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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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

Youth Painting Courthouse Mural
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.

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.