



**BRAVE HEART OF LOUISIANA, CHILDREN IN NEED, INC.**  
3636 S Sherwood, Suite 690H  
Baton Rouge LA 70816  
[www.braveheartchildren.org](http://www.braveheartchildren.org)  
[info@braveheartchildren.org](mailto:info@braveheartchildren.org)

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August 12, 2016

To Whom it May Concern:

The Mission of Brave Heart of Louisiana is to provide hope and security to youth and children in the foster care system by providing comfort and essential items to aid them at a traumatic time in their young lives. By giving hope and comfort to Louisiana's most vulnerable youth and young adults, Brave Heart not only demonstrates care and compassion on a human level but also educates the broader community on how we all share a responsibility in this cause.

We must partner and collaborate for a stronger Louisiana. Therefore, we completely support these efforts. By gathering diverse service providers and stakeholders we can improve outcomes for youth and our communities.

The state child welfare agency cannot do the work of guiding these youth alone. These youth need the support of local communities coming together to help provide needed supportive services and resources that encourage their full development and the opportunity to become productive citizens.

Brave Heart of Louisiana stands ready to assist these youth in our community. We will be following the work of the Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Task Force and hope to contribute as a member of the Task Force to this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John E. Wyble". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John E. Wyble, PhD, CAE

Executive Director



June 3, 2016

To whom it may concern,

It is without hesitation that I write to express my support for efforts to respond to the multiple needs on young people in Louisiana aging out of foster care. The plights of the 150 to 200 youth who age out of Foster care annually were severely negatively impact with the 2013 cut of the Young Adult Program (YAP). This safety net that supported these young people until age 21 served to reduce negative outcomes for young people who were in Foster care before reaching young adulthood.

The Institute for Mental Hygiene of the City of New Orleans (IMH) stands ready to work with stakeholders in an effort to find a solution to providing supportive services for this vulnerable population. We have recently provided some funding to the Youth Aging Out of Foster Care work group of the city's Children and Youth Planning Board. We have also funded some research in the area of multigenerational housing needs. We are committed to continue to support and advocate for these vulnerable young people in the future. We will continue to monitor the work of the Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Task Force and will lend additional support as needed.

Sincerely,

Ronald P. McClain JD, LCSW

Executive Director

**INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HYGIENE**

# LIVE UNITED

United Way of  
Southeast Louisiana  
2515 Canal Street  
New Orleans, LA 70119  
tel (504) 822.5540  
www.unitedwaysela.org



June 3, 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

It is often said it takes a village to raise a child. Research tells us that youth in this country are still developing emotionally and cognitively beyond the age of 18. In 2013, the Department of Children and Family Services terminated the Young Adult Program that provided a safety net for the youth in the foster care system up until the age of 21 as long as they were still in school. This public policy set into motion an alarming trajectory for the 150 to 200 youth that age out of the system annually. This population is at ever increasing risk of poor outcomes: homelessness, unplanned pregnancies, increased risk of involvement with the justice system, and human trafficking.

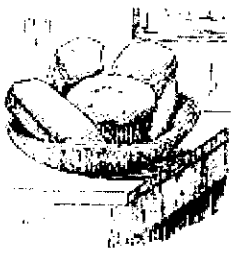
The state child welfare agency cannot do the work of guiding these youth alone. These youth need the support of local communities coming together to help provide needed supportive services and resources that encourage their full development and the opportunity to become productive citizens.

United Way of Southeast Louisiana stands ready to assist these youth in our community. We will be following the work of the Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Task Force and hope to direct needed resources to aid in this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charmaine Caccioppi".

Charmaine Caccioppi  
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer



## Bread or Stones Campaign

Would one of you hand his child a stone when he asks for a loaf... (Matthew 7: 9)

July 27, 2016

Carmen D. Weisner, LCSW, ACSW  
Executive Director  
National Association of Social Workers, Louisiana Chapter  
700 North 10th Street, Suite 200  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Carmen,

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux is very willing to work with other stakeholders in an effort to find a solution to providing supportive services youth aging out of foster care. This vulnerable population desperately needs our support and we are happy to provide it.

Sincerely,

*Robert D. Gorman*

Robert D. Gorman, LCSW, ACSW  
Chair, Bread or Stones Campaign  
Louisiana Interchurch Conference

## Our Mission

We offer opportunities to people with disabilities and other employment barriers to improve their economic self-sufficiency through training, education, support services and employment.

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In 2015, Goodwill provided job training and employment services to 2,049 people and helped 231 find sustainable employment.

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# Goodwill Industries

of Southeastern Louisiana, Inc.



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Fax: 504.456.2698

Baton Rouge Office:  
647 Main Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
Phone: 225.308.0220  
Fax: 225.308.0224  
[www.goodwillno.org](http://www.goodwillno.org)

August 2, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

As a recipient of the Department of Children and Family Services—Aging Out of Foster Care grant 2016-2017, I proudly write this letter in support of the work being done by the Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Task Force. Two-hundred young adults age out of foster care yearly and become victims of the streets because there are very limited resources to assist them. We must do better with these young adults!

Further, in 2013, the Department of Children and Family Service terminated the Young Adult Program that provided a safety net for the youth in the foster care system up until the age of 21 as long as they were still in school. This public policy set into motion an alarming trajectory for 150 to 200 youth that age out of the system annually. This population is at ever increasing risk of poor outcomes: homelessness, unplanned pregnancies, increased risk of involvement with the justice system, and human trafficking.

This work cannot be done alone; the state needs our help with guiding these youths. These youths need the support of local communities coming together to provide them with the wrap around services and resources that encourage their full development and the opportunity to become productive citizens.

Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Louisiana stands ready to assist these youths in our community. We will be following the work of the Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Task Force and hope to direct needed resources to aid in this work.

Sincerely,

Kim Evans Rugon, PhD  
Vice President of Workforce Development

October 10, 2016

**Carmen D. Weisner, LCSW, ACSW**

Executive Director

National Association of Social Workers, Louisiana Chapter

700 North 10th Street, Suite 200

Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Carmen,

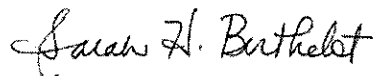
I am writing to thank you for your service to Louisiana youth and children in the foster care system. Experienced organizations and well-designed programs, which foster security and provide care, are essential to stabilizing these young and deserving lives.

LAUW would greatly appreciate staying informed of the work of the *Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Task Force*, so we can help to build effective collaborations and educate others on the issues these children face.

It's clear that no one entity or agency can support these children alone. Local communities coming together to serve the needs of youth and children in foster care can infuse hope and ensure bright futures.

Thank you for your compassion to serve children.

Sincerely,



Sarah H. Berthelot

President and CEO

[sarah@launitedway.org](mailto:sarah@launitedway.org)



JAMES STOREHOUSE LOUISIANA  
527 E. Boston St, Covington, LA, 70433  
[www.jslouisiana.org](http://www.jslouisiana.org)

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October 7, 2016

To Whom it May Concern:

The Mission of James Storehouse Louisiana (JS) is to fulfill emergency requests to expedite safe placement for foster children and to assist aged-out youth as they transition. From cribs to college, James Storehouse supports children in foster care and those aging out of foster care by providing resources that will ease transitions and improve living conditions. James Storehouse encourages awareness and motivates community participation in support of children in foster care.

JS believes partnerships and collaborations are necessary for a stronger Louisiana, and the faith based community has both an obligation and opportunity to be a part of that spectrum of services for our youth and children. Therefore, we completely support these efforts. By gathering diverse service providers and stakeholders we can improve outcomes for youth and our communities.

The state child welfare agency cannot do the work of guiding transitioning youth alone. They need and deserve the support of local communities coming together to help provide needed supportive services and resources that encourage their full development and the opportunity to become productive citizens.

James Storehouse is already responding to the needs of youth in our community but the need is overwhelming. That is why we believe this collaboration is so important. We will be following the work of the Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Task Force and hope to contribute as a member of the Task Force to this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John E. Wyble".

John E. Wyble, PhD, CAE  
Chair, Board of Directors



*A coalition of agencies  
serving homeless persons in  
the seven parishes of the  
Capital Area*

October 14, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless (CAAH) holds the fundamental belief that everyone, no matter how deprived in circumstances of housing and necessities is valued, entitled to dignity, respect, and is deserving of community assistance and the opportunity to achieve a life of self-sufficiency. CAAH is dedicated to ending homelessness through direct services, development of affordable housing and advocacy on homeless issues. The services offered by our member agencies include emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent housing, case management, medical care and substance abuse treatment, dental care, mental health counseling, literacy education and education/GED assistance, life skills training and employment/job assistance.

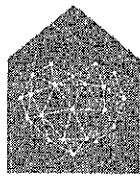
We understand that statistically, a portion of the homeless population is comprised of youth and adults who are or were once in the foster care system. Gathering diverse providers and stakeholders can improve outcomes for foster care youth in our communities. We work with organizations to try to identify which of these youth and adults may have had experience in child welfare and to provide the appropriate trauma-informed care services in regards to stable housing, education, employment, and social-emotional well being for this population to become productive citizens.

CAAH stands ready to assist these youth in our community. We hope to contribute as a member of the Task Force and direct needed resources to aid in this important work.

Sincerely,

Randy Nichols  
Executive Director





**HPSERVE**

EMPOWERING PEOPLE. CHANGING LIVES. BUILDING FUTURES.

October 17, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

The mission of Healing Place Serve (HP Serve) is to positively influence and personally impact homeless and at-risk youth by developing meaningful relationships through life-skills training, educational programs, employment opportunities, and safe housing. We know first hand the impact of the local community and its' resources coming together can make in the transition to a healthy, productive adulthood for these youth.

When incorporated, the Board identified our three target audiences as: (1) homeless and at-risk youth, primarily in the 70805 zip code; (2) youth aging out of foster care; and (3) youth who are/were victims of trafficking. A large portion of the youth we serve across all of these audiences are currently in or have previously had foster care experience. Our heart is to serve these youth through trauma-informed care programs like the Street Outreach Program, the Afterschool Program, the Louisiana Collaborative Against Trafficking, and the Chaffee Independent Living Program, which includes a portion of funds to support foster care youth after they have aged out. Some of the services offered through our programs or partner referrals include emergency shelter, transitional housing, case management, education/GED assistance, life skills training, mental health counseling and employment assistance.

HP Serve supports the Family First Act and stands ready to continue to assist these youth in our community as a contributing member of the Task Force and by directing needed resources to aid in this important work.

Sincerely,

Claudia Berry  
HP Serve Executive Director



Louisiana Methodist Children's Home  
904 DeVillie Lane  
Ruston, LA 71270-6313  
Phone: (318) 255-5020 Fax: (318) 255-6623  
www.LMCH.org

November 1, 2016

Toni S. Buxton, LCSW-BACS  
Foster Care and Transitioning Youth Programs  
Child Welfare Programs Division  
Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services  
P. O. Box 3318  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

**RE: 2015 HCR 168 Task Force**

Dear Ms. Buxton,

I have followed the work of the 2015 HCR 168 Task Force which was created to address the needs of Louisiana's children who age out of foster care. The work of this Task Force is critical to resolving the deleterious consequences which aging out of care presents to these at-risk youth.

Data regarding the negative impacts of aging out of care have been collected and reported for decades. Children who age out of care at 18 must immediately answer basic survival questions: *Where will I sleep? Where will I find food? How will I get to the places I need to be to get these basic needs met? Where will I get money? Who will care for me? How will I avoid sleeping on the street or in a homeless shelter?*

These are **real** questions faced by real **children**.

Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services strongly supports the work of the 2015 HCR 168 Task Force. We have contributed charitable dollars to fund the work of this Task Force and we are interested in working collaboratively with other like-minded, like-missioned organizations and people to address the real needs of Louisiana's foster children who age out of care.

Sincerely,

Rick Wheat  
President and Chief Executive Officer

CC: Marketa Garner Walters, Secretary, Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services  
James Gilmore, Ph.D., Director of the Children's Cabinet, Office of the Governor  
Steve Spires, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor of Louisiana  
Angie Thomas, Director of Life Skills Training Center, Louisiana Methodist Children's Home





RECEIVED  
OCT 21 2016  
DCFS

October 19, 2016

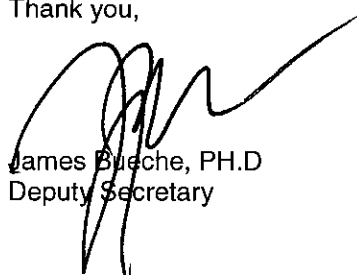
Ms. Toni Buxton  
Foster Care and Transitioning Youth Programs, Day Care Services and Tribal Relations Manager  
Child Welfare Programs Division  
Department of Children and Family Services  
P.O. Box 3318  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

RE: Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Task Force

Dear Ms. Buxton,

This purpose of this letter is to confirm the support and interest of the Office of Juvenile Justice in working with other stakeholders to find a solution to provide supportive services for the youth aging out of Foster Care in Louisiana. We are well aware that this is a vulnerable population and these efforts will be to improve their outcomes as they enter adulthood. Please let us know if there is anything further we can do at this time.

Thank you,

  
James Bueche, PH.D  
Deputy Secretary

# Goodwill



Industries of North Louisiana, Inc.

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Fax: (318) 869-2574  
[www.goodwillnla.org](http://www.goodwillnla.org)

October 24, 2016

**David R. Tinkis**  
*President & CEO*

Ms. Toni Buxton  
Child Welfare Programs Division  
Department of Children and Family Services  
State of Louisiana  
P.O. Box 3318  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821

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**Dr. Holly C. Wall**  
*Secretary*

**Michael Ferrell**  
*Treasurer*

**Joseph Littlejohn**  
*Past Chair*

Dear Ms. Buxton,

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

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Brad Nichols  
Dr. Karen M. Pendleton  
Dr. Shalinee Singh  
James Smith  
Gloria Washington

We are interested in working with your task force to address the needs of youth aging out of Foster Care in Louisiana. As you know we teach independent living to foster youth and are invested in their future. We are willing to work with other stakeholders in an effort to find a solution to provide supportive services for this vulnerable population and improve their outcomes as they enter adulthood. I look forward to hearing from you about next step in regards to our involvement in the task force.

Sincerely,

Julie L. Bass  
Chief Program Officer

[www.shopgoodwill.com](http://www.shopgoodwill.com)

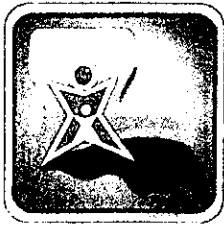


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## LouisianaChildren.org

1120 Government Street, Building I, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

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January 5, 2017

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*Chair*

Ms. Carmen Weisner, LCSW  
Executive Director

Andrew Kolb  
*Vice Chair*

NASW, Louisiana Chapter  
700 North 10<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 200  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Benjamin Huxen  
*Treasurer*

Re: Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

Tara Peltier  
*Secretary*

Dear Ms. Weisner:

Jessica Elliott  
*Past Chair*

I write in support of the work of the Louisiana Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care (2016 HCR 94) and any effort to increase services to this population of children. Having served on the Task Force, I am impressed with the thoroughness of the research and consideration given to the needs of youth aging out of foster care and the challenges facing the State of Louisiana.

Kathleen Richey  
*President/CEO*

LouisianaChildren.org is committed to the provision of the services and resources necessary to achieve safe, nurturing, healthy productive living environments for the children and youth of Louisiana. This organization is dedicated to ensuring that children and youth can fulfill their potential and achieve positive life goals.

Sandra Adams  
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Joy Bruce  
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Michael Hackett  
Latifey LaFleur  
Patricia Robinson  
Madelyn Rosette  
Mary Slazer  
Stephen Wright

As you know, prior to my work with LouisianaChildren.org, I served as Juvenile Court Judge in East Baton Rouge Parish for 24 years. I know, first-hand, the difficulties facing the eighteen year old aging out of foster care. Too often, these young adults drop out of school, live from place to place, land in jail, or reappear in Juvenile Court as the parent of an infant with no place to live. While the Task Force report reflects the magnitude of the problem, the actual cases reflect the tragedy of lost human potential. It is not enough to train these youth to sign up for food stamps and housing vouchers; we must support these youth in completing their education, obtaining job skills and employment, and taking their place as contributing members of Louisiana communities.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Stewart Richey  
LouisianaChildren.org



LOUISIANA  
ADVOCACY  
CORPS  
children and families



Louisiana  
CASA  
Court Appointed  
Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN



December 29, 2016

Carmen Weisner, LCSW  
Executive Director  
NASW Louisiana  
700 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 200  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Ms. Weisner:

Please accept this letter of support from the New Orleans Children & Youth Planning Board (CYPB).

CYPB remains invested in positive youth development planning, impactful systems improvement efforts, sustainability and evaluation of the highest quality services and resources necessary to accomplish safe, nurturing, healthy, productive living environments for children and youth in Orleans Parish, Louisiana.

Further, CYPB commits via this correspondence to collaborating with other committed partners throughout Louisiana to support systems, services and resource improvements in advancing outcomes for those youths which are aging out of the foster care system statewide, and particularly in Orleans Parish.

Sincerely,

Karen Evans  
Executive Director  
New Orleans Children & Youth Planning Board  
PO Box 6673  
New Orleans, LA 70174

**RECEIVED**  
JAN 03 2016  
DCFS

November 2, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jarvis Spearman. I aged out of Louisiana's foster care system, May of 2012.

I am a member of the Louisiana Youth Leadership Advisory Council (LYLAC). I work with other young adults from across the state of Louisiana to advocate for the rights of youth in foster care.

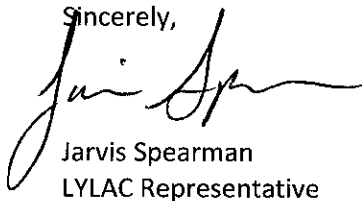
Our LYLAC group works to create stronger adult allies to improve the foster care system.

LYLAC provides a voice in which young people can inform, educate, and advocate for change; to improve the stereotype of former, current, and future youth in care. May of 2013, the youth who participated in the Young Adult Program (YAP) were informed that the funding for the Young Adult Program had ended. This program provided monetary support to young adults who have aged out of the foster care system. Youth who age out of the foster care system, find themselves completely on their own at age 18, with not monetary support from their family. I was one of those youth. The ending of the YAP program had an impact on my life and the lives of my peers. We found ourselves struggling to find a place to live, and get the support we needed to live. Unless you have been through what it is like to be completely on your own at age 18, you cannot understand the overwhelming stress this brings into one's life. I was one of the fortunate ones. I have a strong relationship with my former foster Mother and I was employed. I was also enrolled in college. Losing the support of the YAP program caused me to have to completely redo my paperwork for financial aid. This was a major disappointment to me because I was promised over the years that I would be able to go to college, with the support of the state without having to incur overwhelming student loan debt. Many of my peers were not as fortunate during this time. They did not have a relationship with a caring adult in their life, and they

were not employed. Some of my peers were enrolled in junior college and the stress of losing the support of the YAP program affected their progress in school in a negative way. One of my peers had nowhere to live and would bounce around to different friends, trying to survive and not be on the streets.

Our LYLAC group meets regularly to work with our DCFS sponsors and our IL providers to brainstorm ideas to help improve communication, and learn about services that are available to youth who age out of the foster care system. A group of our youth met with the HCR 168 task force and expressed the realities of the circumstances that we face following the ending of the Young Adult Program. Our LYLAC group supports the efforts of this Task Force as they take a look at what resources are out there for youth, and work to improve services for the youth aging out of the foster care system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jarvis Spearman', written in a cursive style.

Jarvis Spearman  
LYLAC Representative

RECEIVED  
JAN 03 2016  
DCFS





Executive Division  
627 North 4th Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

(O) 225.342.0286  
(F) 225.342.8636  
[www.dcfslouisiana.gov](http://www.dcfslouisiana.gov)

John Bel Edwards, Governor  
Marketa Garner Walters, Secretary

December 20, 2016

Ms. Carmen Weisner, LCSW  
Executive Director, NASW Louisiana  
Co-Chair, Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care  
700 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

RE: DCFS' Support for the Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

Dear Ms. Weisner:

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is in support of HCR 94 of the 2016 Regular Session that provides for the continuation of the Task Force on Youth Aging out of Foster Care created by HCR 168 of the 2015 Regular Session.

In addition to chairing the Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care, DCFS is committed to collaborating with partners throughout the state to support better outcomes for youth aging out of foster care in Louisiana. DCFS would like all youth aging out of foster care to have a permanent connection, safe housing and financial stability to be a successful citizen and achieve positive life goals.

The collaboration of all agencies and organizations participating on the Task Force is greatly appreciated and fully supported by DCFS. Should any additional assistance be needed, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Marketa Garner Walters  
Secretary



Office of the Governor  
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS  
GOVERNOR



P.O. Box 94004  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-9004  
(225) 342-7015  
GOV.LA.GOV

December 15, 2016

Carmen Weisner, LCSW  
Executive Director  
NASW Louisiana  
700 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 200  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Ms. Weisner:

Please accept this letter as co-chair of the Louisiana 2016 HCR 94 Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care.

The Office of the Governor, Children's Cabinet, is invested in the provision of the services and resources necessary to accomplish safe, nurturing, healthy, productive living environments for children and youth in Louisiana.

The Office of the Governor, Children's Cabinet, would like to commit via this correspondence to collaborating with other committed partners throughout the state to support improvement in outcomes for this specific and extraordinarily vulnerable population of youth in Louisiana, those youth which are aging out of the foster care system. This organization is dedicated to ensuring these youth are fulfilling their potential for successful citizenship in our state, and achieving positive life goals to enrich their experience as citizens of this state.

The coordination of programs and services offered by public and private organizations across the state of Louisiana, especially those offered by the various State Agencies, is critical to supporting all youth who age out of foster care. Please consider the Children's Cabinet as a vehicle in leading efforts to ensure coordination is effective and seamless.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. James Gilmore, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

James Gilmore, Jr., PhD  
Executive Director  
Louisiana Children's Cabinet



**Louisiana Association  
of Children and Family  
Member Agencies**

Boys Town Louisiana,  
Inc.

Cane River Children's  
Services, Inc.

Catholic Charities  
Archdiocese of  
New Orleans, Inc.

Children's Bureau of  
New Orleans

Counsel NOLA

Educational and  
Treatment Council, Inc.

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Heritage Ranch Christian  
Children's Home

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Family Services, Inc.

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MacDonell United  
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Services

Raintree Children &  
Family Services, Inc.

T Christopher Youth  
Center

Volunteers of America of  
Greater Baton Rouge

Youth Oasis Baton

November 17, 2016

Ms. Toni Buxton  
Foster Care and Transitioning Youth Programs, Day Care Services & Tribal Relations Manager  
Child Welfare Programs Division  
Department of Children and Family Services  
P.O. Box 3318  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Re: Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Legislative Task Force

Dear Ms. Buxton,

On behalf of LACFA, I am writing this letter to endorse both the efforts of the legislature and Task Force to provide solutions and supports to Louisiana's youth who are aging out of care. The Louisiana Association of Children and Family Agencies (LACFA) is a statewide membership association of service providers for at-risk children and their families. Our mission is to ensure the provision of quality youth services across the state of Louisiana. Our agencies serve more than 129,000 children and their families annually, and 71% of our member agencies are nationally accredited and/or use evidenced-based practices.

Our members, many of whom were service providers for the Young Adult Program before it abruptly ended in 2013, are interested in sharing their past experiences to help determine future supports for youth aging-out-of-care. Our aim is help find them avoid homelessness, incarceration, and dependency on public assistance and unemployment.

The following information is from the Louisiana National Youth in Transition Database report of a sample group of 21-year-old foster youth who were in care at age 17. During their lifetime:

- 40% had experienced homelessness;
- 41% had children; and
- 81% had been incarcerated.
- 51% had received public assistance since the age of 17.

LACFA applauds the legislature's recognition of the need to pursue resolutions for this crisis. We too want to help make Louisiana a better place for our youth, and are happy to help in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

Laura A. Jensen  
Executive Director



# CANE RIVER

Children's Services

P.O. Box 2453 Natchitoches, LA 71457-2453 Phone: (318) 352.9349 Fax: (318) 352.9345

December 10, 2016

Toni Buxton, LCSW-BACS  
Foster Care and Transitioning Youth Program  
Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services  
P. O. Box 3318  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821

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Re: 2015 HCR 168 Task Force

Dear Ms. Buxton,

We support the important work being conducted by the 2015 HCR 168 Task Force charged to assess the needs of youth aging out of foster care in Louisiana. I can attest first hand to the critical nature of this work after witnessing many young people who were negatively impacted when Louisiana's Young Adult Program closed in 2013. I commend the legislature for assigning value to this topic by convening the Task Force.

Youth aging out of foster care are extremely vulnerable. Although they receive support prior to exiting care, it is quite different when they actually start the transition into real life as an adult. They need services to help in the transition process after turning 18. Transitional Living Homes and Supervised Apartments can provide an opportunity to practice independent living skills in a semi-supervised environment. It builds a healthy bridge for youth to cross over into adulthood. This can take time, especially for many foster youth who have experienced trauma. Transitional services are a good investment in their future and ours. Louisiana benefits when young people are successful in building healthy educational and employment foundations.

There is a big difference in outcomes when you just feed someone a fish versus actually teaching them how to fish. They both eat, however one learns how to feed themselves because they have the skill to do it. This same principle is true when thinking about how to prepare our foster youth transitioning out of care. They need to learn how to fish. They need the right tools. They also need time to practice their skills in a safe place in order to learn how to provide for themselves.

Cane River Children's Services is in full support of the 2015 HCR Task Force. We believe that by working together, we can teach our young people how to "fish." Positive outcomes are enhanced by collaborative efforts. We are committed to helping design a system that provides healthy infrastructure and successful transitions for youth in foster care. They deserve it.

Committed to the goal.

Jennifer Johnson Karle  
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Marketa Garner Walters, Secretary Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services  
James Gilmore, Director of Children's Cabinet Office of the Governor  
Steve Spire, Policy Advisor to Office of the Governor  
Gerald Long, Senator District 31 for the State of Louisiana

# American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



## Louisiana Chapter

*"Advocate for all children in Louisiana"*

P. O. Box 64629  
Baton Rouge, LA 70896  
Phone: (225) 379-7923  
Website: [www.laaap.org](http://www.laaap.org)  
Twitter: @MyLaap

To Whom It May Concern,

### Executive Committee

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1211 Coolidge Blvd. Ste 300  
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The Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is committed to the health and well-being of children and youth in Louisiana. Youth aging out of foster care at 18 years of age face a number of hurdles as they exit care, including a lack of support from family; education, employment, and income problems; inadequate living arrangements; and medical problems.[1] Youth in foster care have increased rates of medical and mental health challenges compared to youth not residing in foster care.[1] These medical and mental health issues include developmental delays, difficulty managing their emotions, chronic health problems, lack of adequate health insurance coverage, substance abuse, and pregnancy.[1]

The Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is ready and willing to serve as a partner to youth aging out of foster care to ensure they have the necessary resources and support to reach their full potential. We strongly support the work of the Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Task Force and hope that the necessary resources can be directed to aid in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bryan G. Sibley".

Bryan G. Sibley, MD, FAAP  
LA AAP President

American Academy of Pediatrics. Health Care of Youth Aging Out of Foster Care. Pediatrics. 2012; 130: 1170-1173.\*\* Attached

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[www.regents.la.gov](http://www.regents.la.gov)

December 15, 2016

Carmen Weisner, LCSW  
Executive Director  
NASW Louisiana  
700 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

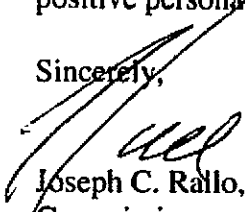
Dear Ms. Weisner:

As Commissioner of Higher Education of the Board of Regents, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the activities of the Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care.

The Board of Regents supports the services and resources needed to create a safe, nurturing and healthy living environment for children and youth in your program.

We commit to collaboration with other state partners to strengthen positive outcomes for this extraordinarily vulnerable population of youth in Louisiana, those individuals who are aging out of the foster care system. We are committed to ensuring the ability for these youth to fulfill their potential as citizens and community members throughout our state. The ability to achieve positive personal life goals can only enrich the communities and regions where they will live.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph C. Rallo, Ph. D.  
Commissioner of Higher Education

JCR:chb

JOHN BEL EDWARDS  
GOVERNOR



EDSELLE KEITH CUNNINGHAM, JR.  
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# *Louisiana Housing Corporation*

December 28, 2016

Carmen Weisner, LCSW  
Executive Director  
NASW Louisiana  
700 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 200  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Ms. Weisner:

The Louisiana Housing Corporation is writing to you, co-chair of the state's Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care, to express our continued commitment to improving outcomes for young adults who are aging out of the foster care system.

The corporation is committed to collaborating with our statewide partners to provide safe, nurturing, healthy and productive living environments for Louisiana children and teens in the foster care system. We will also continue to work with our partners to ensure that once young people leave the foster care environment they receive the support and assistance they need to transition into adulthood.

We look forward to working with you on these important efforts, and encourage you to reach out to us with any feedback or concerns you may have. I can assure you that the LHC is committed to ensuring this extraordinarily vulnerable population is able to fulfill its potential as successful Louisiana citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edselle", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Edselle Keith Cunningham, Jr.  
Interim Executive Director, Louisiana Housing Corporation