



FOSTER & ADOPTIVE CARE COALITION
FOR EVERY CHILD... A PLACE TO CALL HOME

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BANK OF AMERICA AWARDS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANT TO SUPPORT FOSTER YOUTH

St. Louis, MO – The Bank of America Charitable Foundation has awarded the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition funding to support Fostering Success: [RE]FRESH, a retail-based, social enterprise business model and learn-to-work program for metro St. Louis foster youth. Youth in foster care have the highest risk for unemployment than any other demographic in the United States.

The Fostering Success: [RE]FRESH program addresses these poor economic prospects. The program helps older youth, most of whom will age out of foster care with no family, establish good financial habits. About 30 youth from the St. Louis region complete the program annually and are supported by volunteers, workshops, on-the-job training opportunities, and saving incentives. Youth participate in learning labs and are required to meet benchmarks and core competencies at each level.

“Strong employment experiences are essential life skills, especially for this population. Without connections to supportive adults, these kids are rarely exposed to structured, work-based learning experiences,” said Nickie Stienhoff, Director of Training & Community Support at the Coalition.

“The learn-to-work experience is evidence-based”, said Melanie Scheetz, Executive Director of the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition. “When foster youth are connected to the workforce *before* age 18, they have long-term, positive employment results. We are so grateful for the partnership with Bank of America. Their support will provide a life changing experience for St. Louis foster youth.”

The Bank of America Charitable Foundation provides philanthropic support to address needs vital to the health of communities through a focus on preserving neighborhoods, educating the workforce for 21st century jobs and addressing critical needs, such as a strong youth workforce.

About the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition

The Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition is a non-profit agency that strives to create permanency in foster children’s lives by recruiting and supporting foster and adoptive families. Founded in 1989 with the support of United Way of Greater St. Louis, the Coalition is the area’s largest recruiter of foster and adoptive families. To learn more, call 1.800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) or visit www.foster-adopt.org.

About [RE]FRESH

[RE]FRESH: A Fashion Forward Resale Boutique, located at 1710 S. Brentwood Blvd. in St. Louis, accepts new and gently-used donations of clothing, shoes, and accessories. The boutique is open Thurs., Fri., & Sat. 10am to 7 pm, and Sunday, noon to 5 pm. A donation bin is available for drop-offs and is located in the parking garage behind the store. For more information, call 314.367.8373 or visit www.refreshstl.org

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