



**FOSTER SKILLS, INC.**  
*shape a life. build a future.*

**TOGETHER  
WE RISE**

**A leader in foster care innovation**

**TO:** Danny Mendoza; Together We Rise, CEO/President

**FROM:** Marquis Cabrera; Foster Skills, President

**DATE:** August 21, 2011

**RE:** "The Together We Foster Skills Campaign"

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## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish a working arrangement between Foster Skills (FS) and Together We Rise (TWR and together, The Parties) to launch both a national awareness campaign, and social movement wherein young leaders across the country advocate for children in the foster care system; and together The Parties help children in the foster care system from coast-to-coast.

This MOU supports a variety of activities, which aim to decrease barriers and increase opportunities for youth of all ages in foster care. FS and TWR will coordinate on numerous national initiatives (developed via the partnership or sparked by the formation of the partnership) that add to both the movement and campaign and enriches the lives of children in foster care.

This MOU represents a non-binding expression of intent between the nonprofits to work together to improve the foster care system, and lives of children in foster care.

### **II. Background**

Foster care is a temporary living arrangement for abused, neglected, and dependent children who need a safe place to live when their legal care giver, be it a parent or relative, cannot take care of them. The *parens patriae* doctrine gives the U.S. government the power to act in the best interest of the child when the aforementioned circumstances arise, which has led to the creation of the national child welfare system: a system in need of restoration. It is widely acknowledged that the foster care system has yet to maximize its resources and become a utility to children that are in dire need of tangible and intangible aid. Foster Skills and

Together We Rise will provide innovative strategies and practical youth engagement programs to ameliorate the foster care system, thereby providing a modicum of hope for foster children, nationally.

## **FS**

Foster Skills is a nonprofit dedicated to helping foster youth beat the odds and achieve life success. The organization offers at-risk foster youth social support, resources, and a skills focused education in order to succeed now and in the future. Foster Skills vision is to develop foster youth into independent, productive citizens that become benefactors to their communities. It has developed a program model based on empirical research. To best relate to youth, Foster Skills maintains a youthful, current culture.

## **TWR**

Together We Rise is a nonprofit comprised of motivated young adults whose vision is to improve the lives of foster children in America, who often find themselves forgotten and neglected by the public. TWR has built a foundation of passionate volunteers who work tirelessly to make a difference in underprivileged children's lives. TWR strives to deliver a sense of normalcy to the children by furnishing them with clothing that actually fit, and by offering support through counseling and mentoring. TWR has put smiles on many children's faces in various ways, including sports camps, music, art, and improving overall living conditions.

### **III. Collaborative Objectives and Acknowledgement**

FS and TWR recognize that there is a wealth of existing information and many organizations that have developed foster care best practices. FS and TWR agree that all children placed into the foster care system at no fault of their own require additional services and support. FS and TWR will add to the pool of best practices and help support efforts of like nonprofits, companies, and agencies. The partnership established will also focus efforts on energizing the evolving Child First movement. Through outreach efforts, FS and TWR will reach a greater number of foster youth, and establish a national network capable of delivering and sustaining an ongoing voice that will eliminate the foster care system snafus over the long-term.

### **IV. Working Agreement**

The working agreement between the Parties was sparked to develop a national coalition: a coalition of American leaders whom want to help change the foster care system. FS and TWR agree to share their specific expertise regarding the delivery of services to foster children. More importantly, the working agreement is to collaborate on national initiatives and campaigns, implement a menu of options for



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future directions in the child welfare field, and a website portal (MyHome) for children in foster care. To facilitate this collaboration, the Parties agree to share success stories, lessons learned, and other relevant best management practices and best-available technology information (excluding confidential business information). The nonprofits agree to jointly and separately promote their participation in this partnership, to coordinate messaging and to participate in publicity events.

**TWR** will continue focusing on raising national awareness about issues facing children in foster care and mentoring foster youth. TWR is entrepreneurial in that it executes numerous marketing activities that help to increase donors and gain publicity. TWR will invite FS to participate in future marketing activities.

**FS** will continue focusing on youth development and national awareness. FS focuses primarily on providing resources to foster youth that will aid in their mental and life development, thereby helping foster children help themselves and other foster youth. FS will welcome TWR into its consulting venture.

**FS and TWR will work together to:**

- Support and provide resources to youth aging out of the foster care system
  - Build and market an “easy to navigate” web portal for foster youth
  - Make youth aware of resources available to them
- Raise national awareness about the issues facing children in foster care
  - Host a town hall/ panel in every state over the course of two (2) years
- Implement creative youth engagement practices
  - Develop a working relationship and POA with director of REACH
  - Create a VOICE outlet for youth in foster care
- Find innovative strategies to increase donations and maximize utility
- Create, implement, and share best practices

**V. General**

(A) This MOU is strictly for internal management purposes for each of the Parties. It is not legally enforceable and shall not be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of either Party. This MOU shall not be construed to provide a private right or cause of action for or by any person or entity.

(B) FS agrees it will not seek compensation from the TWR in connection with its participation hereunder; and vice versa.

(C) This MOU will be in effect for a period of two years and can be renewed by

written agreement of both parties. It can be terminated by either Party at any time by providing notice in writing to the other Party.

(D) This MOU in no way restricts either of the Parties from participating in any activity with other public or private agencies, organizations or individuals.

(E) This MOU is neither a fiscal nor a hands obligation document. Nothing in this MOU authorizes or is intended to obligate the Parties to expend, exchange, or reimburse funds, services, or supplies, or transfer or receive anything of value. Ultimately, the parties may decide on fiscal relations.

(F) All agreements herein are subject to, and will be carried out in compliance with, all applicable laws, regulations and other legal requirements.

## **VI. Points of Contact**

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