are opening doors for youth to a brighter future!

## *early focus on education*

Nikki, a 5<sup>th</sup> grader at a 1<sup>st</sup> grade reading and math level, now is at a 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading and math level after receiving a comprehensive assessment and 100 hours of tutoring. Another 22 hours of tutoring and Nikki is expected to be at grade level as she enters 6th grade this fall. Nikki's happier, more confident attitude and improved behavior are bringing positive dividends in her placement & relationships.

*THP++ ♥*

Social Worker/THP+ worker Sal was committed and experienced. Despite starting at 6 AM for a trip to Yosemite with ILP youth, Sal was at Target at 9:00 PM to meet Andrew and his lifelong connection Gerry for purchases that had to be made before the next day. By 9:30 Andrew had not shown up & Sal wondered "Am I wasting my time, does this youth not have any appreciation for the assistance and resources being provided?" As Sal finished this thought, he saw a person covered in grease from head to toe walk in the store—to his surprise it was Andrew who had just gotten off of work and drove straight to Target. Andrew had previously worked at a fast food restaurant and his hours fluctuated a lot so Sal and Gerry had talked with Andrew about finding a more stable job that would provide a living wage. Sal suddenly realized that Andrew had done just that—he was working at Fleetwide. And then Sal realized something else—that Andrew had support to take these steps because of the coordinated resources, efforts & support of his lifelong connection Gerry and the THP+ program..

*"... Everyone else gets families, why not us?"*

*Opening Doors Filming, former foster youth, 22 years*

## saving for the future

Thirty-six youth enrolled in Santa Clara's IDA program have saved over \$6500. One "super-saver" has close to \$2500 in his account. His goal is to have money for a "rainy day;" He may just be ready to weather a storm!

## related efforts

### California's NGA (National Governor's Assn.)

#### Vision for our Transitioning Foster Youth:

- \* Integrate ILP & transition services with case-management, caregiving and community supports;
- \* Provide active participatory opportunities and experiences in the youth's daily life prioritizing Permanency, Education & Employment.

*A Breakthrough Series Collaborative on ILP Redesign* is in the planning stages and will help achieve this vision. More on this in 2008!

**Opening Doors Partnerships:** With Alex Smith Foundation, CC25I is producing a short DVD and collateral materials promoting awareness of and investment in foster youth transition. More on this and "paperless giving" pilots by interested Community Foundations in 2008!

**Guardian Scholar Initiative:** A Guardian Scholar Project Manager position is coming soon as part of the strategic planning by our funders to promote outreach, advocacy, program replication, expansion and data collection/evaluation.

**AVID:** County Offices of Ed in Fresno, Stanislaus and Santa Clara are piloting outreach and engagement of foster youth to increase their participation in local AVID programs—these programs are quite successful in helping youth complete "A thru G" requirements and prepare for college.

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"...losing everybody like that, over and over again, it hurts"

*former foster youth, 19 years*



### CC25I Fall Convening

November 5 & 6, 2007

Doubletree Hotel in Sacramento

Presenters: Lorraine Fox, Darla Henry



Presenters will explore how loss and grief impact the lives and successful transition of foster youth and what this means for our work.

## technical assistance

**IDA's:** Mimi Frusha provided IDA training to Fresno, Stanislaus & Orange for developing and implementing their IDA programs.

**Expanding Municipal Leadership:** Andrew Moore & Connie Busse brought City and County leaders together in Santa Clara and Stanislaus to promote local planning and partnership for transition-aged youth services/supports.

**Our K-12 Foundation:** The CC25I Educational Liaisons understand the meaning of a "community of learning." They continue their frequent in-person meetings sharing strategies, challenges and inspiration in the work. Next meeting is 9/11/07 in Hayward.

**Youth Engagement/Youth Advisors:** With technical assistance by Michael Sanders, Fresno recently started up their Youth Advisory Board and held a kick-off retreat.

**Sustainability Planning Training for Trainers:** The Finance Project is working with CalSWEC to develop Sustainability Planning "Training for Trainers" that complements the county self-assessment, SIP and PQCR processes.

## advocacy works

Marianne attended two high schools her Freshman year and was in a third high school at the beginning of her sophomore year. Though her transcript indicated she was deficient in credits, quick follow-up by the county educational liaison ensured that both of her Freshman year high schools provided her the credits she had earned.

## Trailblazing Integration & Permanency

As of summer 2007, all Stanislaus youth in care, whether just removed, in FR or in long term care, have had a connections search! Internet searches, mining files and permanency values are integrated into removal protocols, TDM's, due-diligence searches and permanent planning, and a report is run each month to catch cases that slip thru! If you'd like to know more contact their CC25I lead for some TIP's!

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For more information about CC25I, visit:  
<http://www.f2f.ca.gov/California25.htm>