Life Link Home Provides a Safe, Supportive, Residential Environment for Foster Children



Supplied by Robins' Nest Inc.

The path from Foster Care to Adulthood can be rough. Foster children, many of whom have been in multiple placements, do not have the same opportunities to follow in someone's footsteps, as children who have been raised in loving stable homes. They haven't always had the support of a traditional family. Without a solid foundation and fond memories, many of these young people have only undesirable footprints to lead them into an uncertain future.

Of the 12,500 New Jersey youth in foster care at least 500 "age out" of the foster care system every year. Forced to leave the foster care system at age 18, many become homeless and lack the necessary life-skills to fend for themselves. To make matters worse, emergency and permanent housing services in Gloucester and adjacent counties have been virtually non-existent, leaving these young people unsure how or where to begin to prepare for a positive future.

Life Link Homes is an innovative new program by Robins' Nest that has been created to give young people the guidance and direction they need to take positive steps into adulthood. The program is geared toward youth between the ages of 18 and 21. Life Link Homes provides former foster children a safe place to live and the added support of life-skills training, crisis intervention, counseling and guidance instrumental in their transition toward independence.

June lived in a homeless shelter during her youth and was "aging out" of foster care. She was unsure what she was going to do. June went from despair to hope when she left the shelter to move into her own apartment at the Residences of Life Link Homes. That was two years ago.

June says that without Life Link Homes, she probably would have been forced to "live on the streets." The statistics about youth aging out of the system are sobering. Many become homeless, get pregnant, do not graduate high school, become drug involved and have trouble with the law.

June is resilient and driven. Acquiring stable supportive housing has enabled her to avoid all of these pitfalls and chart her course for a promising future.

In addition to providing June with a safe and secure home, Life Link provides June with life-skills instruction, employment and mentoring services, age appropriate supervised living, educational opportunities and social group experiences. She has developed her leadership skills by becoming an active member of the Youth Advisory Board, which informs State policy makers about the needs, concerns and challenges confronting youth who have aged out of New Jersey's foster care system.

The Life Link Homes staff cheered as June received her high school diploma from Gloucester County Institute of Technology. At the close of the ceremony, a glowing June dressed in cap and gown jubilantly waved her diploma surrounded by Robins' Nest staff, extended family, a fellow Life Link resident and her Robins' Nest mentor Angela Petrongolo.

Now that she has achieved her goal to receive a high school diploma, she is even more determined to further her education by attending college.

"June is a strong, confident young lady who has inspired me to be a better person", said Angela Petrongolo, June's Robins' Nest mentor.

To learn more about June and her story, please visit the Corporation for Supportive Housing's website at www.csh.org and click on Tenants' Stories and then click on My Story: A New Life through Supportive Housing.



To learn more about Robins' Nest and the many other programs offered go to the website at ***www.robinsnestinc.org.***



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