

Temecula Area City County  
Schools Partnership

&

Murrieta Area City County  
Schools Partnership

Joint Foster Youth Task Force  
Barbara Tooker, Chair

**FINAL REPORT July, 2017**

Revised

## **LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL**

To: Members of the Temecula and Murrieta Area City County School Partnerships

From: Barbara D. Tooker, Chair; Joint Foster Youth Task Force

Date: July, 2017

Subject: Report and Recommendation of the Foster Youth Task Force, 2009-2016

On behalf of the Task Force Members, I would like to transmit this report to you for your acceptance and request that you take action on our recommendations. As most of you know, and as our report confirms, we have an opportunity to implement a model foster youth program that can address the service goals of the City County School Partnership as a whole, as well as separate entities. The model embraces community service organizations, businesses, religious organizations, foundations, and individuals who are eager to assist our youth. Our Task Force was fortunate to be supported by a broad base of experts across the country, to link with SDSU (San Diego State University) and CSUSM (California State University San Marcos) for research and project validation, and to make multiple presentations to a large portion of our population. The Task Force itself brought together a wide variety of talents and expertise with the willingness to dig deep for solutions to long-standing challenges within this population. Wherever we searched, we were helped. In the end, there seemed to be only one issue that we could not resolve, although we know it is "resolvable" by the right approach (fingerprinting of volunteers). We found that there are many agencies involved in helping foster youth; however, there is not a method for coordinating the activities. This causes duplication of services in some cases, overlap in others, and issues that stay unattended. We think we have found a solution. Working together and being assisted by a coordinating agency will serve our public agencies and our foster youth in a more seamless way.

We can be proud of the model we implement and share with other communities. Best of all, we can envision our foster youth thriving here, graduating from our high schools, receiving their higher education and/or vocational training, and becoming productive, participating, independent members of our communities.

Regards,  
Barbara Tooker, Chair

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Temecula Area City County Schools Partnership was established by resolutions of the City of Temecula, the County of Riverside, and the Temecula Valley Unified School District in November 2009. Concurrently, a second set of resolutions authorized the establishment of a study committee to assess the needs of Temecula's foster youth population, and to ascertain how they could be assisted to successfully emancipate. [See appendix: CCS Partnership](#). In January 2010, the Partnership appointed a chair and the task force began its work. The issue was originally raised by the California City County School Partnership studies that showed the devastating impact to local governments if not collectively addressed community by community.

Not a one of us starting this work ever dreamed that we would be members of The Mother of All Task Forces, with its work spanning November 2008 through 2014. The issues of Foster Youth are complicated by the tangle of laws and official agencies tasked to deliver services. When we started, there were many misunderstandings among agencies punctuated by lack of communication, miscommunication, assumptions, jurisdictional responsibilities, lack of coordination and oversight, and lack of data (including actual numbers of foster youth as "official"). Many actions taken by well-intentioned employees and volunteers were adversely impacting our foster youth population with alarming frequency. Five conditions became crystal clear as we moved through this project: 1) there was a confusing array of officials interfacing with foster youth and their foster parents/guardians; 2) there was an overwhelming desire on the part of our communities to find meaningful ways to help; 3) there was an overwhelming frustration and confusion on the part of our communities as they sought for legal ways to include this population in their largess; 4) there was a clear need to develop our own more comprehensive definition of what emancipation should look like to both a foster youth and our community, and 5) there was a need to break down barriers and forge new pathways of effective, efficient collaboration among agencies, while capturing the energy and enthusiasm of a community willing to help.

The Task Force continuously experimented with ways to bridge the gap between agencies, the community, and the foster youth/families in terms of information, assistance, and getting the right resources to the right place at the right time. The primary and secondary state and national research initially guided our activities as we searched for ways to demonstrate how to build community capacity and draw agencies closer together to support this population.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE TO THE CCS PARTNERSHIP**

Adopt a joint agency mission statement:

The City County Schools Partnerships of Temecula and Murrieta encourage broad general support for our foster youth by embracing multiple pathways to ensure their successful transition into adulthood and productive citizenship. Further, we will seek ways to proactively include them in community life, while protecting them from harm. We recognize that the journey to emancipation begins early in their childhood and continues throughout their education and life skills training to the time when they become employed at above minimum wage and are able to independently sustain themselves.

Contract with Rancho Damacitas Children and Family Services (RDCFS) to serve as the face of foster youth support by providing coordinating services to 1) sustain community capacity, 2) coordinate community service, 3) track foster youth as they leave high school, 4) provide and coordinate transitional resources as they are placed in higher education, vocational training, or in jobs that include additional training opportunities, 5) develop a digital pathway (The Foster Youth Portal) to connect foster youth and community resources, 6) place foster youth in jobs that support them above the poverty level and in communities willing to assist them in their pathway to success, and 7) serve as the model for developing partnerships and community capacity in other communities.

Support RDCFS with an initial financial contribution of \$5,000 per city, school district, and county and \$12,000 (or balance thereof) from the Foster Youth Task Force Gap Fund.

Provide ongoing cooperation and support of RDCFS with appropriate resources as outlined in MOU. MOU to be developed by representatives of all agencies and include 7 points listed above.

Support RDCFS in their general fundraising efforts to continue their model of excellence and the CCS Partnership vision of developing model citizens.

# FOSTER YOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PORTAL

SPONSORED BY THE TEMECULA & MURIETA AREA CITY COUNTY SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIPS FOSTER YOUTH JOINT TASK FORCE

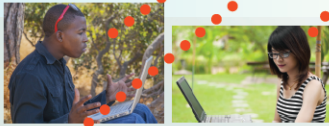
**What:** A mechanism for the cities of Temecula and Murrieta, the County of Riverside, the school districts in Temecula and Murrieta, foster youth agencies, foster youth parents, service organizations, businesses, and individuals to maximize public and private resources that are necessary to help current and newly emancipating foster youth succeed.

**The Portal:** serves as a safe, secure way for our foster youth community of 14-25 year-olds to access the help they need to become productive citizens.

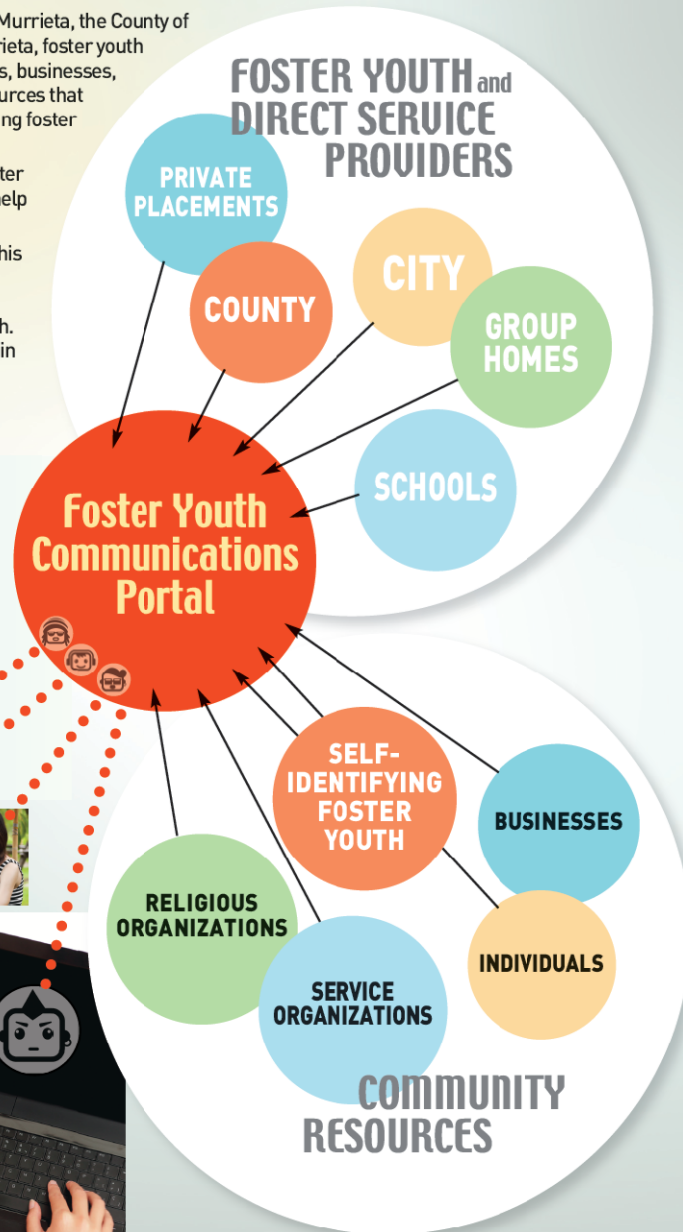
**Why:** The laws are clear about the need to protect this vulnerable population; and our public agencies and direct service providers are diligent about shielding specific information, including identities, of our youth. This has posed a challenge for groups & individuals in our communities to volunteer their time, talent, and resources to our children.

*The Portal easily solves this dilemma.*

**How does The Portal Work?** Each participating youth creates a public representation of themselves, called an avatar. Through the coordination and supervision of the *Foster Youth Joint Task Force*, their individual or group needs are posted electronically. Any member of our community can access the portal and see a description of the needs and wishes of our youth through their avatar. Investments then can be made by simply choosing what the donation might be; i.e., money, mentoring, transportation, employment, food, clothes, shelter, education, etc.



Avatars communicating needs and wishes.



***Our Foster Youth can succeed with our help and our care. We make the difference.***