

What's Happening In My Region?



1 Region 1's Youth Specialist position was vacated in June but should be filled by the time you are reading this newsletter! The Youth Leadership Councils will continue in Amarillo and Lubbock, so look for more information on upcoming meetings. If you do not receive notice of these and are interested in attending, please contact the PAL staff. Your participation is important and we want to hear from you! Traci Baker, PAL Staff 806-354-6263

2 Region 2's youth have had a very busy summer with Life Skills Training, conferences and the Aging out Seminars. We continue to be very busy as we prepare for the next set of Aging Out Seminars and college tours. I want to wish you all good luck as you gear up for your next school year. Courtney Valdez, PAL Staff 940-235-1938

3 For Region 3 the next Aging Out Seminar will be in Collin County on August 24th. For more information call Katherine Stewart at 940-566-4076. Soon there will be a new Youth Specialist and facilitator for the youth group, C4t2, in Region 3. Stay tuned for more details. Rebecca L. Daniel, PAL Supervisor 817-255-2311

4 Region 4 focused on advocacy this past spring and successfully learned, practiced and understood advocacy better as a group. We are now shifting our focus towards community activities and engagement, with several meetings planned. We will be giving back to communities, learning about opportunities in our communities, and considering what impact being in foster care has on us as a community member wanting to be involved. We would like you to join us in learning more about what opportunities are in our communities, so please contact the Youth Specialist for more information about the next event! Jennifer Mace, Youth Specialist 903-533-4110

5 We just had the Regional Teen Conference here in Region 5 and it was a great success! The young adults heard real stories about the impact of drinking and driving from MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) and the victims of the incidents. They toured the amazing campus of Lamar University, and enjoyed activities that stemmed from the "Minute to Win It" game show. Every youth left the conference with an independent living door prize. We also had youth participate in the Texas Teen Conference at Texas Women's University in Denton, TX. The young adults and sponsors enjoyed great entertainment throughout the entire stay, as well as inspirational workshops and fishbowl sessions. The trip to Six Flags made the conference even more fun, exciting, and daring! Can't wait until next year! Shaneka Guidry, Youth Specialist 409-951-3368

6 Summer fun in the sun! Region 6 brings that phrase to life as we rolled out H.A.Y. (Houston Alumni and Youth) day at our transition center. H.A.Y. day included various fun activities with a dj on deck and plenty of good bbq. This was by far the greatest alumni event we have ever seen, with approximately 120 people in the house! I have to hand it to Lasharon Hallman, Charles Lewis, and Mary Green for being the brains behind this operation, along with the helping hands of staff members. It was absolutely great to have such a huge presence of young adults all together, fraternizing with one another and simply having a great time. Until next time, stay cool and enjoy your summer to the fullest! Gaby Valladares, Youth Specialist 713-884-3300

7 Summer has been full of trips and activities in Region 7! We wrapped up our series of Aging Out Seminars for younger youth all across our region. Youth also attended the Texas Teen Conference at Texas Women's University in Denton and our Texas State College Conference held in San Marcos, TX. Look out for our new calendar with this coming year's events! Meagan LeLeux, PAL Staff 512-834-3813

8 Let's hear it for Region 8. Three of our young adults, Stacy Espinoza, Aaliyah Butler, and Hannah Gutierrez, were selected to do an internship for the summer with Senator Lloyd Dogett. The YAlA (Youth Alumni Initiating Advocacy) has collaborated with YTIA (Youth Transitioning into Adulthood) and is continuing a 4 month project with Habitat for Humanity. We are helping our community one family at a time. Our Aging Out Seminar is in full effect and will be taking place on July 31st. Jennifer Elizalde, Youth Specialist 210- 216-1135

9 School is around the corner and Region 9 is ready!! PAL Life skills Classes are done for this year and the Aging Out Seminars will begin. Region 9 will be having one in September and it is really important for those of you who get an invitation to attend. Also we will be having a regional YLC meeting on August 9th before school starts and there will be a presentation for you about Foster Care Redesign!! We are super excited! Call Daniela Ontiveroz, Youth Specialist, if you have any questions 432-260-8719.

10 Region 10's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) members voted that the summer community project will take place at an animal shelter! We've been working on developing a program and skit for our annual CARE conference this fall, which will aim to educate foster parents and professionals on topics of permanency, stability, gangs, and children's rights. Come out and be a part of this growing revolution towards getting involved in your community, and having your voices heard. April McWilliams, Youth Specialist 915-521-3815

11 The Teens Advocating for Change Organization (TACO) is having an exciting Summer! 10 Youth and 5 Staff from the Corpus Christi Area took a trip to Six Flags, Fiesta Texas on Tuesday, July 16th. The trip was funded partially from Region 11 YLC Fundraising and a generous donation from the Foster Angels of South Texas. Also, 58 Region 11 Youth attended the UTPA College Conference in Edinburg, Texas on Wednesday, July 24th. In August, the TACO Group from Laredo will also be going to Six Flags, Fiesta Texas and the Valley Group will be heading to Schlitterbahn at South Padre Island. The Placement Disruption Meetings which are being implemented in Region 11 have been helpful to everyone involved, whether the placement is salvaged, or not. These meetings give the CPS staff, CPA staff, foster parents, and children and youth in care the opportunity to come together to create positive solutions. Kassandra Villarreal, Youth Specialist 361-878-7571



Region 11 YLC

Food For Thought!

Food is a vital part of your every day excellence; the right food can make you sharper both in the classroom and on the sports field. Follow these tips to stay focused and energized throughout the day!

Be energized! A key role in both your health and your ability to perform is to eat good healthy balanced meals throughout the day that contain protein, carbohydrates and vitamins. Here are some cooking ideas for you:

Breakfast

- Most important meal of the day!
- Gives your body the energy to work, both mentally and physically.
- Gets your metabolism going, allowing for your body to start burning calories.

Lunch

- Time to refuel. Think of your body as a car; you're running on half a tank, so you put more gas into it to make sure you can keep driving.

Dinner

- Brings back all the nutrients you lost throughout the day.

Breakfast and Lunch Ideas

Berried Oatmeal

Ingredients:

- ½ cup quick-cook one minute oatmeal (non-instant)
- 1 cup skim milk
- ¼ cup fresh or frozen berries

Directions:

Make sure to mix the oatmeal and milk in a bowl that is microwavable.

You can change the amount of milk depending on the desired thickness.

Microwave for a minute, stir and then put in the berries that you like.

Yum!



Roast Beef Wrap

Ingredients:

- 18" whole-wheat wrap
- 4 oz. (4 slices) lean roast beef or sandwich meat of your choosing
- 4 thin slices of tomato
- ½ cup lettuce
- ½ cup red or green peppers
- 2 tsp. mustard

Directions:

Spread the mustard on the entire wrap (whole wheat, is healthier than flour)

Next, place the slices of lean roast beef, lettuce, peppers, and tomatoes on the wrap.

Finally, roll the wrap and cut it into four pieces.



Ready to Drive

Did you know the Texas Driver's License fee is waived for Foster Youth?

The Texas driver license is free to youth in foster care who are either:

- Between 15 to 18 years of age and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) is the legal custodian, or
- Between 18 to 21 years of age and residing in a paid TDFPS foster care placement.

Here are a few facts you need to know:

- If you are under 18 years of age, your DFPS primary caseworker, foster parent, or residential child-care provider must provide a signature of authorization on the *Driver License Application*.
- Your DFPS primary caseworker or other authorized DFPS staff must sign and complete the *Foster Youth Driver License Fee Waiver* letter affirming eligibility.
- Your foster care provider needs to provide proof of residency to you at the time you apply for your license by signing the *Texas Residency Affidavit*.

For more information:

- o Visit www.dps.texas.gov or call 512-424-2600 for licensing requirements.
- o Visit www.texasyouthconnection.org to check out the *Driver License General Information Foster Youth Fact Sheet*.



School is Here

To make sure that you are ready for the year, follow these tips below:

- Be sure to get a **good night's sleep. Eight hours** is the recommended amount of sleep you need to be productive during the day. It can take some time for your body to get used to the new sleep schedule.
- Create routines** so that you can be prepared for all the challenges that await you in your new school year. Block out times for certain activities like homework or football practice to **effectively use your time**.
- Create a list of tasks** that you have to do in the morning before school (or after) to help you remember and **have goals!** Make this school year your best one yet. Set goals and expectations for your academic and extracurricular life.
- Don't procrastinate!** Make sure you start your homework early so that you can complete it on time! This will relieve stress and ensure academic success.
- Don't be a stranger to working hard!** Whether in the classroom or on the court (or field), give it your all and **don't be afraid to ask for help** from a teacher or coach when you are in need.



My PALs

My name is **Emanuel**. I'm from Rio Grande City, TX and I am 16 years old. My favorite sport is Basketball. Whenever I have free time I spend it playing basketball or swimming. I sometimes play video games. I like to meet new people and that is why I am writing to get a Pen Pal.



Do You Want
a Pen Pal?

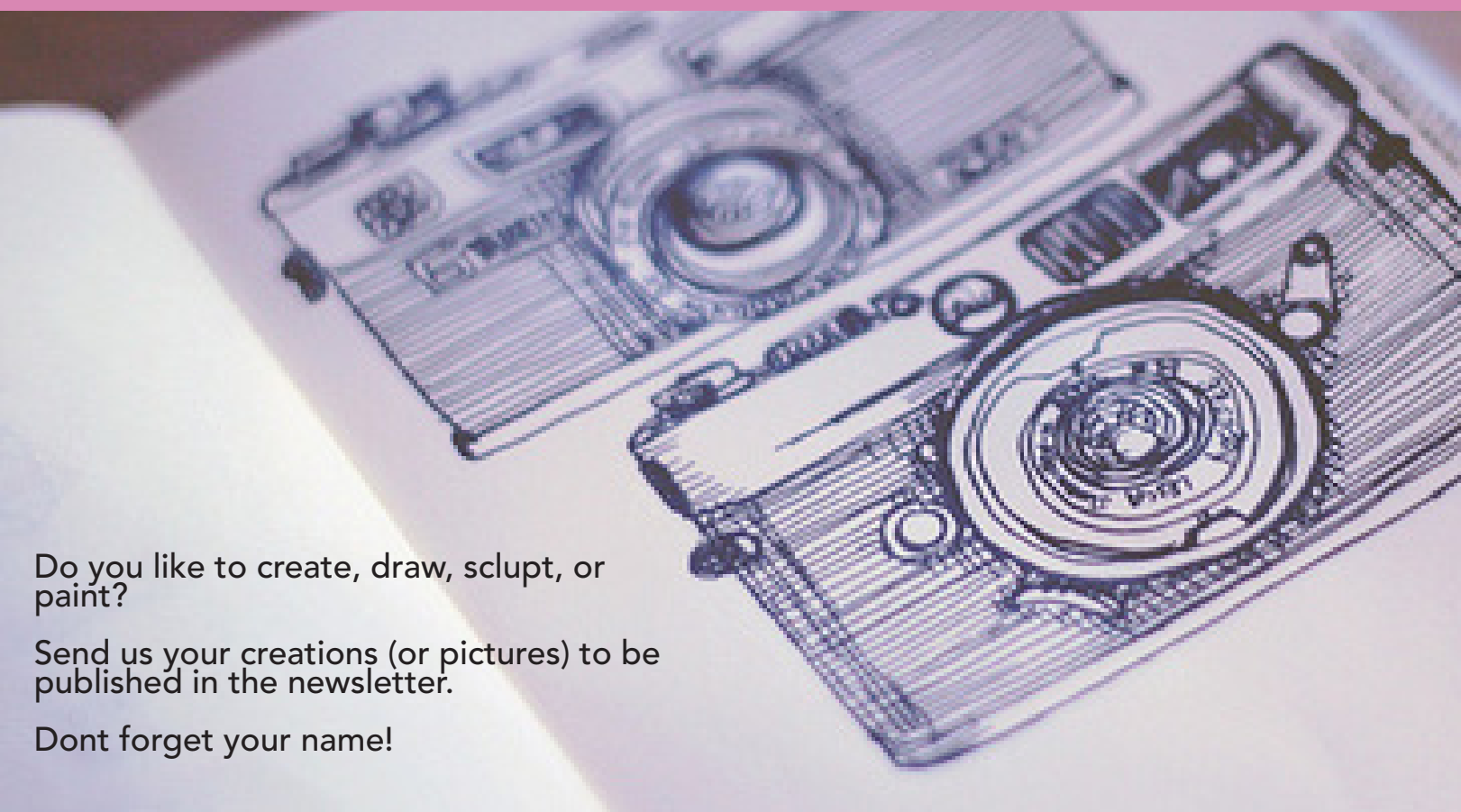
Send your responses
or new letters to:

News for Us! Editor
2525 Wallingwood Dr.,
Suite 1503
Austin, TX 78746

Don't forget to write
your name and
address on all
materials you send!

My name is **Montoya Monique T**. I am 17 years old and was born and raised in Houston and its greater area. 3rd ward, Channelview, Sugarland, Spring, you name it! I love basketball, shopping, reading, cooking, swimming, being on the internet, etc. I like listening to all types of music like rap, R&B, Latin, Soul, and Gospel. I also enjoyed PEAKS camp for the first time this year. I've been through fire and rain, never expecting my life to be the same. I am moving forward now and not dwelling on the past. I am currently in the Cosmetology program in high school so that upon graduation next year, I will be a licensed cosmetologist!

Hello! My name is **Lane** but my friends call me Snow. I am 5'5" or 5'6". I am an outdoor person and like to play football. I also like music! I love God and he is my Father. I am currently in Lee County. I would really like a pal to talk to!



Do you like to create, draw, sculpt, or paint?

Send us your creations (or pictures) to be published in the newsletter.

Dont forget your name!

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Texas Youth Connection

Check out the Texas Youth Connection Facebook page.
It is located at the web address:
www.facebook.com/TexasYouthConnection

This Facebook page provides current resources, benefits and other information such as National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) updates that are important to transitioning youth. The page will allow the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to connect with YOU!!

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News For Us

Derek Clark



Diego Fuller



Texas Teen Conference 2013

"Do you hear that? It's my future speaking volumes!" was the theme for the annual Texas Teen Conference. This three-day event was held from July 8th-10th at Texas Women's University, located in Denton, Texas. There were over 215 youth and adult sponsors in attendance.

The first day featured a booth fair, where organizations from all across the state showcased their programs and services. After the booth fair, youth went on to hear inspiring words from a successful alumnus of foster care, Derek Clark. After listening to Mr. Clark's story and hearing his impressive—and unexpected—hip-hop performance, youth finished the evening with a poolside pizza party.

The first-half of the second day focused on education. Youth participated in several workshops to enhance their knowledge and skills on living a healthy, successful, life. Workshops featured information on advocacy, poetry, relationships, drug abuse, and money management—just to name a few. Additionally, youth and CPS staff held a fishbowl discussion where they had the opportunity to ask each other questions and thoroughly discuss their answers.

The second-half of day two involved a chartered bus ride to Six Flags over Texas in Arlington, Texas.

Youth spent nearly all of the afternoon, and most of the evening, riding on roller coasters, playing carnival games, and enjoying the other features the amusement park had to offer.

The final day of the conference began with the leaders of The Department of Family and Protective Services addressing the youth in the audience. Commissioner John Specia and Assistant Commissioner Audrey Deckinga both took to the stage to address the summaries of the fishbowl discussions, answer questions from youth, and share their vision on how foster care will be improved with the input provided by them. Once this discussion concluded, youth got to experience an invigorating musical performance by foster care alumni, Diego Fuller. Mr. Fuller shared his talent and gave insight on finding inspiration and support; he encouraged youth to find a force that motivates them and keeps them on the right path. After the performance, youth enjoyed a catered banquet and listened to music, viewed pictures taken of the event, and socialized with the new friends they had made throughout the conference.

Texas Teen Conference 2013 was a tremendous success!

- Written by: Tym Belseth,
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