

Aging out of foster care in Delaware

In Delaware, young people age out of foster care at age 18 or upon graduation from high school. They enter the adult world often with an extended history of no stability, little trust in "the system" and people in general and few skills that support them being fully independent.

Having been told where and with whom to live (often experiencing many changes) and what to do with little opportunity to make the decisions, many just want to be free of the system. But then what?

With few resources, they set out into the adult world. But they aren't alone. ILYA, a Social Justice Program of First Unitarian Church of Wilmington is here to help.

For more information about ILYA contact:

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Youth Painting Courthouse Mural

**Serving Young Adults
Aging Out of Foster Care
in
New Castle County, Delaware
Since 2005**

ILYA

Independent Living For Young Adults

**Supporting social justice in
our community**





What is ILYA

ILYA (Independent Living for Young Adults) is a social justice program of the First Unitarian Church of Wilmington. ILYA supports young people who are aging out of foster care in New Castle County, Delaware through a number of projects.

We know that through no fault of their own, these young people struggle with the transition to adulthood when they've had so much instability in their younger lives. Many have been moved to different foster homes multiple times which also means changing schools. They often end up not trusting adults or the system to take care of them. They often don't have the practical or social skills to make a good transition alone.

ILYA's goal is to provide support... to let these young people know their community does care about them.

I aged out of foster care about two years ago. As you can imagine the transition from living in a foster home to moving into my own place was extremely difficult. Thankfully, I've had a lot of help and it has made the transition much easier than if I were to do it on my own. When I first moved into my apartment I didn't have the basic necessities like light bulbs, cleaning supplies, silverware and even plates. It was also hard to buy most of these things because I did not have the money but ILYA really helped me out. Student care packages that included books, snacks and school supplies always offered support to let me know I wasn't alone when I thought I was. That has made all the difference in where I am today and how far I've come.

So many foster kids like me are in similar situations where they don't have any aid and feel completely alone. ILYA is working to support aged-out foster children in New Castle County so they can go on to lead better lives no matter where they've come from. It fills my heart with joy to know that there are so many people dedicated to helping aged-out foster children. Thank you so much! – ED 2015

Throughout the year, we ask church members and friends and others in the community to help us support these young people by donating funds and/or other specific items for specific projects. All donations are tax deductible and members of the ILYA team are always ready and willing to facilitate donations when needed.

Can you help?

We are always looking for help with this work. Perhaps you want to offer financial support or donate specific items that are needed. Maybe you want to give of your time and your talents. Or you might have contacts that will be avenues of support. Anyway that you can help...

The ILYA team thanks you!!

ILYA Projects/Teams

- **Student Care Packages**
Sending "care packages" 5-6 times during school semesters to bolster morale – like what you'd send to your child away at school.
- **Supportive Grants**
One-time grants to assist with apartment or utility security deposits, admission fees, books, emergency needs.
- **Furniture and Household Goods**
Arranges for free furniture and household goods for a first apartment.
- **Holiday Giving**
Facilitates fulfilling "wish lists" submitted by young people at winter holiday time.
- **Graduation Backpack/Pizza Party**
Provides graduation gifts and a graduation pizza party (often the only celebration these young people get). Creates the opportunity to build support networks among the youth.
- **New Apartment Kits**
Provides basic items that get a young person started in their first apartment out on their own.
- **Baby Showers**
Help create a positive, supportive atmosphere when a baby is expected. Provide basics for safe, healthy baby care.
- **Educational/Study Support**
Assists with study skills/subject content/application forms/entrance exam practice.