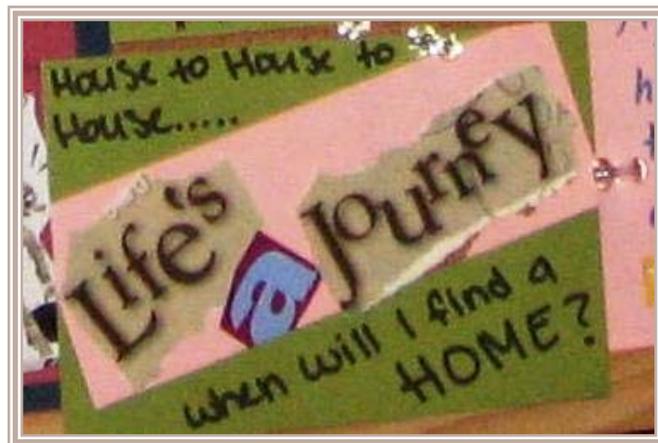


Winston Churchill Memorial Trust



Life & Social Skills and Independent Living Programmes



2007 Fellowship Report
Bethan Hole

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Above: Postcards produced by participants at the *It's My Life* conference in Atlanta, GA (30th Sept – 2nd Oct 2007)
 Title cover: Close-up of one of the above postcards (see bottom row, fourth from left)

Introduction

As a qualified social worker with an Msc in Applied Social Studies, and having worked in a number of social care settings, I am acutely aware of the barriers and difficulties in ensuring positive outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

At the time of applying to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, I had been working for over three years at Coram Housing & Support Services, a London-based charity providing supported accommodation to care leavers and homeless youths. My original role within this organisation had been to write, produce, implement and pilot an accredited life and social skills programme.

Believed to be the first accredited programme of this kind within the UK, and verified by AQA (Assessment & Qualifications Alliance) as part of its Unit Award Scheme, the programme aimed to offer a structured yet flexible resource tool for support staff in helping young people acquire the knowledge and experiences necessary to live independently as young adults. Having implemented the programme within the service, and in addition having set up six external pilot projects, I was keen to ensure continued programme evaluation and development.

My research and interest in this field had led me to discover a number of comparative programmes and initiatives in the USA and Canada, and my successful application to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, under the “Special Educational Needs” category, has given me a unique opportunity to learn about such provision and share my learning with interested colleagues and professionals.

Context

In the UK, almost three fifths of young men, and almost two fifths of young women aged 20-24 continue to live with their parents.^[1] Young people leaving care, homeless youths, asylum seekers and young offenders, however, are often expected to face the practical and emotional challenges of independent living at a much younger age. Moreover, they are less likely to have the same parental or familial support networks as their peers and in making the transition to adulthood, they are often therefore more vulnerable.

Research indicates that when compared with other young people, vulnerable youths are more likely to experience educational, financial and social exclusion, and to experience emotional and mental ill-health. Vulnerable young people have specific learning needs in that, by developing life and social skills, they can build resilience and learn coping mechanisms against the barriers and difficulties they face.

Life and social skills include such things as making decisions, solving problems, resolving conflicts, managing emotions, coping with stress, communicating effectively, self awareness, empathy, creative and critical thinking, respecting others and their differences, being an active citizen, taking responsibility for one's actions and practical self-care and home-care skills such as budgeting, shopping, cooking, cleaning, DIY etc.^[2]

Often based on cognitive behavioural and social learning psychological models, and increasingly, drawing from European social pedagogical theories and models of practice, a wide range of educational programmes and social care services exist in the UK, USA and Canada to equip young people with these essential independent living skills. Having completed this Fellowship I have learned a great deal about them and in writing this report, I hope to summarise my key learning outcomes.

UK FACTS & FIGURES

Young Offenders ^[3]

- When compared with all young people, those in custody are more likely to:
 - under-achieve at school
 - live in a disadvantaged neighbourhood
 - have been in local authority care
 - suffer from substance misuse problems
 - suffer from mental health problems
- Reconviction rates for young people on release from custody are high:
 - approx. 72% re-offend within 12 months,
 - 27% re-offend in the first month after release

Care Leavers ^[4]

- At any one time, approximately 60,000 children are in care and around 8,000 young people will be leaving care.
- In 2007, 25% of those leaving care were aged only 16, with those in residential care the most likely to leave at this age.
- 11% of children in care gained good GCSEs in 2005, compared to 56% of all children.
- At age 19, 19% of care leavers are in further education and 6% are in higher education. This compares to 38% of all young people in one form of education at age 19.
- Over 30% of care leavers are not in education, training or employment at age 19, compared to 113% of all young people.
- Research suggests that around 27% of adult prisoners have spent time in care (source: social exclusion unit 2002)
- Young women aged 15-17 who have been in care are 3 times more likely to become teenage mothers than others of their age.
- Black and mixed race children are over-represented among children in care (3% of children but 8% of children in care) and Asian children are under-represented (6% of children and 3% of children in care).
- There are around 3,000 unaccompanied asylum seeking children looked after by local authorities at any one time.

Homeless Youths ^[5]

- A report in 2000 estimated that there are approximately 32,000 homeless 16-21 year olds in Britain and one that in five 16-24 year olds experience homelessness at some time in their lives.
- Homeless young people are almost three times more likely to experience mental health problems and a third of homeless young people have attempted suicide.

Aims & Objectives

I approached a wide range of organisations in the USA and Canada and arranged an eight week travel itinerary (Appendix 1) in order to achieve the following project aims:

- To compare the needs of vulnerable young people aged 16-21 in the UK with those in the USA and Canada;
- To compare provision of services and resources in the UK with those in the USA and Canada;
- To find out how services in the USA and Canada measure outcomes and evaluate their programmes;
- To gain knowledge of web-based life and social skills educational resources;
- To gain knowledge and experience of alternative approaches in teaching life and social skills to vulnerable young adults.

My journey took me to West Palm Beach, Miami, Seattle, Edmonton, Denver and Alberta. Where possible, I was able to shadow professionals, observe programme delivery and meet young people to whom programmes are delivered. I also attended two national conferences in order to gain a broader perspective of independent living issues and provision of services in the USA.

Please see Appendix 2-7 and the photographs in this report for further details.



DENVER: Daniel Memorial Institute & National Independent Living Association "Growing Pains" Annual Conference: *Left to right*: audience at conference listening to speeches of young participants (venue: Adams Mark Hotel); conference logo; young participants speaking at the conference; young participants auditioning for "X-factor" style talent contest.



ATLANTA: Casey Family Programs "It's My Life" Annual Conference: *Left to right*: conference venue (Renaissance Waverly Hotel); "It's My Space" chill-out room for young participants; young participant posing for photographs; conference logo; interactive installation in the chill-out room for young participants to sign.

Key Findings

Needs Comparison

When compared with young people in the UK, vulnerable young people in the USA and Canada face similar barriers and difficulties and need similar support to gain the necessary life and social skills for independent living, as the following figures illustrate:

USA Facts & Figures

- 513,000 children and youth were in foster care on September 30, 2005. ^[6]
- 48% of all children and youth in foster care (247,645) were over the age of ten and 20% were 16 or older (104,710). ^[6]
- 42% of foster children experience three or more foster care placements. ^[7]
- 19% (96,593) of children live in group care or institutional settings. ^[7]
- In 2004 282,597 children exited foster care. Of these, 54% (149,154) were returned to their parents, 18% (50,567) were adopted, 12% left to live with relatives or via guardianships, 8% (22,741) “aged out” of foster care at 18 or older and 4% (10,722) left for other reasons (ran away, transferred, died). ^[7]
- 3 out of 10 of the nation’s homeless adults report a foster care history. ^[8]
- Children in foster care suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder at twice the rate of U.S. war veterans. ^[8]
- Nationally, African-American children are four times as likely and American Indian children about 3.5 times as likely as white children to be in state protective custody. ^[9]
- As a percentage, there are more children of color in the foster care system than in the general U.S. population. However, child abuse and neglect occur at about the same rate in all racial/ethnic groups. ^[9]
- A national study of youth in the foster care system by the Chapin Hall Center for Children found that: 54 percent earned a high school diploma; 2 percent obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher; 84 percent became a parent; 51 percent were unemployed; 30 percent had no health insurance; 25 percent had been homeless; and 30 percent were receiving public assistance. ^[9]

Canada Facts & Figures

- There are over 80,000 children and youth in child welfare care in Canada. This number has increased by 60% over the past 5 years. An additional 25,000 youth are in detention centres and youth justice facilities. ^[10]
 - Every time a youth in care moves to a new placement and new school, they fall approximately six months behind academically. Youth in care can move anywhere from 1 to 10 times a year. ^[10]
 - 90% of streets kids in Calgary had been in foster care. ^[11]
 - 45% of homeless youth had been in care. ^[11]
 - Studies suggest that when the transition from foster care is not well supported, youth are at greater risk for homelessness, sexual exploitation, victimization, and involvement in the criminal justice and child welfare systems. ^[12]
-

Throughout my journey, some differences in needs were, however, apparent and were mainly the result of differences in population and/or the welfare state systems. For example:

- In Canada, Aboriginal youths comprise a large segment of the overall Aboriginal population and are over represented in the care and juvenile justice systems. Aboriginal youths have lower levels of educational attainment than the overall youth population and, with the exception of university graduates, their chances for employment are less favourable than other youths at the same educational level.^[13] These factors, coupled with the likely experience of prejudice and discrimination, mean that Aboriginal youths are particularly vulnerable. During my visit to Edmonton I was both humbled to realise my ignorance of their struggles, and impressed by the professionals I met who strive to incorporate aspects of Aboriginal culture into their programmes in order to develop in youths a positive cultural self-identity.

- In Edmonton, drug use and gambling among young people is more prevalent than in other areas of Alberta ^[14] and present as added pressures to both youths and the professionals who serve them.
- When compared with the UK and Canada, youths in some US States can find it difficult to access to free/affordable health care or treatment and this factor again presents an added pressure to both youths and social care professionals.
- In both the USA and Canada, given their geography and size, youths who live in rural areas have limited access to public transport and are less likely to have the finances for a car. This impacts on their ability to find employment or maintain family contacts and again, adds to the stresses and demands placed upon them.



Service Provision

Government Provision for Youths leaving care / 'aging out'

As in the U.K., government legislation exists in both Canada and the USA to ensure that young people 'aging out' of care continue to receive support to transition from their foster or care home placements.

During the course of my Fellowship, I learned the most about the US federal government, which, following the Foster Care Independence Act in 1999 doubled the funding available for independent living programmes, allowed youths to have greater assets (up to \$10,000) without losing benefits and allowed states to use Medicaid dollars to provide health insurance coverage to former foster children until age 21.

With the passage of this act, the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program was created and Independent Living (IL) Coordinators now exist in each State to supervise the implementation of IL services for their agency. They coordinate initiatives such as the Independent Living Program (a voluntary programme for youths in foster care aged 15-17), Transitional Living Program (for youths aged 18-21 and still in state or tribal foster care and need assistance to live independently), Foster Care to 21 (enables up to 50 youths to stay in foster care after they turn 18 so that they can attend college or a vocational programme), and the Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV) which

has up to \$5000 in funds available to some foster youths (eligibility criteria applies) to help fund tuition and other education related costs.

Supported Accommodation

Supported accommodation projects are a key aspect of IL provision and enable young people to learn life skills such as budgeting and paying rent, cooking, cleaning, sharing with others, attending appointments etc. Having worked in a similar setting in the UK, I found it interesting to exchange ideas and compare approaches. I visited three organisations with supported accommodation projects: Chimo Youth Retreat (Edmonton), YMCA (Seattle), and Youth Emergency Service's START and SKY Programs (Edmonton). I also heard about many others during the two national conferences.

Though referral criteria, house rules, assessment methods, staffing levels etc often differ from project to project, the aims of each project are broadly similar and so, too, are the pressures. Staff turnover and staff training were common problems, as were lack of resources and anxieties about measuring outcomes.

Residential Treatment Programmes

Chimo Youth Retreat Centre's Healing Home, is an example of residential treatment provision for addicted youths. As such, they work in partnership with Alberta Alcohol and Drug Commission and through drug counselling, expressive arts and a therapeutic approach, aim to develop and improve young people's emotional and mental well-being.

Pre-Employment Programmes

These programmes are again a primary way in which youths can develop essential life and social skills. I encountered many such programmes during my eight weeks, particularly in Canada, where federal funding for employment-related initiatives appears to be more accessible. In order to meet funding criteria, the Canadian programmes share similar structures. They each have a programme of group sessions to teach employment-related skills, incorporate paid work experience placements, and pay youths an attendance fee and completion bonus.

But they also maintained their own identity, so that, for example, the Bent Arrow Wind Dancer Project (Edmonton) targets the needs of Aboriginal youths and is facilitated using culturally specific approaches, such as smudging. While Youth Emergency Services STAR Program (Edmonton) is open to youths aged up to 30. A third project, called Kids in the Hall Bistro (Edmonton), similarly provides the work-experience aspect of the course in-house via the project's popular and profitable restaurant.

Though I did not get the chance to visit their headquarters, I noticed a similar project in a Seattle coffee shop called Farestart, which enables youths at risk of homelessness to work in the service industry. Also, during one of the conferences, I learned about JobCorps, a residential and career training programme which enrolls 62,000 students across America each year.

Self Advocacy Groups

These groups train youths in self-advocacy and in doing so teach transferable skills such as goal setting, team building, public speaking and employment skills.

The Mockingbird Society (Seattle) represents foster youths and trains and employs them as journalists and public speakers. They are currently developing a new programme called Life Skills Advocacy 101, for which youths will produce a pocket-sized life skills handout for their peers.

Though not an advocacy group as such, YOUCAN (Edmonton) is a youth-led organisation and helps participants learn about themselves, develop confidence and find their voice. It consists of a 19-week structured course during which participants learn conflict resolution and self-management skills via a wide range of practical and community group activities. On completion they have the opportunity to become trainers themselves.

During the conferences I also learned about The Youth Advocacy Center which is based in New York and exists to help teenage foster carers become advocates for themselves and take control of their lives, and FosterClub which involves youths in a variety of self-advocacy groups.

Structured Life Skills / Personal Development Groups

In addition to supported accommodation services, Chimo Youth Retreat (Edmonton) deliver a 5-6 week Life Skills Groups, Creating Healthy Relationships Weekend Retreats, and a summer Flight School Program.

Juvenile Justice Programmes

I gained knowledge of provision for young offenders within the state of Florida and visited a high risk facility (Palm Beach Juvenile Correctional Facility), a day treatment programme (Palm Beach Marine Institute), and a detention centre (Miami Dade Juvenile Detention Centre), all of which strive to teach life and social skills to vulnerable youths in challenging environments.



FLORIDA: Far left (top): Entrance to Palm Beach Marine Institute. Far left (bottom): Entrance to Miami Dade Regional Juvenile Detention Centre. Centre: copy of article published in a Palm Beach community newspaper in August 2007. Top right: Example of Life-Skills Trainer Certificate issued by Arise Foundation. Top left: Entrance to Palm Beach Juvenile Correctional Facility.

Life Skills Resources

In both Canada and the USA, social care professionals have access to a sizable collection of life skills resources, most of which are available free online, or at a relatively affordable cost. For example:

Resource	Description	Download Free	Order /Subscribe Online
Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment CORE & Recommended Resources *	Links to an extensive selection relevant resources	✓	
ARISE Life Skills Curricula	Wide selection of workbooks and training guides		✓
Discovering Life Skills Series	Published by the YWCA of Greater Toronto		✓
<i>Do You Have What it Takes? A Comprehensive Guide to Success After Foster Care By Teens Who Have Been There (ed. K. Hurley)</i>	Published by Youth Communication (2007)		✓
Independent Living Resources	Wide selection of workbooks and training guides		✓
National Resource Center for Youth Services Recommended Curriculum **	Links to 12 projects' life skills curriculum	✓	
North West Media, Inc V-STREET.com	Website and publications available for a yearly subscription		✓

* http://www.caseylifeskills.org/pages/res/res_ACLSAGuidebook.htm

** <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/resources/publications.html>

For all other websites, see Appendix 7

In most cases, I would say that professionals take a “pick and mix” approach to programme/support planning: sourcing appropriate materials, adapting them to the needs of their specific client group and devising individual curriculums accordingly.

Chimo Youth Retreat has in addition produced an in-house youth-oriented booklet and programme, called the *Guide to Flying SOLO* which is delivered by staff within the supported accommodation setting.

Staff Training

In my opinion, staff training and development are a key determining factor for the success of life skills programmes and during my observations of group sessions, though slight differences in skills and techniques were apparent, the skills, passion, commitment and energy of each facilitator was, for me, extremely inspiring. I met many skilled and knowledgeable professionals who shared their knowledge and experiences and talked me through the following training models:

ARISE Life Skills Instructor Certification

ARISE have produced an extensive catalogue of age-appropriate resources for youths in the juvenile justice system. Around 30 facilities in Florida, and a further 100 in Washington DC are involved with the ARISE Program and since 1996, the programme has touched thousands of young people. Staff at each facility tend not to have prior teaching experience or a college education and must therefore be certified via the ARISE

training programme. Last year, 243 juvenile justice staff received such training and can achieve different levels of accreditation, according to how many hours of ARISE material they have taught. ARISE monitor outcomes closely, provide ongoing support. They also run CHOICES *Drop it at the Door* training for managing stress and negativity.

Ansell-Casey Life Skills Training

The Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) is a free online tool designed to help bridge the gap between assessment, case planning, and practical skill development. Completed by both youths and carers, assessments are available according to developmental levels/ages and automatically scored in seconds. Youths are assessed across 9 skills domains (career planning, communication, daily living, home life, housing and money management, self care, social relationships, work life, and work and study skills), and a number of supplementary assessments are also available. The ACLA provides instant feedback and generates a score which can be used by participants for discussion and case planning purposes. Customized learning plans are also available which provide staff and youths with clear signposts to accompanying, relevant online resources (available for free or at a minimal cost).

Many US states require (as opposed to recommend) ACLA for their foster youths, and training for staff is available from seven organisations who are fully authorised by Casey Family Programs to deliver it. There are three levels of training: the first (end user) qualifies participants to use the tools in direct practice; the second (certified user) is an additional day to learn about aggregate data reports and coaching others in the use of life skills tools, and the third (certified trainer) enables participants to deliver training to other professionals.

Certified Life Skills Coaches

In Canada, many members of staff are trained life skills coaches having followed life skills coach certificate programmes, such as the one available from the YWCA in Toronto. Rooted in the principles and philosophy of the Saskatchewan NewStart model of adult education, the NewStart Programs began in the late 1960's and are today based on problem-centered, experienced-based and behaviourally-oriented approaches.



Measuring Outcomes & Programme Evaluation

Programme evaluation takes place at a number of levels, often by monitoring variables such as:

- views and perceptions of participants (e.g. via feedback evaluation forms, interviews, focus groups, etc)
- referrals and program take up
- attendance and drop out rates
- cost and value for money

ARISE life skills, for example, collect data on how many hours of classes are taught at each facility, the views and perceptions of both teaching staff and students, and also measure knowledge by scoring pre and post tests. This data is evaluated annually by external researchers and evaluation reports are available for viewing on their website.

It is more difficult, however, to measure “softer” outcomes and to conclude with any certainty that a specific interventions have a positive impact that other alternatives might not have had. In an attempt to capture this information, organisations devise pre and post assessments, measure perceived skills on a pre-determined scale, and try to link this with the interventions youths have access to. This approach is of course comparable to that in the UK, where in recent years, organisations measure outcomes against the Every Child Matters framework. I learned about the following assessment packages available in the USA and Canada:

Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLA)

Already described above, this free online tool enables organisations to collect and monitor regular assessment scores. As a discussion tool to help youths understand their needs, I believe this resource is outstanding, although I understand from some conference attendees that they are not always implemented appropriately, that they can appear laborious and that the goal setting and action planning aspect of the tool are apparently less widely utilised. I believe this reflects training needs in staff and feel somewhat empathetic, having attempted to implement smaller scale versions of these tools in my own work.

Another difficulty, in terms of monitoring outcomes, is that young people’s scores can sometimes go down and not up as a placement continues. This is likely to reflect the fact that both staff and youths may gain a more realistic picture of their skills as they get to know each other and understand the tasks ahead.

Daniel Memorial Independent Living Skills System (ILS 8.0)

Similarly structured, the ILS System is a computer based package which provides detailed assessment tools across sixteen independent living categories. Again, the main purpose of this tool is to determine individual knowledge and skills which can lead to a computer-generated plan for that youth.

Though I did not have an opportunity to examine it in depth, the strength of this assessment appears to be that it offers both subjective, interview-based assessments and

objective, multi-choice assessments, though this does mean that interpersonal, emotional or self-advocacy skills are not assessed, as they are less concrete, observable skills.

Transition Homes Logic Model

Created by the Canadian Outcomes Research Institute, this database package is used by Chimo Youth Retreat Centre. Apparently only using around 25% of the package's features, Chimo are able to record and monitor data on case management, client satisfaction surveys, staff satisfaction survey, incident reports, referrals, timesheets etc. Like all tools, though, they are "only as good as the people using them" and as such cause some frustration in terms of having to carry out regular audits.

Efforts to Outcomes (ETO)

During my visit to the Mockingbird Society, I was shown ETO Software used to monitor and compile data on safety, sibling connections, permanency, placement stability and cultural competency.

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

In the USA, a new federal ruling is due to go into effect in April 2008, with full implementation due in October 2010. This rule requires States to collect and report data to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on youth receiving independent living services and on outcomes for youths who are in or age out of foster care. When fully implemented, States will report on services provided to youth, youth characteristics, outcomes and basic demographics, and youth will be surveyed about outcomes related to financial self-sufficiency, homelessness, educational attainment, positive connection to adults, high-risk behaviour, and access to health insurance. Analysis of this data will allow ACF to assess the impact of the Chafee Program on youth in foster care as they transition to independence.

Alternative Approaches

Throughout my 8 weeks of travel, I observed and learned so much and returned to the UK with renewed passion and motivation to adopt new approaches in my work.

I was particularly inspired by the use of arts and creativity I saw, and the way this approach taps into the imagination of youths and encourages self expression.

I was also extremely impressed by the level of youth involvement at both the conferences I attended and via the advocacy groups I encountered. I estimate that around 600 individuals attended each of the conferences and approximately 200 of these were foster youths. The conferences were organised to meet the needs of all participants and as such were youth-oriented and inclusive.

The benefits for youths were clear, not just in terms of giving them a forum to raise the profile of foster care issues, but also because these vulnerable and often deprived young people had the opportunity to travel to a new city, experience staying in a hotel, to meet new friends, and to have a great deal of fun.

Conclusion

By way of a conclusion, my learning can be summarised as follows:

- In order to improve outcomes for vulnerable young people and prepare them for independence as young adults, life and social skills acquisition is essential;
- Structured programmes using life skills curriculum resources are useful approaches but work best when delivered alongside, and reinforced by, experienced-based learning;
- Skilled staff and staff training are essential to ensure good practice and consistency;
- If included and consulted, vulnerable youths can inform professionals and programme planners about interventions which work best;
- Many organisations are working to achieve the same outcomes and can benefit from sharing their experiences and working in partnership;
- Organisations can sometimes struggle to improve methods in assessing needs, implementing learning plans and recording outcomes.

Appendix 1: Travel Itinerary

DATE	DESTINATION	ORGANISATIONS VISITED
09/08/07	Flight: London – Jacksonville	
09/08/07-12/08/07	Jacksonville (Florida, USA) – orientation	
09/08/07-26/08/07	West Palm Beach & Miami (Florida, USA)	Arise Foundation Palm Beach Juvenile Correctional Facility Palm Beach Marine Institute Miami Dade Regional Juvenile Detention Centre
26/08/07	Flight: Miami – Seattle	
27/08/07-06/09/07	Seattle (Washington, USA)	Ansell Casey Life Skills YMCA Young Adults Services Washington DSHS Children's Administration The Mockingbird Society
07/09/07-08/09/07	Weekend in Vancouver (British Columbia, Canada)	
09/09/07	Flight: Vancouver – Edmonton	
09/09/07-14/09/07	Edmonton (Alberta, Canada)	Chimo Youth Retreat Centre Alberta Alcohol & Drug Abuse Commission Kids in the Hall Youth Emergency Centre / Star Project You Can Terra (Centre for Pregnant & Parenting Teens) Bent Arrow / Wind Dancer Project
15/09/07-16/09/07	Weekend in Jasper National Park (Alberta, Canada)	
17/09/07	Flight: Edmonton - Denver	
17/09/07-25/09/07	Denver (Colorado, USA)	Daniel Memorial Institute & National Independent Living Association "Growing Pains" Annual Conference (4 days: 19 th -21 st Sept)
26/09/07	Flight: Denver – Atlanta	
26/09/07-03/10/07	Atlanta (Georgia, USA)	Casey Family Programs "It's My Life" Annual Conference (3 days: 30 th Sept– 2 nd Oct)
04/10/07	Flight: Atlanta to London	



Appendix 2: Florida

Brief account of organisations visited in Florida (9th–26th Aug 2007)

ARISE Foundation

www.ariseflife-skills.org

Description	A non-profit organisation established in 1986, ARISE has trained and certified over 5000 instructors to use their extensive catalogue of life skills resources. ARISE provides Life Skills Certification Training to staff from a range of backgrounds, including those at a number of juvenile justice facilities in Florida. CHOICES Drop it at the Door training is also available to help staff implement anger management and stress reduction techniques in the workplace.
Summary of visit	I spent several days with the founders of ARISE who explained their work and showed me the wide range of resources they have developed. I learned about their staff training programmes and certification process, as well as their evidence based studies and evaluation methods. I was also able to accompany an ARISE Trainer on her visits to three juvenile justice facilities where ARISE resources are in use.

Palm Beach Juvenile Correctional Facility

www.djj.state.fl.us

Description	A 98-bed residential treatment facility for male offenders aged 13-18 years. Considered a high risk facility, the average length of stay for youths is 9-12 months. A range of services are provided including case management, mental health and substance abuse services, medical and psychiatric services and educational and vocational services. Staff are trained to use ARISE resources as part of tailor-made workshops to meet specific needs.
Summary of visit	I met the staff at this facility, received a tour of the building and learned about how ARISE resources are utilised. I also observed a group session in which 12 young men discussed anger and aggression.

Palm Beach Marine Institute

www.palmbeachmarineinstitute.org

Description	A non-profit organisation serving at risk youths aged 14-18 years in Palm Beach County. Students are referred to this day treatment programme by the Department of Juvenile Justice or Palm Beach County Juvenile Court and normally attend for 4-6 months. They receive counselling, advice, support and restorative justice education, as well as academic and vocational skills building. ARISE resources are used by trained staff in classroom settings.
Summary of visit	I met the staff at this facility and observed a classroom-based session in which a mixed group of youths discussed some job advertisements in preparation to broaden their job-hunting knowledge and skills.

Miami Date Regional Juvenile Detention Centre

www.djj.state.fl.us

Description	A 226-bed secure facility for youths detained pending adjudication, disposition or placement in commitment facilities. The average age of youths at this facility is 14-16 years, and the average length of stay is approximately 15 days. Youths receive on-site schooling in single sex groups of approximately 10-12 students. ARISE resources are selected by teachers according to presenting needs.
Summary of visit	I met the staff at this facility and received a tour of the on-site school. I also met with staff to discuss their use of ARISE resources and observed a group session in which 7 young women and the group facilitator completed an exercise in an ARISE sexual health workbook.

Appendix 3: Seattle

Brief account of organisations visited in Seattle (27th Aug – 6th Sept 2007)

Ansell Casey Life Skills

www.caseylifeskills.org

Description Casey Family offer a range of family programmes and assessment tools which include the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLA): a web-based suite of tools designed to assess and develop independent living skills. Over 40 US states now require or prefer ACLA to prepare youths for independent living. Casey Family also promote an integrated practice framework for transition services (*It's My Life*) and publish a wide range of free, downloadable "how to", *It's My Life* guides.

Summary of visit During my visit to Seattle and also the "It's My Life" Conference, I learned about the work of Casey Family and its work with families and youths. I met with several staff members and gained in-depth knowledge about the on-line ACLA and other resources.

YMCA Young Adults Services

www.seattleyymca.org/page.cfm?ID=center

Description This division shares a building with other youth-oriented services such as The Mockingbird Society. Having recently undergone renovation, the YMCA center invites youths to access support around housing, education, employment and life skills. Foster youths and homeless youths can access supported housing via the YMCA Transitions Program or the Young Adults in Transition (YAIT) Program. The organisation also provides (via the YMCA Independent Living Program), transitional casework support to youth served through the DSHS Division of Child and Family Services and, as such, is required to use the ACLA tool.

Summary of visit I met with several members of staff to learn about the work at the YMCA, gain knowledge of how their support packages help prepare youths for independence, and to ask about their use of the ACLS Assessment. I also observed a 2 hour group session about tenancies and rent agreements: the second of four sessions which youths are expected to attend before moving into YMCA shared supported housing.

Washington DSHS Children's Administration

www.dshs.wa.gov/ca

Description Administers government initiatives for foster youths such as the Independent Living Program (ILP), Transitional Living Program (TLP), Foster Care to 21, and the Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV).

Summary of visit My meeting at this department enabled me to gain greater understanding of how the social care system in the USA differs from that in the UK and how government run Independent Living Programs are implemented. In particular, I gained knowledge of how Washington State works to improve outcomes for youths, as well as advice about where to go for further information and a kind donation of life skills related CDs and booklets.

The Mockingbird Society

www.mockingbirdsociety.org

Description Supports foster families via The Mockingbird Family Model which enables foster homes to join a kinship network or 'constellation' in which one home acts as the 'hub' to provide support, respite, and coaching to neighbouring 'satellite' foster families. Also cultivates leadership and work skills among youths who have experienced foster care via Youth LEAD (Leadership, Employment/Education, and Advocacy Development), a programme which trains and employs youths as journalists, public speakers and trainers to work on The Mockingbird Times, Youth Speakers Panels and ASK-Y Community Coalition.

Summary of visit I was offered individual appointments to meet four staff members who each explained their role within the organisation and enabled me to gain greater understanding of their work, approach, values and evaluation methods. I also met a young advocate who told me about her experiences and achievements.

Appendix 4: Edmonton

Brief account of organisations visited in Edmonton (9th – 14th Sept 2007)

AADAC Youth Services – Edmonton

www.aadac.com

Description AADAC (Alberta Alcohol & Drug Abuse Commission) is government funded and delivers a wide range of information, prevention and treatment programmes across the state. AADAC Youth Services assists children and adolescents aged 12 to 17 who are experiencing problems associated with alcohol, other drugs or gambling. Taking a solution-focused approach and using motivational interviewing techniques, staff deliver residential detox and treatment programmes as well as a mobile services unit and intensive day treatment. They work in partnership with other Edmonton services such as Chimo's Healing Home.

Summary of visit I met the counselors and therapists at this organisation and learned about their work, resources and approach. I observed a group session with youths who first listened to a presentation by an ex-gambler and later took part in a debrief discussion. I also shadowed one of the counsellors during his session with three youths at the Chimo Healing Home Treatment Group.

Chimo Youth Retreat Centre

www.cyrc.ab.ca

Description In existence since the 1970's the centre offers a range of community-based and residential programmes to assist youths in becoming self-supportive and/or to reintegrate them back into their families. With a strong focus on independent living and life skills, the centre currently has a residential treatment programme (Healing Home) for youths with addictions, a supported house for young mothers, and five other supported group homes. Chimo has developed a life skills resource (*Guide to Flying Solo*) for use in these homes and in addition offers a six-week structured Life Skills day programme to youths aged 13-17 years, and a Creating Health Relationship Weekend Retreat programme.

Summary of visit During my week with the team at Chimo I met with their Program Developer to learn about her experiences developing and implementing *Flying Solo*, their Outcomes Specialist to learn about how their programmes are evaluated, and their Life Skills coaches who shared their ideas and experiences running a regular group. I also shadowed a planning meeting for a future Healthy Relationships weekend and visited the Healing Home Treatment Group Home, where I met the staff and youths, observed a drugs counselling session, took part in an expressive/therapeutic art session, and read the centre's life skills curriculums.

Kids In the Hall Bistro Program

www.e4calberta.org

Description In operation since 1996, and with 65% of participants self referrals, this popular programme enables youths aged 16-24 to gain work experience and transferable skills in the food industry. Participants must complete a 4 week probationary period during which they attend unpaid life skills and career planning workshops. They subsequently undertake 3-6 months of paid work placements in a public restaurant located in Edmonton's City Hall and receive a minimum of 1 year follow-up support after exiting the programme.

Summary of visit I met the manager of this project and learned about its history, aims and objectives. I learned about the project's difficulties in finding funding, subsequent creation of a business plan, success in increasing revenue, its growing self-sufficiency, and its future plans to expand. I also visited the project's bistro and sampled its lunch menu. ☺

Youth Emergency Centre / STAR Programwww.yess.org

Description	Assists homeless youths aged 15-19 via outreach support, a night shelter, supported accommodation (START Program), Skills for Youth (SkY Program), and Strategies to Achieve Results (STAR Program). The STAR Program is a 22 week structured programme of activities to help youths obtain life and employability skills. It is funded by the Government of Canada Service Canada and participants receive a weekly attendance allowance and additional bonus on completion.
Summary of visit	Unfortunately the STAR Program was not currently running, with hopes that funding would be found to begin the next programme in October. I therefore met with the group facilitator who explained the programme design, shared his experiences and showed me the range of resources used.

YOU CAN – Peacebuilders Projectwww.youcan.ca

Description	Federally funded and with projects across Canada, this agency exposes youths to new experiences and encourages team work and community involvement. The programme lasts 19 weeks and consists of 10 set modules on conflict resolution, negotiation, peer helping, cross culture conflict resolution, mediation, facilitation, peace circles, intervention, train the trainer and non-violent peacebuilders. Youths receive hourly compensation for attendance and a completion bonus.
Summary of visit	I met the group facilitators and learned about the success of the previous programme and plans for the new one. I observed an afternoon session of a group of 7 youths who had begun the programme that week. The youths were asked to produce a collage about themselves and to present their work to each other at the end.

TERRA Centre for Pregnant & Parenting Teenswww.terraassociation.com

Description	Runs a wide range of projects including home visitation, individual counselling, crisis intervention, parenting education, services for dads, group activities, parenting classes, school support services, advocacy for young parents and their children, and a 14 suite supported accommodation service.
Summary of visit	During my visit to this organisation I learned about the services and support being offered to teenagers and how life skills are vital for their successful development as young parents. I met the Family Resource worker who shared her experiences of running groups and kindly donated some teaching resources.

Bent Arrow / Wind Dancers Youth Pre-Employment Programwww.bentarrow.ca

Description	Established in 1994, The Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society bases its work on traditional teaching and values. The organisation has grown to run a wide range of programmes which include long term residential care (Kokomish House), full time education (Rites of Passage School), pre-employment for people over 18 years (Safety Watch Aboriginal Training – SWAT), support for school age and pre-school children (White Cloud Head Start & Coyote Kids), support for young mothers (Iskwew House) and many more. The Wind Dancers Program is a holistic and flexible Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centre Initiative for youths aged 15-29.
Summary of visit	I met several members of this organisation and learned a great deal about the history and experiences of Aboriginal people in Canada and the services Bent Arrow provides. I also observed a life skills session about employment preparation, delivered as part of the Wind Dancer Program, and observed how the programme incorporates Aboriginal culture into each session and enables youths to build on and/or reconnect with their cultural roots.

Appendix 5: Denver

Details of workshops & sessions attended during the Daniel Memorial Institute & NILA
“Growing Pains” Annual Conference in Denver (19th-21st Sept 2007)

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	PRESENTED BY
Opening General Public Session: Preparing for the Future: Engaging hidden resources, youth themselves!	Pioneers in thinking and program development around self-advocacy for teens, in particular those aging out of foster care, Betsy Krebs and Paul Pitcoff frequently write and speak about self-advocacy as a model for empowering youth to become participating citizens.	Betsy Krebs & Paul Pitcoff, <i>Youth Advocacy Centre – New York, NY</i>
A-7 Understanding the Youth We Serve: The Relationship Between Risks and Outcomes in Transitional Living	Presentation on the IARCCA Outcome Measures Project which began in 1996 following a demand for program accountability. Discussion of ten years of monitoring outcomes in IL/TL programs and how this information can be used when providing effective programs.	Steven Koch, Jacqueline Remondet Wall and Monique Busch <i>Riley Child Development Center, Indiana University School of Medicine, Dept. of Pediatrics – Indianapolis, IN</i>
B-3 Creative Approaches to Transitional and Independent Living Services	Overview of 5 agencies in Nebraska who deliver 7 innovative and diverse transitional living programs, address diversity in geographies, economics, ethnicity and population and cover 77,227 square miles in total.	Nancy Ferguson, Darryl Summers, Todd Spellman, David Krogman and Jodi Sonneman <i>Central Plains Centre for Services – Broken Bow, NE</i>
C-3 Involving Primary Caregivers in the IL Program	Interactive seminar to address strategies for involving primary caregivers in all programming aspects of IL programs	Nancy Carter <i>Independent Living Resources, Inc. – Durham, NC</i>
Youth Talent Auditions	All youth conference attendees were encouraged to perform solo vocals, dance and spoken word for the end-of-conference Youth Talent Show	Facilitated by NILA conference staff team
General Session II: Job Corps and Foster Care: A Growing Partnership	Job Corps is the nation's largest residential career technical training and education program for students aged 16-24 years, serving more than 60,000 students annually at 122 centers in 48 states.	Maria E. Temiquel <i>Job Corps Deputy National Director – Washington DC</i>
D-10 Trends in Transitions to Adulthood	Discussion of national best practices and research concerning transitions to adulthood.	Rhonda Dyer <i>Starry, Inc – Round Rock, TX</i>
Introduction to ILS v. 8.0	Lunchtime bonus session to learn about the Independent Living Skills system – a 16 category assessment designed for individuals aged 14 and older.	Bob Rooks <i>Daniel Memorial, Inc. – Jacksonville, FL</i>
E-10 Understanding Research and Making it a Reality in Independent Living Programs	Concrete and practical examples and strategies for conducting research and incorporating research into practice.	Courtney Lynch <i>University of Texas – Austin, TX</i>
Youth Speak Out!	Presentation from youths about their personal challenges and triumphs and how they feel the system can better serve the youth in need.	Facilitated by FosterClub All Stars
F-9 Where Do I Go Now? YMCA Centre for Young Adults	Presentation to share information and best practices about new drop-in center that serves former and current foster youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness.	Julie Jacobson, Brooke Nielsen & Karlie Keller <i>YMCA of Greater Seattle – Seattle, WA</i>
Closing General Session: Success is a Journey	George Duvall, motivational speaker, trainer and comedian, spent 15 years of his life in foster care and boys' facilities and now speaks to audiences about the importance of fun, family, unity and higher education. Conference also concluded with talent performance by young participants and a prize-draw raffle for all.	George Duvall <i>University of Kentucky, Training Resource Centre, School of Social Work – Lexington, KY</i>

Appendix 6: Atlanta

Details of workshops & sessions attended during the Casey Family Programs “It’s My Life” Annual Conference in Atlanta (30thSept – 2ndOct 2007)

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	PRESENTED BY
Opening General Session	Native Era, a hip-hop rap group, and 2007 Native American Music Awards nominee, open the session and introduce alumni, youth in care, and professionals.	Native Era, Misty Stenslie & alumni and youth in care
A-05 EmpowerMENT – Hearing the ‘ME’ in the Voice of Georgia’s Foster Youth	Presentation by Georgia’s current and former foster youth about a booklet they have produced to advocate for six priorities which will change their lives.	Gwendra Samuelsn, Anita Alston, Tarkiyah Melton, Jamekia Williams, Sherena Johnson, Crystal Williams
B-02 Creating Futures for Foster Care Youth in Transition	Presentation of Arbor E&T’s program models for youth aging out of foster care in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and New York City. Youth who participate in these programs also provide their perspectives.	Howard Knoll, Wendell Moore, Elizabeth Cherry, Dupree Drummond, Charise Chapman
C-07 Foster Youth in the Movies: What Does the American Public See?	Presentation, film clips and interactive workshop about the few representations of foster youth in American cinema.	Ayme Turnbull, Jontae McNeil
D-01 Know Your Legal Rights!	Presentation about responsibilities of state and federal governments and legal rights of foster children, examination of changes in law during the last 20 years.	Michelle Barclay, Judge Vincent Crawford
Plenary Session: The Next Generation & the Workforce: Are We Prepared?	Panelists discuss critical employment trends and what young people need to know to successfully compete in tomorrow’s workforce.	Vanessa Fuentes, Jeremy Middleton, Calvyn Tyler, Jr.
E-06 T-Time	Workshop about FosterClub’s T-Time toolkit for Young People Preparing to Transition from Care. Toolkit includes reproducible forms and guides for transition team members, including foster parents, case workers, courts, supportive adults and youths themselves.	FosterClub
Movie Night: <i>Smoke Signals</i> (1999)	Presentation and Q&A’s with Chris Eyre, Director. His debut film about the contemporary life of indigenous people won the Sundance Film Festival Filmmaker’s Trophy and the Audience Award.	Chris Eyre
F-03 Academic Tools for Economic Independence	Interactive workshop to learn about programs and activities to help youths get into a postsecondary education program and give them the skills to become financially independent and connected to their community. Based on recommendations from youth focus groups, Connected by 25, and It’s My Life strategies.	Victoria Salzman, Claudia Krider, Larry Turner
G-06 The Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment: Filling the Interdependence Gap	Presentation about the ACLA, a web-based tool designed to help young people prepare for the transition to interdependence. Professionals, foster carers and foster youths share experiences and best practice.	Traci DeOchoa, Jane Coward, Sylvia Enriquez, Steve Zuber
General Closing Session	Last chance to hear how others have tapped into and unleashed their genius. Included surprise guest appearance by Usher who gave a motivational speech and Q&A’s session. Conference also concluded with a final prize-draw raffle for all.	Guest appearance: Usher

Appendix 7: Contacts Details

Contact details of the professionals I met at each organisation

Alberta Alcohol & Drug Abuse Commission

12325 – 140 Street, Edmonton, AB T5L 2C9

www.aadac.com

Scarlett Eyben	Addictions Counsellor	scarlett.eyben@aadac.gov.ab.ca
Jenny Mclester	Addictions Counsellor	jenny.mclester@aadac.gov.ab.ca
Trevor Vezina	Addictions Counsellor	trevor.vezina@aadac.gov.ab.ca
Michael Laporte	Family Counsellor	micheal.laporte@aadac.gov.ab.ca
Leely Lew	Recreations Therapist	leely.lew@aadac.gov.ab.ca

Ansell Casey Life Skills

1300 Dexter Avenue North, Floor 3, Seattle, WA 98109 / acls@casey.org

www.caseylifeskills.org

Dr. Chris Downs Ph.D.	Director of Practice Assessments & Web-Based Tools	dcacfp@casey.org
Randa Jo Downs	Systems Improvement Specialist	
John Cherek	Systems Improvement Specialist	rdowns@casey.org
Dr. Alan Puckett	Systems Improvement Analyst	JCherek@casey.org
Jan Waggoner	Systems Improvement Analyst	
Bernard Caliman	Systems Improvement Analyst	
Kelly Sim	Systems Improvement Analyst	ksim@casey.org
Phyllis Duncan-Souza	Systems Improvement Analyst	

Arise Foundation

824 US Highway 1, Suite 240, North Palm Beach, FL 33408

www.arisefoundation.org

Edmund F. Benson	Founder	ebenson@arisefoundation.org
Susan Benson	Founder	sbenson@arisefoundation.org
Van Ly	Executive Assistant	vly@arisefoundation.org
Joliett Vega	ARISE Trainer	jvega@arisefoundation.org

Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

2nd Floor, 10117-150 Street, Edmonton, AB T5P 1PZ

www.bentarrow.ca

Brad Seneca	Executive Director	
Lovette Ferguson	Executive Assistant	lovette.ferguson@bentarrow.ca
Carla Laboucane	Wind Dancers Employment/Career Counsellor	claboucane@bentarrow.ca
Naim Cardinal	Wind Dancers Outreach Worker	ncardinal@bentarrow.ca

Chimo Youth Retreat Centre

10568-104 street, T5H-2W1, Edmonton, Alberta

www.cyrc.ab.ca

Frank Wingrove	Executive Director	
Margaret Martin	Director of Community Programs	margaret@cyrc.ab.ca
Cathy Bowley	Program Developer	
Denise VanDomselaar	Life Management Training Supervisor	
Melanie Marghella	Outcomes Specialist	
Bev Marshall	Certified Life Skills Coach	bev@cyrc.ab.ca
Chantal Bérubé	Life Skills Transition Coach	chantal.berube@town.beaumont.ab.ca

Daniel Memorial Institute

4203 Southpoint Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32216

www.danielkids.org

Bob Rooks	Director of Adoption Information Center	brooks@danielkids.org.uk
Stephanie Waugerman	Conference Coordinator	swaugerman@danielkids.org

Kids In the Hall

9321 Jasper Ave, Edmonton, AB T5H 3T7

www.ecccc.org / www.e4calberta.org

Calvin Avery	Project Manager	calvin@e4calbera.org
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Miami Dade Regional Juvenile Detention Centre3300 NW 27th Avenue, Miami, FL 33142www.djj.state.fl.us

Orlando Milligan	Principal
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The Mockingbird Society2100 24th Ave S. Ste.240, Seattle, WA 98144www.mockingbirdsociety.org

Lauren Frederick	Executive Assistant	auren@mockingbirdsociety.org
Juan Ramirez	Administrative Assistant	juan@mockingbirdsociety.org
Wanda Hackett, Ph.D.	Programs Manager	wanda@mockingbirdsociety.org
Najja Morris	Youth LEAD Coordinator	najja@mockingbirdsociety.org

Palm Beach Juvenile Correctional Facility

9680 Fairground Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33411

www.djj.state.fl.us

Jasir Diab	Facility Administrator	jasir.diab@youthservices.com
T.J. Mauer	Assistant Facility Administrator	t.j.mauer@youthservices.com

Palm Beach Marine Institute, Inc.Bert Winters Park, 13425 Ellison Wilson Road, Juno Beach, FL 33408 www.palmbeachmarineinstitute.org

Lucinda Warthen	Lead Case Manager	pbmi-cm2@amikids.org
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TERRA Centre for Pregnant & Parenting Teens

9930-106 Street, Edmonton, AB T5K 1C7

www.terraassociation.com

Kathy Kozens	Family Resource Worker	kkozens@terraassociation.com
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YMCA of Greater Seattle (Independent Living Program – Region 4)2100 24th Ave S. Suite 250 , Seattle, WA 98144www.seattlemca.org/page.cfm?ID=center

Sean Walsh	Senior Director of Young Adults Services	swalsh@seattlemca.org
Veronica Coenen	Housing Administrative Assistant	vcoenen@seattlemca.org
Kim Jackson	Housing Group Facilitator	
Brooke Nielsen	Community Development Coordinator	Bnielsen@seattlemca.org
Karlie Keller	Case Manager, Young Adult Services	kkeller@seattlemca.org
JC Collins	Assistant Resource Specialist	Jcollins@seattlemca.org

YOUCAN

Office: 16030-104th Ave, Edmonton, AB T5P 053

By mail: 11 Addison Crescent, St. Albert, AB T8N 252

www.youcan.ca

Mandy Halabi

Youth Development Coordinator

mandy.halabi@youcan.ca

Cindy Atkey

Youth Development Coordinator

cindy.atkey@youcan.ca

Youth Emergency Centre

9310 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB T6C 026

www.yess.org

Connor Savich

STAR Project Group Facilitator

starproject@yess.org

Washington DSHS – Children’s Administration

P.O. Box 45710, Olympia, WA 98504

www.dshs.wa.gov/ca

Rick Butt MSW

Independent Living Program Manager

RLBU300@dshs.wa.gov

Other Relevant Organisations

Barista Training & Education Programs

www.farestart.org

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

www.ccsa.ca

Canadian Outcomes Research Unit

www.corl.ca

Children’s Bureau Express

www.cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov

Child Welfare League of America

www.cwla.org/programs

Connected By 25

www.connectedby25.org

Connect For Kids

www.connectforkids.org

Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks

www.fbcyicn.ca

Foster Care Alumni

www.fostercarealumni.org

Fosterclub

www.fosterclub.com

FY13 (Foster Youth Involved, Informed, Independent)

www.FY13.com

Independence for Foster Youth

www.independence.wa.gov

Independent Living Resources, Inc.

www.ilrinc.com

IARCCA Outcome Measures Project

www.iarcca.org

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative

www.jimcaseyyouth.org

Job Corps

www.jobcorps.dol.gov

My Space / YMCA Center for Young Adults

www.myspace.com/ymcacenter

National Foster Care Coalition

www.nationalfostercare.org

National Independent Living Association

www.nilawusa.org

National Resource Center for Youth Services

www.nrcys.ou.edu

North West Media, Inc./Social Learning

www.sociallearning.com

Problem Gambling Resources Network (Alberta)

www.problemgamblingalberta.ca

Starry, Inc

www.starryonline.org

The Treehouse

www.treehouse4kids.org

Youthcare

www.youthcare.org

Youth Communication

www.youthcomm.org

Youth in Care Network

www.youthincare.ca

Youth Advocacy Center

www.youthadvocacycenter.org

Youth Today

www.youthtoday.org

YWCA of Greater Toronto

www.ywcatoronto.org

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Appendix 9: Acknowledgements

My thanks to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for awarding me the Fellowship, and to all at the Trust for their advice and assistance.

It was both a pleasure and privilege to be selected to undertake this trip. The experience has been invaluable, both for my professional and personal development, and is one I am sure I will remember and benefit from in years to come.

Many thanks to all who I met along the way and who offered me their time and assistance. In particular, my thanks to those professionals and young people who kindly agreed for me to observe them during group sessions.

Thanks also, to the following people who were my initial contacts and without whom I could not have planned such a varied and successful itinerary:

- Mr. & Mrs. Benson, ARISE
- Rick Butt, DSHS Children's Administration
- Randa Downs, Ansell Casey Life Skills
- Margaret Marin, Chimo Youth Retreat
- Sean Walsh, Seattle YMCA
- Stephanie Waugerman, Daniel Memorial Institute

Special thanks to Margaret Marin who pre-booked so many visits on my behalf, and kindly invited me to stay with her family. I received a true Canadian welcome and had a fantastic week.

Thanks, also, to my family, friends and colleagues for their support and encouragement.

