



May 2009

The Mission of RFL is:
To engage foster care youth, private citizens and public resources to assist Pinellas County foster youth in a successful transition to adulthood.

RFL would like to thank
~ J Allan Studios ~
for providing our website "Pro-Bono"

J Allan Studios is a full-service marketing agency specializing in websites, branding, publicity, marketing programs, sales tools, and e-commerce. Located in Old Northeast St. Petersburg, J Allan Studios has been providing exceptional marketing services at down to earth prices for more than four years. We find out what your goals are and help you decide which marketing, publicity, sales, and customer relations options to pursue-and how to pursue them in an affordable way.

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- St. Petersburg Preservation
- MBA Career Services Council

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RFL Committee's

Communication / Website
Community Connections
Education
Employment
Health
Housing
Legal
Life Skills
Transportation

For more information or to get involved contact us at 727-631-1778 or go to www.readyforlifepinellas.org

Special Thanks to the Following...

J Allan Studios
Follow Through Foundation
N.E. St. Pete Exchange Club
Lisa Marone
Pampered Chef
Eckerd Community Alternatives
Tampa Bay Community Foundation
R.E.S.P.E.C.T.
Camelot Community Care
GulfCoast Jewish Family Services, Inc.
Family Resources, Inc.
All Committee Members

Contact J Allan Studios at (727) 822-2526 or online at www.jallanstudios.com.

Ready for Life's "Youth Council"

Purpose: The Ready for Life (RFL) Youth Council will engage current and former foster youth to work in partnership with citizens, businesses, area providers and other stakeholders to promote successful transition of foster youth into adulthood.

Are you between the ages of 17 - 24?
Are you or were you in foster care in Pinellas County?

Ready for Life needs your...

Voice

Ideas

Involvement

Benefits include

- * Making a difference for foster youth in Pinellas County
 - * Earn up to \$500 as a member
 - * Food will be provided at every meeting
 - * Members can request assistance for transportation
- * Serve a year and receive a \$1,000 voucher for household items, clothes, computer, down payment for a car or other needs

For further information contact: 727-631-1778 or go online to www.readyforlifepinellas.org



"Carrie's Story"

Carrie was put into foster care when she was three years old. Before that she lived with her parents who were abusive. Growing up in foster care, Carrie was placed in 20 different foster homes. She lived at Children Home Society for a while and in many group homes. Carrie had two failed adoptions. Carrie was thrown out when she was fifteen and aged out when she was seventeen. She got her own apartment and when she was nineteen she had her first child.

Carrie went on to get her GED and then her CAN so she could do more in the area of nursing. Currently, Carrie works with Ready for Life and loves public speaking which she has been doing since she was fourteen. Carrie has had the opportunity to speak at conferences, church groups and many meetings. She has done many newspaper articles about foster care to bring awareness to this issue. Carrie wants to educate our community about foster care, mentor other youth and work with RFL Committee's to make a difference for those coming behind her.

Carrie is now being Adopted at 24 years old! Carrie and her daughter now have a forever family. Many of Carrie's family members have been and still are in foster care and she knows that she will raise her daughter differently so that the cycle of abuse will be broken.

Written by: April White, Ready for Life Youth Leader

"Committee Highlight"

Legal Committee

Committee Members Include:

Marty Rice, Attorney-at-law
Bob Dillinger, Public Defender
Kathy Gibson, State Attorney's Office
Donna Rassmusen, Guardian Ad Litem
Dawn Hulbert, Community Law Program
Lisa Brody, Bay Area Legal Services
Debra Leiman, Unified Family Court
April White, Former Foster Youth
Kathy Mize, Ready for Life, Inc.

The initial and short term goals of Ready for Life's Legal Committee are to:

- * Identify the laws that are currently in place that govern youth in transition from Foster Care to adulthood.
- * Identify the providers of legal services with respect to those laws.
- * Determine the best way to connect the youth with those providers.
- * Implement a way for youth to self-study the laws and rules.
- * Identify the gaps in law and services and address those gaps.

The committee will review the statutes that govern youth transitioning out of foster care and utilize the resources on the committee to answer the following questions:

1. How do we put the summary of the laws and providers into a useful form?
2. How do we connect youth with this information?

The committee's are the backbone of our organization and they each have a daunting task to look at issues that impact the transition process. Every committee has community volunteers, service providers and young adults that have recently aged out of foster care so that everyone's voice is heard. This initiative is truly a community effort!

Ready for Life will highlight a committee in each newsletter issue.



"Forever Family" Feature...

Gulf Coast Community Care is recruiting *Imperfect Families for Imperfect Children* who are waiting in foster care for their forever adoptive family. Carolyn is seventeen and remains hopeful for a family to call hers forever. She enjoys cooking and watching science fiction movies. At school, she most enjoys reading and social studies. Carolyn will need a family willing to provide support throughout her adulthood. If you are interested in learning more information about adoption or Carolyn, please contact Abby Blackwell, Recruitment Specialist at (727) 456-0600 X 2139.

No foster youth should be discharged from foster care without access to higher education, employment, medical insurance, safe, stable and affordable housing and a permanent connection.

Get Involved by:

Volunteering

Make a Donation

Serve as a "Life Coach"

To get involved with Ready for Life go to our website at www.readyforlifepinellas.org or call (727) 631-1778.

Making a difference...one young person at a time!

Kathy Mize
Ready For Life, Inc.

Our Location

Thank you to the Children's Home Society for providing RFL office space at the Family Visitation House. Please contact us to take a tour and learn more about the vital role that the Children's Home Society plays in our community.

2731 13th Ave. North, St. Petersburg, FL 33713