

## Delivering life skills: Inaugural fundraiser for foster care support organization

Written by Harry Colbert, Jr.  
Wednesday, 23 April 2014 14:34

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Connections 2 Independence (C2i) is set to host its first ever fundraiser to fund its mission of providing life skills to teens and young adults in foster care in the Twin Cities.

The event, Run for the Roses, is a Kentucky Derby and casino themed party that includes food, cocktails, a hat contest (for men and women), viewing of the Kentucky Derby, a silent auction and a fashion show featuring C2i youth, that takes place from 2 p.m. – 6 p.m., Saturday, May 3 at Warehouse Winery, 6415 Cambridge St., St. Louis Park. The event is \$30 per person or \$50 for two. Money raised will fund C2i, a nonprofit located inside of Sabathani Community Center, 310 E 38th St, Minneapolis. Former Los Angeles Laker and Minneapolis native Devean George will serve as the event's honorary chair.

C2i prepares youth for living independently as they get closer to reaching adulthood and aging out of the foster care system. Services include teaching independent living skills, with a key emphasis placed on one-on-one relationship building. A specific focus is placed on practical matters such as securing housing, education and employment.

C2i CEO, Jessica Rogers said her organization is worthy of the public's support because too many exit the foster system without the basic skills to live a productive life.

"Fifty-three percent of the homeless population (in America) has been in foster care, so there's something broken with our system," said Rogers. "Foster children have a graduation rate of 45 percent. Ninety-eight percent of our kids graduate high school or achieve a GED. Only 14 percent of kids in foster care go on to post secondary education. Fifty percent of our kids go on to pursue post-secondary education. If we don't put funding into programs like this now, these kids can easily mirror the national statistics. We're teaching them how to live truly independently."

Rogers said there's a prevailing myth that kids enter foster care and get adopted and live happily ever after, but that is not the reality. According to Rogers, kids in the foster system, on average, live in five different homes and many are never adopted.

"We make it a priority to provide a stable environment no matter where they go in the system," said Rogers. "We're here to support them and teach them what a healthy relationship looks like."

For more information on Connections 2 Independence visit C2i online at [www.c2iyouth.org](http://www.c2iyouth.org) . To purchase tickets to the May 3 fundraiser go to

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<http://tinyurl.com/luj9a3w>

May is National Foster Care Month. Insight News will feature a story in each edition this month to highlight issues in foster care within the Twin Cities.