

March 2022

YOUTH NEWS



Educational,
Motivational, &
Inspirational Stories



When They See Us I was Born into Foster

From city-to-city, coast-to-coast, and nation-to-nation, our focus is FAMILY:

Foster Adopt Mentor Investing in Lives of Youth
www.whalers-creation.us



Youth News magazine is a way to celebrate the good news of youth. *Youth News* provides fostered, adopted, kinship cared and mentored youth with real on-the-job training skills. Youth are paid as they learn how to produce this publication for the community. Donations for ad space is how we pay youth in training. The "Dove" logo is a symbol we use as a message of good news. Our goal is to bring educational, inspirational and motivational stories to encourage people to open their hearts and support youth.

Join our team: writers, editors, photographers, marketing and sales. *Youth News* highlights the accomplishments of young people near and far.

If you have a story and want to share it with others, please email us at: admin@whalers-creation.us.

Donations are accepted at
www.whalers-creation.us

Youth News



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Maya Angelou

Kinship Care

First African-American woman on
the US quarter





Mental Health Matters and That's Reality!

"The Me You Can't See"

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Youth News



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La' Toria Kern
Founder/Publisher

I am deeply honored to work with these amazing people. From our youngest writers to our retirees, we are all committed to educating our communities about the vast need for people to become foster parents, adoptive parents, and mentors.

In this issue, meet TrinaMarie Shaw, *USOA "Mrs Nevada" a former foster youth whom will inspire youth and go-getters to dream big.*

Please open your hearts and home, and help a child in need. You never know, you may help raise the next important person. From city-to-city and coast-to-coast, "I support youth."

One of our team members may call you to ask for support. Please *"Answer the Call."*

From city-to-city, coast-to-coast, and nation-to-nation, our focus is **FAMILY: Family Adopt Mentor Investing in Lives of Youth.**

Thank you,

La' Toria



WHEN THEY SEE US

Written by Dr. Kay Ramsey

When they see us, we get the looks of despair as if it's our fault that we grieve for our beloved parents and we had nowhere else to go. For some of us, our parents neglected and abused us, and they ended up in jail. Why didn't they love us enough? This is how our story began but I promise you, this is not where it ends.

These are the stories of transitional-age-youth (TAY), ages 16-25 that make up 16 % of the foster care system. According to the Children's Law Center, there are over 60,000 children in foster care and the number continues to increase. In 2010, AB12 (assembly bill) was signed, which extended foster care until the age of 21. This has changed the trajectory for many youth, however, there still remains a call to action for additional support. The TAY population are youth who leave foster care without being adopted or reunited with their biological families. They also make up a large proportion of youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system and on probation. Transitional youth "age out" of foster care through emancipation or because they reach the age of no longer being eligible for foster care services.

Within the foster care system, the ideal age for placement or even adoption is 0-3 years old. Unfortunately, as a child gets older, the more difficult it is to place them with a loving resource (foster) family. The TAY

population has also been stereotyped as the invisible community who come with too many challenges to manage. However, when you think about yourself as a teenager or maybe you have your own teenager didn't you or don't they still need love, structure, guidance, and support regardless of their age?

I guess I was considered one of the lucky ones when I was adopted at the age of 2 years old. But when my adoptive mother died in my early 20s, I felt abandoned and all alone. I'm sure it was nothing close to what a transitional-age-youth feels. For me, in my 20s, I was considered a young adult and presumably should've had things figured out, but I didn't. We surely can't expect the same for youth dealing with adversity, especially as they continue to be lost in a system that caters toward the school-to-prison pipeline and then homelessness. Instead, there needs to be a call to action for the TAY population to end the revolving door and disrupt the system by providing hope, encouragement, opportunities, confidence, and empowerment. Non-profit organizations like *Kids in the Spotlight* and the *Nehemiah Project LA* do just that.

Nehemiah Project LA is a nonprofit organization that creates awareness of the challenges that an at-risk and transitioning foster youth experience. The founder of the Nehemiah Project LA, Bishop Ed Smith,



shared his mission is to “*change the hearts of America*” and break the cycle to ensure this population is self-sufficient and resilient towards thriving for a better future. Bishop states that it is unfortunate that people are far quicker to invest in goods and services instead of helping a child that just needs love. The misconceptions that people have about the TAY population are they won't do well in a structured home environment or potential foster parents believe they don't have the capacity to truly help. The Nehemiah Project Los Angeles combats those fears by offering multiple ways for people to help such as being a mentor, donating furniture, goods and services, and even rental property. One of the many challenges that this population faces is homelessness, and ways to mitigate it is through transitional housing, which is also offered at the Nehemiah Project LA.

Kids in the Spotlight is a non-profit organization that offers opportunities for youth 12-22 years old. Tige Charity, Executive Director of Kids in the Spotlight, shares that her organization shatters stereotypes through disrupting the pipeline by creating filmmaking opportunities. Tige understands the entertainment industry is responsible for so many life-changing careers and it provides a pathway for healing, growth, and viable employment opportunities. Kids in the Spotlight was created in 2009 and has since helped over 500 youth in foster care share their stories by writing, casting, and starring in their own short films. The organization provides a 10-week program that occurs 3 to 6 times a

year, which includes screenwriting, acting classes, and casting and editing courses. Kids in the Spotlight empowers youth to help end the cycle of the disparities that are associated with at-risk foster youth. Tige stated, “*youth often come to us angry, quiet, and even may have behavioral issues and I always say, these youth have every right to be upset but we empower them so they can use their pain for a purpose. For change to happen with these kids, you must connect to their soul and offer hope.*” Tige also plans to open a residential vocational academy for transitional-age-youth, which will be a groundbreaking social enterprise production studio for a cause. It will provide in-depth on-the-job-training 7 days a week where youth can work with industry professionals on an ongoing basis; it's set to launch April 2022.

Growing up, I didn't have programs such as Kids in the Spotlight or the Nehemiah Project and I wish I did. It has been my experience that having a mentor, one that can remain constant, has been the best teacher. As well as programs like these that connect to our soul and help us evolve to the fascinating people we will become.

Dr. Kay Ramsey is Author of Persevering Beyond Adversity: The Blueprint and CEO of Savannah Renee Consulting. SRC services are designed to provide equity for BIPOC underrepresented populations that seek to elevate their careers as a social change agent while building legacies within their communities.

Please visit: drkayrenee.com for more information.

March Awareness Month

- **American Red Cross Month**
- **National Women's History Month**
- **National Social Work Month**
- **National Ethics Awareness Month**
- **National Nutrition Month**
- **3rd World Wildlife Day**
- **4th Employee Appreciation Day**
- **6th Dentist's Day**
- **7th–13th Patient Safety Awareness Week**
- **8th International Women's Day**
- **13th-29th National Pulmonary Rehabilitation Week**
- **7th-12th Long Term Care Administrators Week**
- **9th Registered Dietician Nutritionist Day**
- **12th National Girl Scout Day**
- **14th Pi Day**
- **16th Mardi Gras**
- **17th St. Patrick's Day**
- **19th Certified Nurses Day**
- **20th-26th National Poison Prevention Week**
- **21st World Down Syndrome Day**
- **26th Earth Hour**
- **20th- 26th Health Information Professionals Week**
- **24th World Tuberculosis Day**
- **30th Doctor's Day**

US Adoption Resources

- Centers for Disease Control International Adoption Health Guidance
- U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs Adoption Process
- AdoptUSKids.org
- Child Welfare information Gateway
- Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI)

Additional Resources

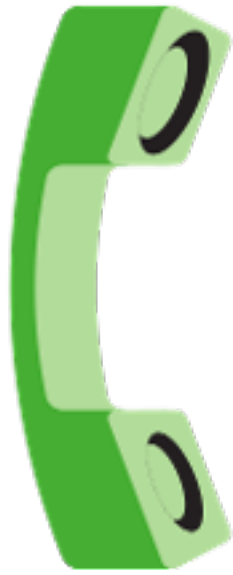
- Adoptive Families Magazine
- Adoptive Parents Committee
- American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (AAAA)
- Child Welfare League of America
- The Center for Adoption Support and Education
- Dave Thomas Foundation
- Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute
- International Social Services
- National Adoption Center
- National Council for Adoption (NCFA)
- North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC)



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SUICIDE



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Crisis Text Line allows teens to access free emotional support for any issue. It can be reached by texting "HOME" to 741741.

International Women's Day

Written by Jacqueline Monaghan

March 8 is International Women's Day. It is a global holiday celebrated every year in order to observe the historical, political, socio-economical, and cultural achievements of women. It is also the focus of the Women's Rights Movement. This movement brings attention to gender equality, violence against women, and reproductive rights. In 1869, Susan B. Anthony (a women's rights activist) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton founded the National Women Suffrage Association in order to promote women's rights. Women were experiencing a lack of voting rights, pay inequality, and they were being overworked. In 1908, fifteen thousand women marched through New York City to demand their rights. In New York City in 1909, the first version of a "Women's Day" was organized by the Socialist Party of America. In 1910 in Copenhagen, the holiday was first established at the International Socialist Women's Conference organized by Clara Zetkin to demonstrate the holiday all across Europe.

There were one hundred women from seventeen different countries at the conference and all agreed unanimously to the suggestion. Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria celebrated the holiday on March 19, 1911 for the first time. In 1917, International Women's Day was made a national holiday after women gained suffrage in Soviet Russia. In 1921, March 8 was established internationally. It was commemorated by the communist countries and socialist movement. In 1965, women were given the right to vote by the women's liberation movement. When the internet became more popular, the fight for inequality experienced a resurgence. In 2000, new age feminism became unified. Twenty seven different countries now celebrate this holiday. We celebrate this holiday in order to continue to create an equal society. The colors purple, green, and white being unified are the symbol of Women's Day. Purple represents justice, royalty, and dignity, green represents hope, and white represents purity. People can celebrate International Women's Day by thanking women that inspire you.



I Was Born into Foster Care

Written by Dr. Kay Ramsey

I was born into foster care. My mother was in prison when she was raped and became pregnant with me. Like many mothers who must surrender their children to foster care because of addiction, disability, mental illness or incarceration, she was not allowed to keep me. And like all children entering the child welfare system, I didn't have a choice either.

I was more fortunate than most because I was adopted when I was 3 years old. My adoptive mother was a single mother — remarkable and strong and a loving woman. Thanks to her, I graduated from high school — an accomplishment achieved by fewer than a third of youths in foster care. I went on to attend Cal State Los Angeles, her alma mater, to obtain my BA in Psychology and later to Pepperdine University and ended my academic career by receiving a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Non-profit Leadership (Only 2.5% of children who grow up in foster care graduate from a four-year college).

But just before my college graduation from Cal State LA, my life turned upside-down. My adoptive mother passed away, and that same year, my biological mother sent me a letter from prison. It was my first contact with her, and through the letter I learned that I was a product of rape. I hoped I might be able to have a relationship with her, but she didn't want to

meet me. A face-to-face meeting, she felt, would only stir up traumatic memories.

For the first time in my life, I was completely alone, I was once again a motherless daughter. I had no money and no support system. For a short time, I was homeless, until I found a job and my new boss did something remarkable — she gave me the money to pay my first month's rent. This act of kindness from a near stranger moved me to tears because the family of my adoptive mother had pushed me out on the streets. I was able to move beyond the adversity I faced, thanks to a combination of my own self-determination and the support of my boss and other mentors.

My experiences inspired me to become a mentor to other young people and to advocate for mentorship for children in foster care and other disadvantaged youth. In sharing my story, my hope is for foster parents to understand how much a foster child needs structure, consistency, and hope for the future. A foster home can often be a revolving door for many of our youth in the child welfare system. Therefore, if a foster parent can plant a "seed" in a child by inspiring them to persevere break barriers, stereotypes, and statistics, then consider that a job well done.

What many foster youth need like I did, is a

mentor that will instill hope in youth, encourage change, and provide a safe place for open dialogue to share stories. Daily mentorship garners success and ensures youth have a 'why' which will help them remain consistent, dedicated, and encouraged throughout life's challenges.

Kirk Berry, Director of the KB Foundation in Philadelphia, PA, shared "It is important for our youth to have mentors in their life because a good mentor can help fill the gaps of what their parent's upbringing and experiences in life may not cover. Our youth need so many things to be modeled for them as they grow up. If parents do not have the skills to show their children a good example in a specific area of life, this is where a good mentor can fill in the gap. This will help to empower our youth and hopefully assist them with being well rounded." I know the difference a mentor can make. An Executive Director of a nonprofit,

Joe Rouzan, greatly helped me in my immediate post-college years and remains my mentor today. When a dear friend committed suicide, he helped me navigate a career change from architecture to child welfare and clinical psychology. A retired Dean of Education, Dr. Thomas Thompson, instilled in me the confidence I needed throughout my journey to earn my Doctorate in public policy and nonprofit leadership.

But I often wonder how different my younger life might have been if I'd had a mentor during my childhood as I was sorting through the emotions of adoption and being a product of the child welfare

system. Perhaps I would have had someone to turn to when my mother died. Perhaps I wouldn't have felt so alone.

Perhaps I wouldn't have been homeless. At any given time, 50,000 kids are in foster care in California — nearly 20% of the nation's total foster youth population. Most have experienced some form of trauma. Understandably, students who are exposed to trauma and violence have higher suspension and expulsion rates and lower school attendance and grades.

Mentorship can help them deal with some of the challenges that lead to poor academic performance and behavior. Research suggests that mentoring for children in foster care positively impacts mental health, educational functioning, and peer relationships.

If you're wondering if you have what it takes to be a great mentor, here are some tips below because this country desperately needs more mentors.



A report by the National Mentoring Partnership found that more than one in three young people, including an estimated 9 million at-risk youth, “never had an adult mentor of any kind” while growing up.” The ideal mentor typically has the following characteristics:

- Compassionate
- Consistent
- Respectful
- Successful
- Supportive
- Trustworthy
- Understanding
- Life Experience

Other tools to become a successful mentor include ensuring youth have a sense of belonging; the Mentor should also be, patient, communicative, resilient, hopeful, and disciplined. A wealth of evidence establishes belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity as foundations for positive life outcomes for foster youth yet belonging is valued the highest. So, before we place a diagnosis on our youth, let’s take a step back and look holistically at the situation, talk to them, figure out their wants, their why, because they might just need a Mentor. If you’re interested in becoming a mentor to a foster youth please go to Foster Care to Success (fc2success.org) for more information.

There is no shortage of opportunities to mentor foster and adopted children — whether it’s through a well-known program like Foster Care to Success or a regional program like Cal State Northridge’s Adoption Promotion & Support Services. The Department of Child and Family Services can also refer potential mentors to specific organizations with the greatest

needs. Children in foster care who are transitioning out of the foster care system are especially in need of mentors, because they may have lost their previous support networks.

A good mentor models positive behavior, teaches life skills and empowers kids to take on challenges with confidence. A strong relationship with a mentor can also give children in foster care a sense of belonging that they may never have experienced before.

Mentorship isn’t a cure-all. But it can make a profound difference in the life of a child who will suddenly feel less alone.

Dr. Kay Ramsey is Author of *Persevering Beyond Adversity: The Blueprint* and CEO of Savannah Renee Consulting. SRC services are designed to provide equity for BIPOC underrepresented populations that seek to elevate their careers as a social change agents while building legacies within their communities.

For more information.

Please visit: drkayrenee.com



Dr. Kay Ramsey

Faster!

Adapt!

Mentor!

Be the reason for their success!

Youth Spotlight



Lenna is a young writer living in a crowded city. Though she is a part of society's youth, she writes to show others what is important to the future generations and what our future world will look like. Lenna values education and strives to inform others on important topics relatable to the youthful audience.

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January 4, 2022	Tuesday	Baby Boomers Expo
February 1, 2022	Tuesday	Red & Hot Expo
March 1, 2022	Tuesday	Square Biz Expo
April 12, 2022	Tuesday	April Showers of Business Growth Expo
May 3, 2022	Tuesday	The Power of Women & Business Expo
June 7, 2022	Tuesday	Beauty / Fitness / Health Affair Expo
July 12, 2022	Tuesday	16 th Year Anniversary Celebration Expo
August 2, 2022	Tuesday	Consumer Expo
September 6, 2022	Tuesday	Entrepreneurs Expo
October 4, 2022	Tuesday	Safe Night Halloween Bring the Kids Expo
November 1, 2022	Tuesday	Red, White & Blue Expo

All event expos are held at Emerald at Queensridge.
 All event expo dates and location is subject to change by the LVBNM Producers.



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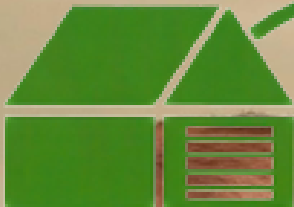
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120,000 children and teens are waiting to be adopted. The number of children in foster care nationwide increased 2.3% this year to 437,465. Making it a figure that has risen every year since 2012. Studies indicate that one out of every four youth who age-out of foster care will end up in a homeless shelter within three years.

Do you want to help a youth?

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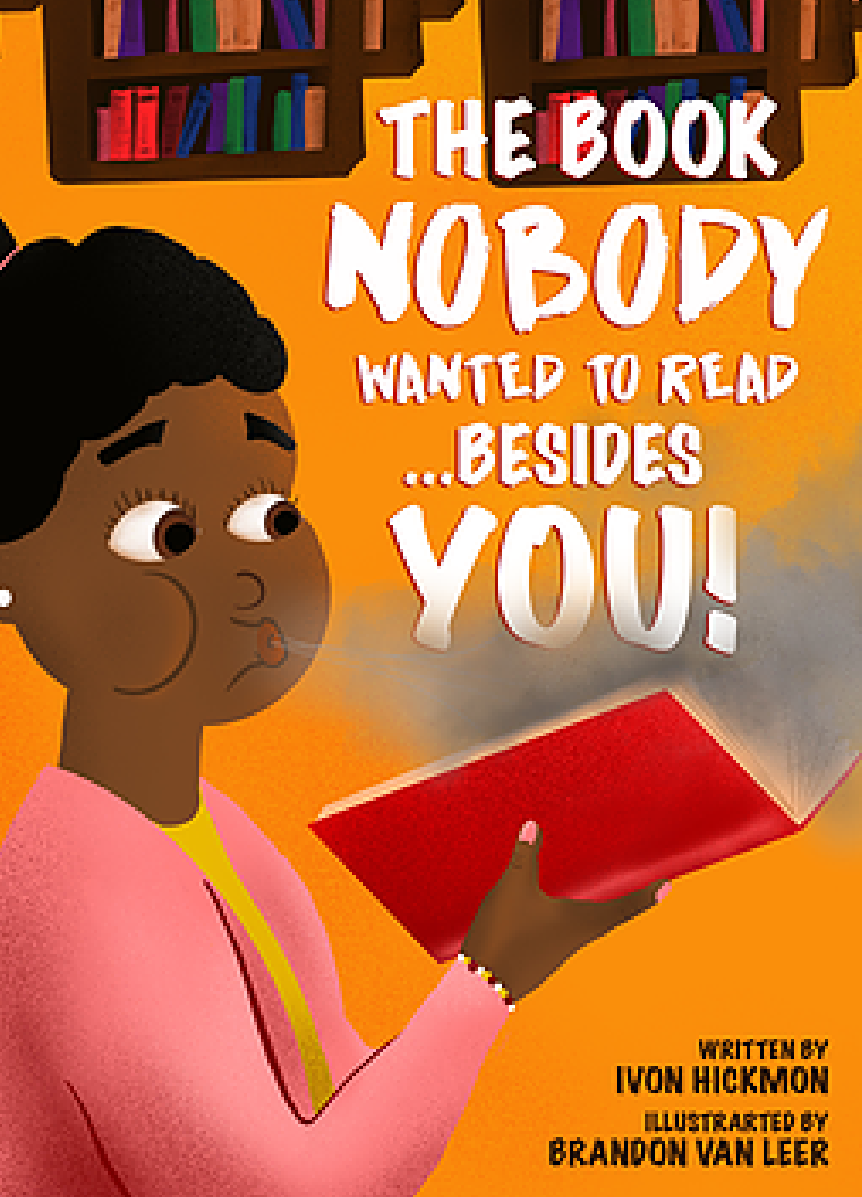


Anita Baker

Foster Care/Adopted

Jazz, R&B Singer





About the Author: The youngest son out of three boys to military parents, Ivon found his dreams of playing among the NFL greats were closer than he'd ever imagine. Ivon's football career journeyed from "last man" on the roster to earning his football scholarship with honors and being selected as team captain and MVP.

A true "girl dad," Ivon spends hours visiting both his daughters' schools, cultivating children through the power of reading. These visits propelled Ivon to release his debut children's book, *The Book Nobody Wanted to Read... Besides You*, a fun and silly book that introduces children to emotional intelligence and inclusion.

Inclusion
Diversity
Unity

The Hickmon Helper

To book Ivon for speaking engagement or fitness training:
<https://www.thehickmonhelper.com>

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Burn Fat!

This beautiful story captures the need for inclusivity and emotional intelligence. Readers are introduced to the protagonist, as she shows empathy and compassion towards our book character. By definition, inclusion is the action or state of including or being included within a group. Inclusion must be taught and fought for. Equipping children is essential for this life's journey. Emotional intelligence is a set of emotional and social skills that influence the way we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges, and use emotional information in an effective and meaningful way. This dynamic story teaches your children a proven, practical tactic to develop emotional intelligence skills. After reading this story, children will be empowered to love and embrace themselves fully and gain awareness of their emotional state.



Ivon Hickmon

ABC FUNDRAISING

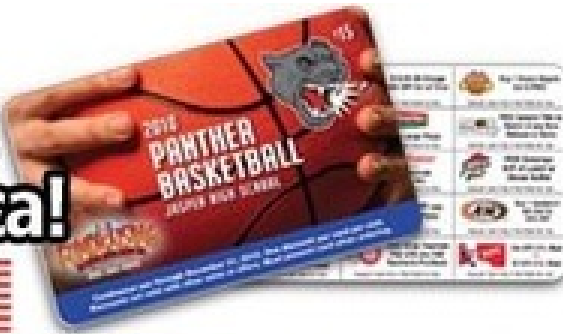
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The Mindful Corner

Written By: Loney Nguyen, LCSW-C

Mindfulness is a technique that can help us stop and be in the present moment rather than the past or the future. By practicing mindfulness, we can learn to become more aware of our own thoughts, feelings, and the environment around us. It helps us to refocus and recenter our mind, body, and spirit. Throughout this issue, you have read several articles that may have been thought-provoking or tapped into your emotions. Whether you were inspired by a story or an article that triggered a traumatic memory for you, take this moment to reflect on how you are feeling.



The Five Minute Journal

This exercise is centered around gratitude, a positive psychology technique. Here are 5 daily questions to answer in your journal of choice:

IN THE MORNING :

Set your intention for the day

- (1) What are you grateful for?
- (2) What would make today great?
- (3) Daily affirmation. I am...

AT NIGHT - End your day on a high-note and reflect

- (4) 3 Amazing things that happened today...
- (5) How could I have made today even better?

Take a mindful minute

Breath-in
Breath-out
Relax



When it's time to say goodnight to your little ones, turn on:
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Meet our TEAM

GET TO KNOW OUR TEAM CONTRIBUTING WRITERS OVER 21



Keisha Mitchell is an inspirational author, writer, poet, and creator. She self-published her first book titled, DO BLACK LIVES REALLY MATTER? at the age of 20. Keisha chooses her words wisely as she believes that her greatest power comes out through the use of words. Her favorite line to use, "What you speak is what you seek." As a registered nursing student, Keisha is dedicated to using her voice to advocate for improving health and wellness within the minority community.



Paula Margus, is a Quality Program Specialist, is always looking for opportunities to make improvements. She applies this to her personal life as well and enjoys helping others to improve their lives. She is very involved in her community and is passionate about youth advocacy, social justice and equality; animal rescue/adoption and health self-advocacy. Paula is a long-time resident of VA.



Sarah Holcomb is a Human Resources professional and a graduate student studying organizational psychology. With a passion for personal development, she lives by the mantra "I never dreamed of success, I worked for it" (Estee Lauder). In her spare time, she enjoys staying active and riding her electric scooter around Washington, D.C., which she calls home.



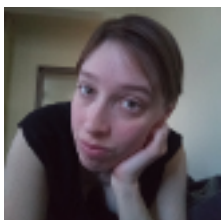
Samantha Cooper is a 20-something writer living in the DMV area. She runs a blog, "Scoop's Animation Corner" where she reviews animated movies and TV shows. She is also the co-runner of the YouTube channel, "Chamber of Spoilers."



Adria Kinney loves reading and writing and is passionate about expanding educational opportunities for underserved youth. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, a Master's degree in International Education, and resides in Washington, D.C. where she works as Program Officer for FHI 360.



Christa Cooke is a software engineer with a keen interest in technology, LGBTQ+ issues, politics, and the intersections between the three. She is an aspiring writer and avid sci-fi and fantasy reader, with a dream of one day publishing a novel of her own. Christa has spent much of her twenties traveling; she's now chosen to make Washington D.C. her home, close to her chosen family.



Jacqueline Monaghan is a new to writer who saw this as an opportunity to enhance her writing skills, She is really enjoying it and also loves working with her hands. She wants to continue working as a remodeling contractor.

Meet our TEAM

GET TO KNOW OUR TEAM YOUTH UNDER 21



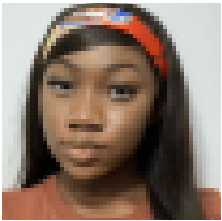
Liam, a photographer / host of 60 Second Sports Talk on KFAM Youth Radio. He is a recent high school graduate with dreams of becoming a professional sports anchor or sports attorney.

Foster



Lenna is a young writer living in a crowded city. Though she is a part of society's youth, she writes to show others what is important to the future generations and what our future world will look like. Lenna values education and strives to inform others on important topics relatable to the youthful audience.

Adopt



Tolu is an African writer, who uses her voice to advocate for change. She writes articles, poetry and screenplays alongside finishing her first novel to be published Spring 2022. When she is not writing, she loves fashion and cloud watching.

Mentor



Jordan, enjoys running, sports, and writing. As of now, she is not sure what career path she wants to pursue, but writing and academic maybe apart of her future.

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