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NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES MARKS ONE-YEAR OF 'FAIR FUTURES' INITIATIVE, CONNECTING THOUSANDS OF NYC YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE WITH DEDICATED COACHES, TUTORS & OTHER EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Providing Young People With Coaching and Tutoring Can Help Put Them On a Better Pathway to Becoming Successful Adults

NEW YORK, NY – Today, NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell announced that it has reached the one-year mark from implementation of "Fair Futures," a groundbreaking, first of its kind public-private partnership, that provides dedicated coaches, tutors and education, employment and housing specialists for youth in foster care ages 11 to 21. New York City is the first jurisdiction in the nation to implement an initiative for youth in foster care of this breadth and scale. Since the program's launch last year, thousands of youth in foster care have been supported through Fair Futures.

"As we mark one-year since the launch of Fair Futures, we're thrilled to hear from young people who are finding the program beneficial, especially through the pandemic. Fair Futures provides invaluable support and guidance to youth in foster care, helping them build confidence and life-long skills to become strong advocates for themselves and their futures. ACS is focused on improving outcomes for youth in foster care, and we thank all those who have helped make this initiative a success, including the Fair Futures Coalition, the Fair Futures Youth Board, the foundations supporting Fair Futures, the City Council and, most of all, the inspirational young people who have shared their stories and experiences," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.**

"This month marks the one-year anniversary of the launch of Fair Futures and the results speak for themselves," **said Ericka Francois, Fair Futures Youth Coordinator and former foster youth.** "Fair Futures coaches and tutors have become even more critical during the pandemic, helping youth with everything from remote learning to following COVID-19 safety protocols. I can't imagine my life without my coach!"

More specifically, the Fair Futures initiative provides youth in foster care with dedicated coaches that provide social and emotional support to build life skills, set academic and career goals, facilitate connections to programs/services that support goal attainment, and plan for successful transitions from foster care. Thousands of young people are receiving tutoring, coaching, college assistance, internship and employment assistance, and other resources to help improve educational and employment outcomes.

"Fair Futures allows our team to provide young people with the individual attention they need to find their voice and collectively advocate for themselves to live full and successful lives," **said**

Michelle Yanche, Executive Director of Good Shepherd Services. “Before Fair Futures, our Family Foster Care program was stretched thin, doing their best to reach 300 young people, ranging from infants to 21-year-olds. And now the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated the challenges that young people in foster care face — from navigating remote learning to managing the trauma and stressors of social isolation. During this time of loss, Fair Futures coaches have helped create a space where youth feel safe to be themselves and work to reach their full potential.

“Fair Futures is a transformative model which has already proven to enrich the lives of thousands of young people in foster care. At JCCA, our Fair Futures coaches and tutors are vital to helping youth in care navigate remote learning, maintain stable housing and access the health services they need. Coaches also offer someone to talk to when they accomplish a milestone or encounter a frightening hurdle, much like a parent would. In a year marked by unprecedented challenges in our city, Fair Futures coaches and tutors have become a bedrock of support for so many of our young people. It’s imperative we keep building upon this foundation in the years ahead,” **said Ronald E. Richter, CEO and Executive Director, JCCA.**

“My coach has inspired me to advocate for other young people in care like me. Growing up in foster care, I overcame countless challenges to be where I am today. I now work two jobs, one at a law firm dedicated to pursuing justice for women of color and another job at a community center to tutor kids in need. Balancing these responsibilities can be taxing, but I know my coach is there for me every step of the way. She watches over me like a mother,” **Cheyenne Deopersaud, Fair Futures youth, age 18.**

“The city’s critical funding of Fair Futures has given us the opportunity to expand our capacity to better serve our young people in foster care,” **said Children’s Aid President and CEO Phoebe Boyer.** “Within one year of implementation, we have hired additional Fair Futures coaches and tutors to give every youth the attention and personalized supports they deserve. Fair Futures has already made significant strides to improve the educational and life outcomes of thousands of young people in our foster system - we must continue this progress.”

“The Fair Futures initiative is helping to change the trajectory of SCO’s young adults in foster care through individualized support and critical mentoring, and evidence-based programming that address their educational, emotional, and career development needs and goals that will serve to lay the foundation for achievement in their transition to adulthood,” **said Keith M. Little, President & CEO, SCO Family of Services.** “The program has been a lifeline throughout the pandemic for more than 400 youth and their families served by SCO, helping them to navigate the additional challenges associated with remote learning, transportation, tutors, computer and technology needs, among other educational supports.”

Fair Futures exemplifies the success of public-private partnerships. Key components of Fair Futures—including technical assistance, training, and professional development opportunities for foster care agencies and their staff — have been made possible through the generous support of the New York Community Trust, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Redlich Horwitz Foundation, Tiger Foundation, Ira W. DeCamp Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Trust, Booth Ferris Foundation, and Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

Youth in foster care are among the nation’s most vulnerable young people as they have experienced abuse or neglect and the trauma of removal from their families. The Fair Futures program comes at a time in which New York City’s foster care system is undergoing a

significant transformation. ACS has been working aggressively to improve educational and employment outcomes through the implementation of the Foster Care Blueprint, as well as the recommendations from the Foster Care Task Force. ACS has an Office of Education and Employment Initiatives that is dedicated to advancing this important work, including Fair Futures and collaborations on a range of initiatives with the NYC Department of Education (DOE), NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), City University of New York (CUNY) and other key partners. ACS has successfully reduced the foster care population to a historic low of under 8,000. Comparatively, 25 years ago, there were nearly 50,000 children in New York City's foster care system, and nearly 17,000 just a decade ago.

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