Adult Connections Team

Each year, nearly 30,000 of the 463,000 children in foster care nationwide reach the age of adulthood (age 18 to 21) and are discharged to live on their own without resources or support. Annually, Illinois has approximately 1,200 youth emancipating or “aging out” of the system, which is the third highest rate in the country. These young adults are at high risk of homelessness, poverty, unemployment, incarceration, as well as physical and mental health issues. As a Success Coach with Children’s Home + Aid’s Adult Connections Team, you can impact the life of a foster youth by helping them to:

- Establish a safe, trusting relationship with a caring, committed adult
- Demonstrate increased life-skill achievement to prepare them for independence
- Maintain a stable living arrangement and improve their emotional well being

Young Adults at Risk Need Your Help
A study of Midwest foster youth who had aged out of foster care found that 60% were unemployed and 55% did not earn a high school diploma. Foster youth need resources their peers often take for granted, such as stable relationships with caring adults who offer them guidance and emotional support. Research shows this connection is critical to helping foster youth successfully transition to adulthood.

How You Can Change a Life
The Adult Connections Team seeks caring, committed adults (over age 25) looking for a unique, long-term (but flexible) mentoring opportunity, where in-person contact is not always necessary. You will provide foster youth with social and emotional support, sharing in their successes and challenges as they begin an independent life. Additionally, you can help youth in developing skills they need to thrive on their own, such as:

- Completing college applications, creating resumes and finding employment
- Searching for an apartment and/or roommate
- Budgeting, cooking, housekeeping and other life skills

Being Part of the Adult Connections Team
Our staff, in partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), works with you to provide support to foster youth program participants. We work with the youth to select their Success Coach, and when a match is made, we facilitate the relationship. We then arrange a flexible agreement between the youth and you, including: expectations as participants on the Adult Connections Team, frequency and type of contact with the youth, and activities to help the youth achieve their transition goals. The youth will determine the involvement level they would like to have with you, which can range from in-person or e-mail contact, and/or phone contact on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis, although we strongly encourage the youth to personally meet with you as often as possible. Our staff will provide you with the training and support you need to maintain a long-term program commitment.

Getting Started
Volunteers for the Adult Connections Team must be at least 25 years old. To ensure the safety of the youth, volunteers must:

- Complete a volunteer application and participate in an in-person interview
- Provide three personal or professional references
- Complete a fingerprinting background check
- Complete an updated health screen/TB test
- Participate in an initial orientation and ongoing training/support opportunities

If you are interested in making a difference with the Children’s Home + Aid Adult Connections Team, please call us at (773) 918-8636 or email ACT@childrenshomeandaid.org.