

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ACS Awarded \$1,145,000 Grant to Develop State-of-the-Art Caregiver Recruitment for Older Youth

Funding will allow ACS to strengthen recruitment, retention and support of foster/adoptive parents for older youth in care

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS), in partnership with New Yorkers for Children (NYFC), is pleased to announce the award of a \$1,145,000 grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. The grant will be used over two years to develop and model a state-of-the-art caregiver recruitment and support system for older youth, one that supports improved well-being for youth in New York City, with the potential to serve as a national model. Over the past year through the Home Away from Home (HAH) initiative, ACS has worked with its partners to identify and implement opportunities to improve the way foster and adoptive parents are licensed, supported and retained. With support from the Hilton Foundation, this project will leverage the learning and investment from HAH by turning the spotlight on the special needs of young people and building the capacity to license, support and retain caregivers who can help young people flourish.

HAH was launched in 2015, with support from the Warner Fund, Redlich Horwitz Foundation, Pinkerton Foundation and Casey Family Programs and the assistance of Public Catalyst and Action Research. The project aims to improve outcomes for young people in foster care, particularly older youth. Investments in foster and adoptive parents make a significant difference in the well-being of youth in care. Targeted recruitment of parents with specific skills who can care for older teenagers will decrease the likelihood of moves among foster homes and increase the stability of foster care placements.

On any single day, there are more than 3,500 young people ages 14 and older in placement in New York City. As of January 1, 2016, more than 2,800 of these young people had been in foster care for more than two years. ACS recognizes that the well-being of these youth in placement – and much of their success after leaving placement – depends powerfully on their daily experiences with the foster families providing them with a home. Foster parents also play a critical role in supporting biological families so that youth can return home safely, and when that cannot happen, foster parents step in to become adoptive parents and provide forever families for young people.

"Foster parents play a critical role in helping our young people overcome trauma, challenges and nourish their strengths and passions so they can grow and thrive," said **ACS Commissioner Gladys Carrión**. "We are committed to not just recruiting the very best foster parents, but strengthening the support they need to care for our young people. When we invest in our caregivers, our children stand to benefit most. This generous grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation will make a substantial and sustainable transformation in the landscape of New York City's foster care system."

"We are delighted to announce this partnership which will give us the opportunity to learn how to best support foster parents, who become the primary caregivers when a young person is removed

from his or her home,” said **Peter Laugharn, president and CEO of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation**. “We understand the critical role foster parents play in the lives of these young people, and are happy to support ACS and their partners as they work to improve recruitment and retention mechanisms with the ultimate overall goal of improving well-being for the foster youth themselves.”

Foster parents may be the most important resource that a child has and the retention of prospective foster parents for older youth is increasingly a challenge. This generous grant from Conrad N. Hilton Foundation ensures that ACS can dedicate additional resources to recruit, support and train foster parents. This, in turn, impacts the well-being outcomes for older youth and that is ALWAYS a good thing,” said **Saroya Friedman-Gonzalez, executive director, New Yorkers For Children**.

Support from the Hilton Foundation will allow ACS to test and shape a new model of caregiving for young people, one built on research and best practice, and to pilot the elements of that model for recruitment, training and support of foster parents for older youth in care.

About the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation was created in 1944 by international business pioneer Conrad N. Hilton, who founded Hilton Hotels and left his fortune to help the world’s disadvantaged and vulnerable people. The Foundation currently conducts strategic initiatives in six priority areas: providing safe water, ending chronic homelessness, preventing substance use, helping children affected by HIV and AIDS, supporting transition-age youth in foster care, and extending Conrad Hilton’s support for the work of Catholic Sisters. In addition, following selection by an independent international jury, the Foundation annually awards the \$2 million Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize to a nonprofit organization doing extraordinary work to reduce human suffering. In 2015, the Humanitarian Prize was awarded to Landesa, a Seattle-based land rights organization. From its inception, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1.4 billion in grants, distributing \$107 million in the U.S. and around the world in 2015. The Foundation’s current assets are approximately \$2.5 billion. For more information, please visit www.hiltonfoundation.org.