

# Postsecondary Education for Foster Youth

## *How We Can Help Them Succeed*



8:15A.M. - 3:30P.M.

NOVEMBER 7, 2008

ADANTI STUDENT CENTER

**SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY**

**NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT**

Sponsored by the Connecticut Postsecondary Education Committee

With funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services, Connecticut Department of Children and Families, the Connecticut State University System, and Southern Connecticut State University

## WELCOME

Thank you for joining our forum, “Postsecondary Education for Foster Youth: How We Can Help Them Succeed.” Although 70 percent of foster youth desire a college experience, postsecondary education has long been a challenge for youth from foster care and other non-traditional family arrangements. In fact, only three percent of youth from foster care, having developed the skills to balance academic demands and social pressures, graduate from college. Those who graduate often credit the support of at least one caring adult – a parent, teacher, school counselor, or other mentor – who helped them navigate the maze of campus life.

Since its inception in 2007, the Connecticut Postsecondary Education Committee – a diverse group of secondary and postsecondary education and child welfare professionals, and current and former foster and adoptive youth – has set out to increase the number of youth from care who graduate from postsecondary education. The Committee has explored the challenges youth face, discussed ways to break down barriers, and exchanged ideas about how to close gaps in the system. At today’s interactive forum, we hope to share what we have learned and to learn from you about the challenges and opportunities we can address together.

We are pleased to offer presentations that address both a national and Connecticut perspective on postsecondary education for vulnerable youth, and want to give special thanks to the dynamic group of youth who are here to share their personal stories. We also encourage you to discuss what you learn today with your colleagues to ensure that youth from care gain the skills and supports they need to realize their dreams.

*- The Connecticut Postsecondary Education Committee*

## PANELISTS

### *Student Voices: Panel and Discussion*

- David Gillan, Casey Family Services alumnus and caseworker at Boys Village
- Vanessa Gonzalez, Casey Family Services alumna and a junior at St. Josephs College
- Laura Jimenez, Casey Family Services alumna and a sophomore at Southern Connecticut State University
- Jerry Moore, Department of Children and Families alumnus and a junior at Mitchell College
- Darren Ramos, Department of Children and Families alumnus, college graduate, and a technician at WFSB-TV Hartford Channel 3
- Lydie Vainqueur, Casey Family Services alumna, graduate of Southern Connecticut State University, and a purchasing agent at Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation
- Ghebreigziabher “G” Woldeghebriel, Department of Children and Families alumnus and a junior at Albertus Magnus College

### *How We Can Help Students Succeed: Panel and Discussion*

- Jim Barber, Director of Student Services at Southern Connecticut State University
- Anita Gliniecki, President of Housatonic Community College

## FORUM AGENDA

- 8:15 A.M.** Registration and Breakfast
- 9 A.M.** Welcome and Introductions  
*Laura Jimenez, Sophomore, Southern Connecticut State University*  
*Dr. Cheryl Norton, President, Southern Connecticut State University*  
*David Johnston, Senior Program Associate for Life Skills,*  
*The Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services*
- 9:30 A.M.** Postsecondary Education for Foster Youth across the Nation  
*John Emerson, Education Advisor, Child Welfare Practice Improvement,*  
*Casey Family Programs*
- 10:30 A.M.** Break
- 10:45 A.M.** Student Voices: Panel and Discussion  
*Moderator: T.J. Michalski, Social Worker and Life Skills Specialist,*  
*The Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services*
- 12:15 P.M.** Lunch
- 1 P.M.** Postsecondary Education for Foster Youth in Connecticut  
*Dr. Brett Rayford, Bureau Chief for Adolescent and Transitional Services,*  
*Connecticut Department of Children and Families*
- 1:30 P.M.** How We Can Help Students Succeed: Panel and Discussion  
*Moderator: Meghan Collins, Director of Government Relations, Connecticut*  
*Community Colleges*
- 2:30 P.M.** Next Steps: Opportunities, Challenges, and Partnerships  
*Moderators: Jill Ferraiolo, Associate Vice Chancellor for Government Relations/*  
*Communications, Connecticut State University System, and Gloria Ragosta,*  
*Vice President, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges*
- 3 P.M.** Closing  
*David Johnston, Senior Program Associate for Life Skills,*  
*The Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services*

## *Connecticut Postsecondary Education Committee*

### **MISSION**

To increase the ability of foster youth to attend, and succeed in, postsecondary education.

### **GOALS**

- Increase the percentage of foster youth who go on to postsecondary education.
- Increase the percentage of foster youth who graduate from postsecondary education.
- Enhance the capacity of secondary schools to assist foster youth in applying to and getting accepted to postsecondary education and in securing financial aid.
- Enhance existing support services of Connecticut postsecondary education institutions to better serve foster youth.
- Facilitate discussion among key players, including the Department of Children and Families, private agencies, statewide educational agencies, higher education institutions, and others.

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