OPEN THE DOOR
SO THEY CAN SOAR

Ending homelessness, sexual exploitation, incarceration, and pregnancy of foster teens and youth.
BECOMING HOMELESS

Toni was 5 when she landed in the foster care system.

Authorities had discovered that her half-sister was pregnant by their father. Toni and her siblings were placed in the system. And so continued an already dark journey for a little girl who had experienced far too much tragedy already.

Toni’s mind did everything it could to shut out memories of abuse and burns from a fire. She still remains quiet about those years.

Not surprisingly, Toni had significant behavioral problems characteristic of people who have experienced extreme abuse. She was repeatedly kicked out of foster care homes and ended up in an institution.

When a lawyer who would become her advocate found her at 11 years old, Toni was in a medicated fog, shuffling in a dark corner with a disconnected look in her eyes.

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“I was shocked at how much like jail this was,” said Kathleen Dumitrescu, who
was with the Legal Aid Society of Cobb County at the time. Thankfully, Kathleen eventually found a home for Toni through one of Georgia’s only therapeutic foster care providers, Creative Community Services.

**A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS**

Toni has access to therapeutic foster care to help manage life with intellectual disabilities and bipolar disorder while learning skills for independent living. She lives in an apartment setting called an “enhanced home.”

Funded by the state, it’s a stable living environment for foster kids with unique challenges that make living in a traditional foster home difficult. Toni lives in the apartment and different foster parents rotate in and out throughout the week to teach her a variety of independent living skills.

**ENHANCED HOMES**

FOSTER YOUTH + APARTMENT + TEAM OF MENTORS
If you swing by “Toni’s apartment,” you’ll hear sounds of banging pots and smell aromas drifting from her kitchen. She has learned to make omelettes, shrimp parmesan and everything in between. She is learning to manage other daily living skills, such as remembering to take her meds, shopping for groceries and managing finances.

*With the help of her mentor, Lindsie, and other team members at Creative Community Services, Toni has learned how to create meal plans, shopping lists and cook. “I have never gone over budget!” Toni beams.*

Lindsie is one of Toni’s former live-in mentors. She is now a co-director for SOAR and continues to mentor Toni and support her development.
A DARK ROAD AHEAD

Unfortunately, her mental health challenges make Toni extremely trusting, which has gotten her into dangerous scenarios. Even recently, when it was believed she was in a safe place, she put herself in a dangerous situation with horrific consequences. While Toni has learned a lot, she has a lot to learn.

Despite her unthinkable past, Toni is a joyful human being with a heart full of gratitude and hope. But she’s about to lose everything.

Toni is “aging out” of foster care.

She doesn’t qualify for a Georgia Medicaid waiver for individuals with developmental disabilities. She has mental health challenges that make public spaces very unsafe.

And she has absolutely nowhere to go and no one to look out for her.
GEORGIA’S FOSTER CARE CRISIS

LIFE AFTER FOSTER CARE

Children legally “age out” of foster care at the age of 21. If their IQ is low, but not low enough, they do not qualify for Medicaid waivers for individuals with developmental disabilities. However, they often struggle with mental health issues, require medication, are unable to hold down a full time job and have emotional and financial struggles. They have no family, no safety net, and few of the life skills needed to live independently and safely.

Nearly HALF of Georgia’s homeless youth are former foster children. And nearly half are SEX TRAFFICKED or RAPED

Foster teen girls face another crisis even earlier than when they age out.

Nationally, by the age of 19, half of teen girls in foster care report having been pregnant. The rate of foster teens who give birth compared to non-foster teens is significantly higher.

Unfortunately, children of teen parents are more likely to be abused, neglected and placed in foster care, repeating a dark and haunting cycle for babies of foster teens and for our community.

There are many costs of teen pregnancy, both direct and indirect. There are life-altering costs to the parent and the baby and high financial costs to society.

Below is a simplified look at the cost of teen births to Georgia.

**THE COST OF TEEN PREGNANCY IN GEORGIA**

**TEEN MOMS**
- Birth complications, additional expenses (medical, childcare, food, clothing & living expenses)

**BABIES**
- Low birth weight, other development issues, reduced financial support from father
- Less active parenting, less involvement (or none) from father figures, higher likelihood of foster care placement

**GEORGIA TAX PAYERS**
- $395 million/year to Georgia taxpayers through social benefits for healthcare, food stamps, rent subsidies
- The cost of foster care, unwanted pregnancy, homelessness and incarceration of children

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WHO WILL HELP?

Creative Community Services is a nonprofit founded on creating innovative solutions for adults with developmental disabilities and foster children in need of specialized care.

Now, we’d like to propose new thoughtful solutions to Georgia’s crises related to foster teens and youth. But we can’t do it without you. We need your support to make the following ideas a reality.

ENHANCED HOMES THROUGH OUR SOAR PROGRAM

We aim to create an extension of our SOAR program to offer life-changing support to youth aging out of foster care.

We want to extend our enhanced home program for foster youth with mental health and intellectual challenges who are aging out of Georgia’s system. They will have the chance to live in an apartment setting with mentors instead of foster parents.

In this setting, Toni and others like her can have a home and guidance to learn skills for success.

LIMITED RESOURCES

An average young adult transitioning to adulthood

A young adult with intellectual disabilities transitioning from foster care to adulthood
TEEN PARENT CONNECTION

Nationally, 50 percent of teen girls in foster care end up pregnant by the age of 19. We want to put an end to the cycle of foster children abusing their own babies and children, who statistically end up back in the foster system.

Creative Community Services offers a Teen Parent Connection program to provide support, guidance and assistance for teen mothers and fathers to succeed as adults and parents.
YOU CAN HELP

Creative Community Services’ therapeutic foster care programs are funded by the state and select grants. However, we require community funding for the new enhanced home component for foster kids who are aging out and for our Teen Parent Connection program. Our goal is to raise $560,000 by June of 2021. To launch these programs, we need to raise the first half of this goal by June of 2020.

How can you help us open the door to possibilities?

Who do you know that can help? Can you make a donation today? Will you make a monthly pledge? We’d like to hear from you about how you can help. Please drop CCS’s executive director, Sally Buchanan, a line at sbuchanan@ccsgeorgia.org. Or to act now, you can donate online, call Creative Community Services, or complete the enclosed form today.

Thank you. We couldn’t do it without you.
Addressing homelessness, sexual exploitation, incarceration and pregnancy of foster teens and youth

Creative Community Services is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your donation may be tax deductible. Donations can be made online through our secure portal at CCSGeorgia.org or fill in the form below and mail to: Creative Community Services, 1650 Oakbrook Drive, Suite 445, Norcross, GA 30093.

Name: _____________________________________________________
Address (Street/City/State/Zip): _________________________________
Phone: _________________________________
Email: ______________________________________________________

MAKE A FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

☐ ONE-TIME: Give a one-time donation today. Select one:
  ☐ My check is enclosed.
  ☐ Charge my credit card below.

☐ RECURRING: Give a recurring donation today. Select one:
  • Charge a recurring donation of ____________ every month on my credit card.
  • I pledge to make a recurring donation of ____________ every month with a check or through my bank’s automatic bill pay system. Please send a reminder by email.

☐ PLEDGE: Make a pledge for the future. Select one or more:
  • I pledge $____________ to be paid by ____/____/____.
  • I pledge to add Creative Community Services to my estate planning for the future.

BECOME A MENTOR OR FOSTER PARENT

☐ I’d like to receive more information about becoming an in-home mentor for a therapeutic foster youth or a foster parent.

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

Circle one:  Visa /  Mastercard /  American Express /  Discover
Card Number: _____________________________  Expiration Date: ____________  CVC: __________
Name: _____________________________________________________
Billing Address and Zip Code: (If different from address above): ______________
Phone: ______________________________________________________
Email: _______________________________________________________

☐ I’d like to help cover the transaction fee of my donation.

DONATE ONLINE:
www.ccsgeorgia.org/donate
Creative Community Services (CCS) was founded in 1982 as a nonprofit to serve adults with disabilities. The organization achieved unprecedented success in helping these adults learn skills and live meaningful lives.

In 1988, the innovative nonprofit answered an unmet need and became Georgia’s first licensed therapeutic agency to care for foster children who were physically and sexually abused. CCS trained foster care parents to care for kids in these situations. Then, the organization created and offered a range of specialized mental health services to support foster families. The big-hearted staff and volunteers serve foster children and families through a range of services including support groups, educational classes, 24-hour on-call support, psychological counseling, life-coaching and respite services.

Now, CCS is ready to address foster care pregnancies and homelessness and sexual trafficking related to aging out. And we need your support.

Will you help?

CONTACT US

www.ccsgeorgia.org  (770) 469-6226

facebook.com/ccsgeorgia  linkedin.com/company/creativecommunityservices

instagram.com/ccsgeorgia  twitter.com/ccsgeorgia