

2/27/15

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the adolescent unit social workers of the Norwalk Region, we strongly urge and encourage the continued support for the Work-To-Learn Programs and initiatives throughout our state. Over the years, the Work-To-Learn program at FSW has helped numerous foster care youth transition successfully into adulthood. Many of the former DCF clients have maintained supportive relationships with the staff long after being involved in the program. The one quality that is unique to the Work-To-Learn model, is that it offers services as long as the child needs the services instead of being on a time limit. It offers outcome-based, individualized programming that impacts not only each youth, but the community as well.

Throughout the years the Work and Learn programs help us bridge the learning and life skills gaps that challenge many of our youth. Many of our youth do not have the built in networks that many of us were afforded as developing young adults which provided us with invaluable advocates, experience and skills that were the foundation for future success in both the academic realm as well as employment. The Youth who participate in the Work and Learn Programs gain employment skills that have helped them gain confidence and maintain employment, acquire money management skills and have been able to save their money to purchase cars and live in safe, stable housing. Many have also obtained college degrees. In addition, they have been connected with businesses in the community and have learned how to advocate for themselves. Without the support of the Work-To-Learn at FSW, these youth would lose a significant advocate and resource that has supported many youth and increased their knowledge and skills necessary to be successful adults.

The Norwalk Area Adolescent Unit,

Christopher Ragsdale
Erica Perkins
Ramon Sanchez
Willis Powell