

CONNECTING
teens and adults

CREATING
families

CHANGING
lives



FAMILY & YOUTH
INITIATIVE

2023

Annual Report

Nationally, in 2022, there were **30,339** teens in foster care ages 12 and older waiting to be adopted, but only **8,316** of them were adopted.* In other words, **less than a third of older children ever find adoptive families**. The rest remain in care until they age out.

In 2022, only 922 seventeen-year-olds were adopted anywhere in the US.

*US Department of Health and Human Services, The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (or AFCARS)

Our Mission:

Family & Youth Initiative creates a supportive community and lasting relationships for teens and young adults who are in or have aged out of foster care.



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Thank You!



A Game-Changing Introduction Leads to *Adoption*

Christina and Steve Levendosky knew they wanted to adopt an older child to grow their family. Christina had always had a heart for it. When they understood they wouldn't easily have biological children, they began discussing adoption more seriously.

Their case manager at Barker Adoption Foundation suggested they consider meeting teens who are in foster care, which led them to DCFYI. Their lives have changed dramatically – and positively – since that day in early 2022.

"I met DJ at my first event," recalls Christina of the boy who was 16 and not too talkative. "We talked a little but not too much. DJ was very quiet. He's an introvert."

Christina became a regular at DCFYI events. Then Steve met DJ in July at a Nats game attended by other DCFYI youth and volunteers, and the two bonded over their love of baseball.

DJ's DCFYI mentor, Heather, was a wonderful support for all of them. "Heather guided me through a lot of what teenagers are like," says Steve. "She was a huge advocate for DJ. That was invaluable, that someone was there for him."

“By the summer, we were starting to think strongly about whether we were a good fit for DJ, and about what he wanted and needed in a family,” Christina says.

The couple followed DCFYI’s guidance to not tell the teen they were considering adoption. They talked with DJ’s case worker about his needs and whether they would be the right parents for him. The social worker also talked to DJ about his thoughts and feelings toward adoption. They believed their parenting style would suit him, and they knew that he was, as Christina says, “a great kid, and we loved him.”

Christina and Steve were approved as DJ’s adoptive parents that fall and he moved in with them the following March. His adoption was finalized in the fall of 2023, only a year and a half from the day Christina and DJ first met.

“Our lives have become very DJ-centric,” says Steve. “After the first few months, it would have seemed strange without him.”

DJ realized a long-held dream when, in the spring of his junior year at his new high school, he tried out for and made the varsity baseball team. The team went all the way to the state tournament. From his spot on third base, DJ found another family in the baseball team.

In the summer, DJ does normal teen stuff. Take a family vacation to Wisconsin. Go rafting for the first time. Attend adoption camp. And it’s all because Christina and Steve’s adoption case manager knew of DCFYI.

“I’m a huge fan of DCFYI, for multiple reasons,” Christina says, noting that the opportunity to meet teens in person, through low-pressure events, was a game-changer.

“We would never have met DJ without DCFYI. His profile wasn’t out there being shared. And most importantly, DJ on paper is different from DJ in real life,” says Christina. “DJ in person is a real person. Being able to meet him and know how wonderful he is, we’re so grateful.”



Your Support Matters!

In 2023, we successfully maintained programming through a long and unexpected gap in staffing. By revising staff positions and new hires, we are now staffed to better meet youth needs. Two staff members are former DCFYI participants, bringing their own lived experience to better support both youth and volunteers.

We revised aspects of the Open Table program based on youth experience and feedback from the first year of implementation. Several youth who thought they wanted Tables decided it wasn't the right time. We will create Tables for them when they're ready. Since youth participation in all DCFYI programming is voluntary, we allow youth to join us when the time is right and step back as they choose.

Support from generous donors like you kept eight young adults from becoming homeless. Through our Fund for Critical Youth Needs, these youth who had aged out of foster care were able to obtain first apartments or remain in their current housing. We also helped four other youth with transportation to or materials they needed to start new jobs.

	2023	2022
Teens in program	18	21
Young adults aged out of foster care in program	25	22
Prospective volunteers who attended orientation or info session	103	134
Youth (teens and young adults) matched with mentors	20	24
Teens matched with host families	2	1
Teens placed for adoption	1	1
Teens whose adoption was finalized	1	2
Youth newly matched with Open Tables	2	7

DCFYI
Income Statement
(Profit & Loss)

	2023	2022
REVENUE & SUPPORT		
Grants	\$44,500	\$62,940
Contributions from Individuals	\$143,281	\$169,841
Contributions from Organizations/Foundations	\$36,943	\$22,208
Contributions from Fundraising Event	\$67,736	\$58,045
Other Income (includes Employer Match and Interest)	\$15,212	\$19,120
TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT	\$307,672	\$332,154
EXPENSES BY PROGRAM		
Program Services	\$237,350	\$251,960
Management and General	\$17,931	\$24,451
Fundraising	\$86,029	\$59,109
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$341,310	\$335,520
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(\$33,638)	(\$3,366)

DCFYI
Cash Balance Statement

	2023	2022
END-OF-YEAR CASH BALANCE		
	\$182,427	\$212,985
CASH BALANCE AS % OF TOTAL ASSETS		
	94%	94%



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