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NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES & THE CENTER FOR FAIR FUTURES RECOGNIZED BY CHAPIN HALL FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF FAIR FUTURES – A FIRST OF ITS KIND, ONE-ON-ONE COACHING PROGRAM THAT MADE NYC THE FIRST IN THE NATION TO SERVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN FOSTER CARE THROUGH AGE 26

Today, Over 450 Fair Futures Staff Support Nearly 4,000 NYC Young People in Care Between the Ages of 11 and 26

Chapin Hall Report, Conducted by Leading National Child Welfare Researchers, Affirms Speed & Quality of Program's Implementation Systemwide

The NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and [the Center for Fair Futures](#) are being recognized for the successful implementation of the Fair Futures model in New York City. The Fair Futures model provides 1:1 coaching and tutoring and a range of academic, career development, housing, and independent living supports to young people in foster care and those whose lives were touched by foster care from sixth grade through age 26. An independent report, conducted by leading national child welfare experts at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, found that Fair Futures made "remarkable" implementation progress in a short time period, that Fair Futures has helped bolster a strong youth-centered culture within foster care agencies, and that the Center for Fair Futures provides a broad and deep range of supports to foster care agencies.

An outcomes evaluation by Chapin Hall is also underway and will report on Fair Futures' long-term impact in the lives of young people.

This month marks the five-year anniversary of Fair Futures, which began as a youth-led, grassroots movement to secure public funding for young people in NYC's foster care system. Today, Fair Futures has grown into the largest cross-sector collaboration and most successful youth-led advocacy movement in the history of child welfare. The model has been fully implemented and scaled systemwide, with over 450 Fair Futures staff supporting nearly 4,000 young people ages 11 to 26. Through the Adams Administration, NYC became first in the nation to serve young people who exited foster care until age 26 with a long-term, comprehensive model. Fair Futures continues to grow; it is now being expanded to ten organizations serving youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and a pilot was launched in Buffalo, New York.

"I'm so proud of all of the work that has gone into developing and executing a unique program such as Fair Futures, which provides young people in foster care and those whose lives were touched by foster care, with supports aimed at helping them become healthy, successful adults," said **ACS Commissioner Jess Dannhauser**. "I'm thrilled that Chapin Hall's report

affirms our work to center youth voice across the program and that that we are assisting thousands of youth in care to overcome barriers related to education, housing, and independent living. On behalf of ACS, I want to thank our contracted foster care agencies for all the work they've done to help implement Fair Futures and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Redlich Horwitz Foundation, Tiger Foundation, Ira W. DeCamp Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, New York Community Trust, and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation for their critical support."

"I am excited to see Fair Futures receive positive external reviews, but more importantly I am heartened by the young people being served by this remarkable program," said **Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services Anne Williams Isom**. "Fair Futures helps young people put together the building blocks to not only survive in the city, but to truly thrive. Thank you to ACS and all of our partners in this work that are making a difference in the lives of so many for years to come."

Katie Napolitano, one of the founders of Fair Futures and Co-Executive Director of the Center for Fair Futures said, "What makes the model successful is not just about the "what" we do but the "how" we do it – that is, how Fair Futures staff make young people feel. Coaches build trusting relationships with young people and help them explore, envision, and achieve their goals and potential. Young people help screen Coaches and all staff are trained to use the Fair Futures approach – show up as their authentic self, meet young people where they are, let them lead, be consistent, and celebrate every step of the way."

Tony Turner, the Center for Fair Futures' Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Director and founding member of the YAB said, "I've been on a number of YABs over the years, but the reason why Fair Futures stands out is because it was authentically youth-led; for once, it really felt like we could make real change in a system that always held us back. And we did – the YAB was successful in securing \$10M; then \$12M; then \$20M, and then fully baselining \$30.7M in the NYC budget and being the first in the nation to serve foster youth until age 26. We were successful because the mission and impact was so clear – young people need a Coach to help take them to new heights. We heard this from hundreds of young people and the data behind it does not lie. We are so grateful to the Adams Administration and ACS Commissioner for believing in us and giving us all a shot at a fair future."

Jay Fitzpatrick, YAB member, said "My Coach Jamie makes me feel safe, heard, and inspired. She is like an older sister to me. Before I had Jamie, I felt like a lonely seed in a dark room with no idea how much it could flourish with the right environment and support. Within months of meeting Jamie, she helped me realize my goals and accomplish so many things I never thought were possible. I went from couch-surfing and being nearly homeless to obtaining housing, internships, and enrolling in college with a national scholarship. From the daily pep-talks to our fun outings, Jamie's unconditional love showed me the true meaning of support."

Launched in 2019, and later expanded under the Adams Administration, the Fair Futures initiative is a citywide, comprehensive model for youth in foster care and those who have exited foster care. The program is operated in cooperation with 26ACS contracted foster care agencies. The Fair Futures program envisions that through one-on-one targeted support provided by Coaches, tutors, and specialists, youth in foster care will have a higher likelihood of reaching goals associated with a successful transition to adulthood, including by improving education, career development, and housing outcomes.

ACS commissioned Chapin Hall to conduct an implementation study (phase one) and outcomes evaluation (phase two, still underway) of Fair Futures. During phase one of the four-year project, the evaluation team conducted an implementation study of Fair Futures and developed the outcome evaluation design. The Chapin Hall report was prepared by researchers from the Center for State Child Welfare Data (the Center) housed at Chapin Hall, with funding from ACS and Foster Care Excellence Fund (now renamed Youth + Families Forward) foundations, which include the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, New York Community Trust, Redlich Horwitz Foundation, Tiger Foundation, Ira W. DeCamp Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

According to selected findings from the phase one implementation study:

Fair Futures is being implemented from a youth-centered perspective. The report says: “Fair Futures aims to provide youth ages 11 to 26 with a Coach and/or specialist services tailored to their unique needs. Focus group responses suggest that each agency emphasizes centering youth when adapting the Fair Futures framework. This youth-centered perspective allows each agency to exercise flexibility when determining which youth they will serve and the ability to consider how they may best meet the needs of the youth in the program.”

In the report, Chapin Hall notes: “Of particular distinction, and one of the elements of Fair Futures that sets it apart from other, large-scale youth-serving efforts, is its heavy focus on youth involvement in planning, decision-making, and advocacy—both during the formative years of the model and now, as it scales and grows.”

According to one Coach: “The focus is definitely relational mentorship, coaching relationship. It's not about telling the youth what they should do with their lives. It's about getting to know them on a personal level and then presenting them options that they're able to choose themselves and go ahead. ... I really appreciate the Fair Futures model because it's not just shoving, like, college down their throat or a certain pathway. It's really getting to know people on a personal level and just being in their corner, whatever that looks like.”

One staff comments, “I've worked in child welfare for 25 years, I feel like Fair Futures is one of the...success stories ... it's had such a clear impact on the young people that the Coaches work with. And I know, that's not just true at our agency... you hear the stories from young people across all of the agencies about the impact on their lives of having a Coach. And it's, it's really remarkable.”

Fair Futures has created a collaborative and supportive culture for youth in foster care and the staff working alongside them, which is driving changes in child welfare sector as a whole. The report says: “Fair Futures agency leaders described the model as: collaborative, within and between agencies and the system at large; a wraparound support system for youth in care; providing young people with individualized support that is focused on their goals; and focused on improving outcomes for youth, specifically across housing, career development, and education. Overwhelmingly, focus group participants described the culture of Fair Futures as ‘supportive’ and ‘collaborative.’ They noted that the collaborative culture fostered by the Fair Futures implementation team has been very beneficial throughout implementation, creating an atmosphere in which staff from different agencies see themselves as part of a larger team focused on achieving a common goal.”

The report also notes that, “In addition to pioneering a new approach to working with youth in foster care, staff described how Fair Futures is driving changes in the dynamics of the foster

care and service provision systems at large.” One staff said, “Fair Futures is forcing child welfare as a whole— child welfare youth development as a whole—to shift toward genuine care and attention for the whole person.”

Coaches, Coach supervisors, and specialists emphasized the contrast between the typical experience of a young person in foster care—during which a revolving door of professionals come in and out of their lives and tell them what to do—with the approach of Fair Futures which “gives the kids a voice now. [It gives] them options, and they’ll be able to choose what path they want to take. It’s not just showing them one road, but letting them know they have options.”

The technical assistance (TA), trainings, and learning communities provided by the Center for Fair Futures have been key throughout the implementation process. The report says: “Overall, we received positive feedback on the training, TA, and learning communities offered by the Fair Futures implementation team. In the coming years, with the expansion of the implementation team, the expectation of the team is to continue to deliver the range of training, TA, and learning communities currently offered, as these were universally viewed as extremely helpful and effective for staff to develop skills, solve problems, and build collaboration within and across agencies.”

Katie Napolitano said, “Without support, this work can be incredibly complex and overwhelming – because it’s not just about engaging and building relationships with young people. Coaches help them navigate large, complicated systems – child welfare, education, college, workforce, housing ... and on top of that, NYC has so many amazing programs and opportunities; it can be challenging to connect young people to a best-fit setting. That is where the Center comes in – instead of ‘figuring it out on your own,’ we provide all staff with training, tools/materials, ongoing support, and a strong community we call the ‘Fair Futures family.’ We guide staff through the full landscape of resources and tips they need to meet **any** young person where they are and champion them throughout their journey.”

Throughout its implementation, Fair Futures has continued to improve. The report says: “The Fair Futures implementation team continually collects feedback from agency leadership and staff through their frequent interactions with them during training, TA, learning communities, and other support activities with agency leadership. In addition, the way in which the Fair Futures data team works with the front-line staff naturally builds feedback loops related to data completeness and accuracy. Conversations between those working on the front-end and back-end of Care4 take place frequently through data capacity-building activities such as targeted training, one-on-one coaching/training, and ongoing technical support sessions. Taken together, these activities provide sufficient opportunities to staff to report first-hand about real-world issues and concerns, and in turn, for the implementation team to work to address those problems.”

Tracy Jenkins, who oversaw the launch and growth of one of the largest Fair Futures programs before becoming the Co-Executive Director of the Center for Fair Futures, said, “Launching Fair Futures at JCCA, in 2019 and amid the pandemic, seemed almost impossible. I am in awe of the support provided by the Center for Fair Futures during the implementation phase and beyond. They were there every step of the way, providing invaluable technical support, trainings and workshops, thought partnership, and strategic planning advice. They listened to our program’s specific needs and challenges, and helped guide us in creating a Fair Future’s model that is tailored to support thousands of NYC’s most vulnerable youth with coaching and academic/career/housing support.”

The report makes a number of recommendations on how to continue to improve training/TA supports, such as offering more in-person opportunities and increasing the frequency of the Core training. All of these recommendations have since been implemented.

To read the full report from Chapin Hall, [click here](#).