



PRESS RELEASE

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CHILDNET LAUNCHES INTERNSHIP/MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR LOCAL FOSTER CARE TEENS

PLANTATION, FL – Local foster care youth are turning to ChildNet for support in another area of their life. The lead agency in Broward County has launched an Internship/ Mentorship program for the local foster care teens that they serve. The goal of the program is two-fold: to provide foster care teens with exposure to the working world and different career options while offering them the much needed support and guidance that a mentor provides.

The Internship/Mentorship program, which kicked off on December 1st, matches teenagers interested in working in a particular field with ChildNet staff that works in that area. The program launched with nine foster care teens. Milo Jetkins, a former foster youth and Economics major at Florida Atlantic University, is considering a career in the legal field. He has been matched with Derrick Roberts, ChildNet's General Counsel, who has an extensive background in the Dependency Court system. Derrick and the nine other ChildNet employees participating in the program are excited about being able to encourage foster care youth and help guide them towards a career in the right direction. "Since many of our staff in supporting departments do not get to work hands on with our youth this program will provide them with the opportunity to have a direct positive impact on the life of a teen in foster care," said Gerren Bray, the Program's Coordinator and ChildNet's HR Recruiter. Gerren started the program with much support from ChildNet's management team to provide career guidance and moral support for children in foster care. "Many times our young adults are unsure what path to take after high school or college; interning can help them pinpoint aspects of work that they like," said Dipak Parekh, ChildNet's Chief Financial Officer. Emilio Benitez, Chief Executive Officer, is equally excited about the new program. "This is a promising program that we hope will grow to include local businesses and organizations," said Emilio.

Interested teens must complete the application process and be selected to participate in the program. The deciding committee mainly looks for initiative and a sense of responsibility from the applicants. Participants must be enrolled in school full-time and will receive community service hours for their involvement. ChildNet staff is responsible for arranging a work schedule for teen interns. For mentees, staff is responsible for speaking with them at least once every two weeks.

ChildNet is the private, not for profit organization selected by the state through a competitive process to serve as the local Community Based Care lead agency. As the lead agency, ChildNet manages the local system of services and supports for Broward's abused, abandoned and neglected children and their caregivers. This system of care was developed with extensive input from local stakeholders and its effective implementation depends upon their continued support. For more information on ChildNet, visit the Web site at www.ChildNet.us or call (954) 414-6000.

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