



PRESS RELEASE

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LOCAL FOSTER TEEN LANDS PART-TIME JOB OPPORTUNITY WITH CHILDNET

PLANTATION, FL – Two years ago, at age 16, Sela McGuire was labeled a “runaway” by the foster care system. Today, thanks to a local grant that provides supportive employment to former foster teens, Sela is working part time at ChildNet, Broward County’s Community Based Care lead agency.

First Steps for Independent Living is a newly created program funded by the Community Foundation of Broward County that is specifically designed for teens aging out of foster care. The part-time position will provide Sela with the opportunity to gain working experience while reaching out to fellow teens in foster care. “I am excited about working at ChildNet but even more so I am looking forward to speaking to other teens like myself and letting them know that they can make it.” In her new job, Sela will make presentations to new ChildNet trainees and foster parents during quarterly trainings about how to better understand and relate to teens in foster care. She will be speaking to teens at local group homes, attending county-wide Independent Living meetings and assisting with creating the monthly Independent Living newsletter. “We are happy to have Sela on our team,” said Michael Stephens, Independent Living Supervisor. “She is a very intelligent and confident young lady who has real life experiences to share with our teens.”

Sela, a full time student at Hallandale Adult Center first learned about the position in an issue of Turning Point, ChildNet’s monthly Independent Living Newsletter. She immediately contacted, her Aftercare Specialist at ChildNet to express her interest in the part time position. Soon after, Sela interviewed with Theresa Kennedy, ChildNet Director of Permanency, and was later offered the job. “This is a win-win situation for ChildNet and Sela,” notes Theresa. “Sela will gain work experience in a supportive environment and ChildNet will be able to get ideas and opinions from Sela on how to better serve our teens.” Sela’s responsible and mature attitude helped her to live independently while focusing on completing high school and working part time. These are the same qualities, ChildNet recognized when they interviewed her and selected her from a pool of seventeen other applicants.

Emilio Benitez, ChildNet’s Chief Executive Officer is equally excited about having Sela on board. “The grant funded by the Community Foundation of Broward is making a difference in the life of a teen transitioning out of foster care,” said Emilio. “This is an exceptional opportunity for Sela to learn professional skills and gain work experience while impacting fellow teens in foster care.”

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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