Aging Out of Foster Care in America

1 in 4 kids ages 15-19 who have aged out of foster care between 2005 and 2010 are in jail, mothers, or on welfare, and 1 in 5 are homeless or on the streets. The trauma and emotional toll these kids face is not just for the young people who age out, but also for the communities and family members they leave behind. The pain and heartbreak they face are also felt by those who care for and advocate for these vulnerable youth.

Here’s a look at the situation and the solution:

The Projected Costs of Doing Nothing

On average, for every young person who ages out, taxpayers and communities pay $300,000 for care and services throughout his or her life. The solution? Investment in prevention and early intervention.

Social costs equal nearly $8 billion per year. Public assistance on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security is absorbed by the community at an average cost to society of $300,000 per person.

A Solvable Problem

According to the Administration for Children and Families, through FY 2009, 92% of the children who left foster care were placed in adult homes.

26,000 young people age out every year. If we invested $300,000 per person...

$26,000,000 + $300,000,000 = $7.8 billion in total costs

The First Signs of Improvement

A formula for Success Beyond 18

When it comes to ending youth homelessness, it’s a matter of setting goals and charting a course.

From the young people themselves, from the clinicians who work with them, from the communities that care about them, from the business leaders who understand the need, and from the policymakers who have the ability to plan and design.

Success Beyond 18 is a campaign of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. Together, we can create a better future for young people transitioning from foster care to adulthood.

Get involved and learn more at www.jimcaseyyouth.org.