



# YOUTH IN TRANSITION

*a community initiative in Forsyth County*

**Vision:** That every young person in Forsyth County who has been in foster care as a teenager will make a successful transition to adulthood

**Mission:** Support young people in foster care by coordinating robust partnerships between public and private resources and to extend those supports until they turn 26.

## **YIT Strategic Goals**

- Sustain an Effective Community YIT Initiative
- Improve Short and Long term Outcomes for Youth Who Transition from Foster Care compared to national benchmarks
- Support Healthy and Productive Partnerships with DSS and other Key Organizations
- Create a model that is replicable to expand and share with other counties throughout North Carolina
- Improve the delivery of supports available to young people in foster care

[www.youthintransition.org](http://www.youthintransition.org)

## **Eligibility:**

1. Any young person who was in public foster care after turning 14 and up until their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday is eligible to become active with YIT. (currently 60 active young people, July 2014)

## **Outcomes we are working to improve:**

1. Permanence – Young people have adults to rely on for a lifetime and supportive family networks
2. Education – acquiring education and training that enables them to obtain and retain steady employment
3. Employment – young people supporting themselves by obtaining and retaining steady employment
4. Financial Capability – managing their budgets and achieving their financial goals
5. Housing – having safe, stable, and affordable housing and access to transportation for work and school
6. Physical & Mental Health – having access to insurance and to the appropriate services and supports that meet their physical and mental health needs
7. Social Capital – have, sustain, and capitalize on a diverse network of connections to achieve their life goals

## **Strategies and Activities that will lead to improved outcomes:**

We take a two-pronged approach through both direct and indirect services. We offer direct case management to participants. Staff assist individuals create goals and action plans to achieve them. YIT is also a systems improvement initiative which works to create coordinated community engagement.

1. Youth Engagement – young people as effective self-advocates

2. Partnerships & Resources – creating a public-private partnership
3. Research, Evaluation and Communications – measuring the work and communicating the need
4. Public Will & Policy – galvanizing public will, identifying and working to change policies that are barriers
5. Increased Opportunities – matched asset purchasing, door openers and helping young people become decision makers for their own life

**Leadership structure:**

1. Community Partnership Board made up of:
  - a. Scott Wierman, President, The Winston Salem Foundation
  - b. Art Gibel, CEO, Goodwill Industries of Northwest North Carolina
  - c. Debra Donahue, Director, Forsyth County Department of Social Services
  - d. Joe Crocker, Director: Poor & Needy Division, Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
  - e. Judge Lisa Menefee, Chief District Judge
  - f. Betsy Annese, Annese Public Relations
  - g. Dan Kornelis, Housing & Community Development Dir, Forsyth County
  - h. Cindy Gordineer, Pres & CEO, The United Way of Forsyth County
  - i. Bob Feikema, President, Family Services
  - j. Steve Lineberger,
  - k. Rodessa Mitchell, VP of Education & Workforce Development, WS Chamber of Commerce
  - l. Sheryll Strode
  - m. Michael Moore, CMO Lowes Foods
2. Staff:
  - a. Alex Hudson – Executive Director
  - b. Karon McKinney & Marcus Wilson Stevenson – YIT Participant Advisors
  - c. Staff Support Specialist
  - d. Allie Mangin – Programming Assistant
  - e. Calvisha Wilson – Youth Engagement Advisor
  - f. Karissa Forsyth – Education Advisor
3. Financial Support:
  - a. The Duke Endowment
  - b. Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
  - c. Goodwill Industries of NW North Carolina
  - d. Annie E Casey Foundation grants
  - e. City of Winston Salem
  - f. Private donations

Goodwill is the designated lead agency for YIT, but this is an internal designation for staffing and office purposes. While we share a wonderful relationship with Goodwill, and they are fully supportive of YIT, our financial sustainability and board is separate from Goodwill Industries of NW NC.

4. Technical Support & Structure:

- a. Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative – [www.jimcaseyyouth.org](http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org)  
A national and state-based effort that believes every young person leaving foster care should have the family connections, opportunities and support needed for a successful transition to adulthood.

For more info:

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