

Foster Care Support Project



The Problem

According to the Connecticut DCF's 2017 report, a large proportion of children in Connecticut's foster care system do not receive the adequate attention or support they require to thrive. While addressing neglect should be a task for social workers, these agencies simply do not have enough resources to employ more workers to meet the complex needs of these children. As a result, they have veered towards more cost-effective options, such as placing these children in group homes or institutional care, or even just putting these children on long waitlists until they can decide where best to place them. Without individualized attention, these foster-care children then become more susceptible to predation and feelings of abandonment.

The Solution

Our project is dedicated to pairing up student mentors with local foster children as a way of both encouraging personal growth in the children and nurturing more supportive relationships in their lives. To this end, we have partnered up with a local foster care organization that helps facilitate these interactions. We envision this model of collaboration replicated across the entire state, so that ultimately all colleges can create partnerships with neighboring foster care organizations and collectively give mentors to all of Connecticut's 4,000 foster children.

The Ecosystem

Nonprofit organizations such as Big Brothers and Big Sisters have been matching at-risk youth with adults of all ages. The relationships this organization has created have been shown to significantly improved educational outcomes and socialization skills. Several schools throughout the state offer similar programs, such as Yale and UCONN which have independent student interest groups that work with their local foster children. While such efforts are necessary and worthwhile, there continues to be no joint effort by colleges and trade schools to connect their students with local foster children. The FCSP's emphasis on collaboration between Wesleyan and neighboring colleges and trade schools will enhance its ability to reach more children with greater effect in its campaign to reach all of Connecticut's foster population.

What Success Looks Like

In the immediate future, our goal is to replicate our program in a few of the colleges and trade schools that are geographically closest to Wesleyan. Since we already know that the mentoring project at one institution is feasible, we will want to observe how a collaboration between several institutions will function. As with all projects, it will be important to assess the strengths and weaknesses of this local model of expansion so that, when the time comes, we can introduce a refined and effective project to institutions in other parts of the state. Ultimately, we envision our project reaching every foster child in the state, with however many colleges and trade schools that such an ambitious goal will require to participate. We intend to create a mentoring network between all of the institutions that participate in the project so that resources and information are effectively shared.

Timeline

SHORT-TERM GOALS

1. SPRING 2019:
 - a. Hold a sports clinic for the children
 - b. Partner with a second foster care organization
 - c. Identify a potential college partner
2. SUMMER 2019:
 - a. Continue discussions with potential college partner
3. FALL 2019:
 - a. Begin working with college partner
 - b. Begin working at second foster care organization
 - c. Second cohort begins its work
 - d. Hold at least 2 events (clinics, field trips, workshops)
 - e. Identify a potential trade school partner
4. WINTER 2019:
 - a. Continue discussions with potential trade school partner

LONG-TERM GOALS

- Establish a strong relationship with all of Connecticut's trade schools and colleges
- Hold regular events (clinics, field trips, workshops)
- Either directly or through our partner institutions, reach all of CT's foster care organizations and their ~4,000 foster children
- Obtain funding through partnerships with community organizations and various charitable foundations
- Partner with DCF and ultimately be absorbed into their organization

Budget

- \$850 -- Academic and recreational supplies for mentoring
- \$1800 -- 3 sports clinics / workshops for children
- \$1100 -- Zipcar transportation (\$27/car x 4 cars x 10 weeks)
- \$1250 -- Expansion efforts (website, partnering with neighboring schools, community outreach)

Our Team

MEMBERS



LUKE
LEZHANSKY '20
Coordinator
MAJOR: English



KATERIN ORTEGA
VILLANUEVA '20
Relations Manager
MAJOR: College of
East Asian Studies

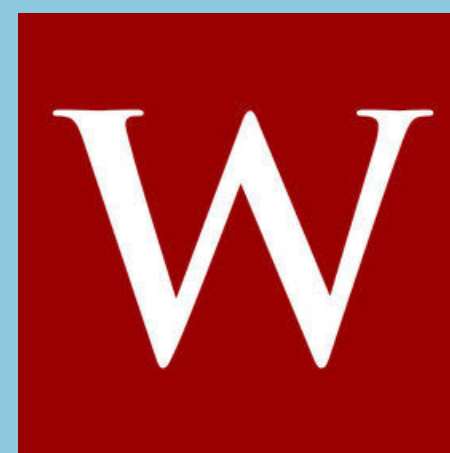


ANGELA DUONG '21
Finance Manager
MAJOR:
Government



RUBY LU '19 -
Logistics Manager
MAJOR: Math, Film

Partners:



The Institute of
Professional Practice, Inc.