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Crisis Care Training International

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Aging Out



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Two Great Organizations Working with Foster Kids



In Focus

Since May of 1988, May has been recognized as National Foster Care Awareness month. Foster care is defined as follows:

1. A formal system by which a child is cared for, in a foster family, by people other than its own parents, but without being adopted.
2. Supervised care for delinquent or neglected children usually in an institution or substitute home

We know that Foster Care looks different for so many children. Thankfully, some stay within this system for a short period of time and are able to be safely reunited with their own families. However, we know that others are not able to have this reunification and do not have other family who can care for them. Until permanency of an adoption can be made, these children are sometimes bounced around to multiple temporary placements. A great deal of effort is given to trying to keep things such as the same school, placement with their siblings, etc. and other accommodations of familiarity and as much normalcy as possible. However, depending on availability, family circumstances, and so many other factors, this may not be possible. These children and youth may never be able to find consistency at a time in their life when they are desperately trying to find identity, belonging, and purpose. When this occurs, they age out of the system designed to care for them and often enter the world very lost, uncertain, scared, searching for ways to get stability and acceptance, but often in very unsafe and unhealthy ways.

It is our prayer that this article on Aging Out will provide you with tools to help you see the need and respond in action. Begin in prayer, with the resource provided by Viva this upcoming weekend (found on our Resource Page). Ask for the Lord's discernment and one step you can take from the many suggested ways so that you and your church may be able to become the one that an aging out child needs. As always, may you be encouraged, enriched, and equipped to serve God and His children!

Serving Him Together,

Amy Wilson
Director of Education
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Aging Out

Amy Wilson



“Aging Out” is a term that means many different things throughout our world. We can age out of public school, no longer able to attend despite our academic achievements. We can age out of being able to live on a college campus. We can age out of being able to join the military. We can age out of some sports activities. Typically, it is because all of these activities have an age limit that says we are now too old to do these particular activities within the limits established. One common program that involves aging out is the foster care system, commonly found in America, but also in countries such as Canada, Australia, and varying European and Asian countries. The purpose of foster care is to provide a temporary environment of care until a child can be reunited with their current parent(s) or other relatives. If it is deemed that a child is unable to reunite with their parent(s) and no other relative is alive or able to care for the child, at that point, a child should be legally placed into the adoption system. However, foster care, like all other structures in society, are messy and take a great deal of time. Some children sadly stay within these programs until they “age out” (dependent upon a country's definition of becoming an adult). The latest statistic in the US is that 23,000 children age out each year.¹

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Idealistically, a program would be in place with the foster agency to help these young adults find employment, housing, and the knowledge of life skills such as budgeting, cooking, planning, time management, etc. While some programs do have assistance in place, this does not always occur because systems, life, and people are messy. We all live in a fallen world and even if all necessary services are offered, a young adult may emotionally be struggling and not accept the help. We know that the church is called to step into the gap, to care

for the least of these. Where do we, as the church, find the resources to know where to begin? Thankfully, Christian organizations such as [Christian Alliance for Orphans](#) and [Lifeline](#) have risen to the challenge to help!



The Christian Alliance for Orphans has designed holistic life transition programs that provides training and information to the church on how to step into the gap for these young adults. They provide information on life skills training, spiritual care and mentoring, transitional housing, career development, and support networks. They provide contact information for individuals under each of these categories to assist

you and your church to get set up well. Descriptions of programs already in place are also provided so you can choose a model that best matches you and your needs. The multitude of experienced individuals provided gives you a great and trusted resource to help you get started. You can learn more about CAFO and these programs [here](#).

Another wonderful organization focused on the needs of orphans and foster children is Lifeline. They have specific information on church foster care ministries so that the church can be best equipped to help these families at-risk and in crisis. Lifeline also provides information and help for how churches can encourage internships via church members. Additionally, they have a program entitled [Heritage Builders](#) which works through the local churches to serve youth who are nearing the point of aging out of the system. A 30-45 meeting Zoom meeting that Lifeline offers regularly can help you and your church start the journey.

...Christian Alliance for Orphans and Lifeline have risen to the challenge to help!



As with all statistics, it is hard to get a definitive number due to many factors. However, the latest estimates are that there are over 400,000 children in the US



alone currently in the foster system and that 23,000 of these youth will age out of this program this year. What is waiting for these young adults on the other side? Will they be able to receive the support they need to become independent and productive citizens of society? More importantly, despite their pasts, will they have anyone to share the love of the One true Father who loves them unconditionally and wants the best for them? There are approximately 332,000 evangelical churches in the United States. Surely with a 1:14 ratio, we can encourage our own church to take on at least one

aging out youth where we all come together to provide the identified needs above to show this one that God loves them. We may never know how this one, like so many ones before, may have a positive impact on our hurting world!



Amy Wilson is CCTI's Director of Education and has been with CCTI since 2013. As a mother of two boys, she is concerned about the lack of direction and encouragement that many young men of today are receiving.

Resources



1. Did you know that you can take our core *Module 1: Trauma and Crisis Care* as an independent study?

You can work through the module along with the corresponding videos at your own pace, with three months to complete the course. In addition, you are provided with a CCTI trainer to mentor you through the course. Contact us at info@crisiscaretraining.org if you are interested.

2. Viva [World Weekend of Prayer](#)!



3. [Something to read](#):

