



Annual Report 2016
SEE THE CHANGE

**FIRST PLACE
FOR YOUTH**
MORE IS POSSIBLE





*“Together,
we can create a
wave of positive
change that will put
self-reliance and
long-term success
within reach for
all young people in
foster care.”*



Dear Friends of First Place,

What a year it has been! Every day we see the change that First Place makes possible for young people. We believe that everyone who comes through our program has the capacity to succeed and become part of a movement that creates hope and opportunity for others. Yet, there are still many young people aging out of foster care without access to support, stability, and encouragement as they dive into adulthood. So we keep pushing forward to grow our reach and deepen our impact.

Late in 2015, we leveraged seed funding from the Super Bowl 50 Fund for our expansion to Santa Clara County. Despite sky-high rents, we’ve already moved 30 young people into safe apartments. An innovative collaboration with Art+Practice in South Los Angeles will allow us to double the number of young people we serve in the county. By hosting our new service hub at their Leimert Park campus, Art+Practice highlights the intersection

of art, education, and community. And in the Bay Area, where First Place started 18 years ago with five former foster kids, we now help more than 300 young people every year attain the strong outcomes that set them up for lasting success.

Along with offering direct services in six California counties, we are capitalizing on 18 years of knowledge and experience to strengthen outcomes for young people across the country. We continue to promote legislative and systemic changes to better support the needs of foster youth, and we’re laying the groundwork for an affiliate program that will allow other organizations to implement our model and access ongoing technical assistance and support.

As you read this report, I hope you’ll see inspiration in Will, a young man who was living in a homeless shelter until he found First Place. Now he’s thriving in college,

making plans for the future, and finding ways to give back to his community. You’ll also meet Chelsea, a First Place graduate who is completing her master’s degree in social work and plans to dedicate her career to working with foster youth.

None of this would be possible without your support. Your generosity will continue to be vital as we embark on a four-year, \$10 million fundraising effort that will set a new standard for First Place’s capacity. Through contributions to the Ready to Launch growth campaign, you will make it possible for us to double the number of young people we can serve and, for the first time, expand beyond California.

Together, we can create a wave of positive change that will put self-reliance and long-term success within reach for all young people in foster care. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Sam

Will's Story

When I was 18, I was living in a homeless shelter. I had earned my GED and had started taking classes at a community college, but I knew it was up to me to take the initiative to do more with my life. I went out in search of help, and that's when I found First Place.

First Place gave me the stability and the comfort that I needed to continue. Having a place to stay keeps me level-headed, and my First Place team is there for me through good times and bad. I've been in the First Place program for over a year now, and it really feels like being part of a family. Thanks to their support, I have a job and school is going really great. I'm thinking about transferring to a four-year university where I can study Communications and Psychology because I think everyone should know how to communicate effectively, poetically, and emotionally.

When I was living in the shelter I often went to bed hungry. Now I'm only hungry to succeed and to be a better person. It means so much to me to have gotten help along my path, and I want to be an example for other First Place youth. I want them to see that it's okay to make mistakes, as long as you learn from them.

I believe that if you do positive things, you'll get positive things in return, and it's not how much you give but how much it means. I walk through my life thinking about how I can help those around me, even if it's just something small like being able to give someone spare change. I'm just glad that First Place has helped me get to a position where I can do that and keep working on being a better me.



"I believe that whatever you put out, that's what you're going to get back."





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Chelsea's Story

When I aged out of foster care I didn't feel like there were a lot of resources for me. I was a senior in high school and wanted to go to college, but I wasn't sure how I was going to make that happen on my own. That's when my social worker connected me with First Place for Youth.

My First Place team encouraged me to set goals for myself, and they helped me apply for schools and financial aid. I was able to start at Solano County Community College, and two years later I transferred to CSU East Bay with a scholarship.

When my time in program was up, I didn't want to just walk away from the people who had made a difference in my life, so I looked for ways to stay involved and give back. I was lucky enough to work at First Place through AmeriCorps for three years, first as a Peer Educator and then as an Education Specialist. My former case manager became my boss! I learned so much about the work First Place does, and I decided that I wanted to go into social work.

In 2013, I received my bachelor's degree in history and political science and decided to go to graduate school for my master's degree in social work. Now, with the help of Title IV-E* funding, I'm just a semester away from my MSW. I'll graduate in June and I'm really excited to officially start working at Solano County Child Welfare Services—where I've been interning this year in family maintenance and reunification—especially since it means I might get to work with First Place again.

I think everyone who decides to become a social worker is a “helper.” I really like working with other foster youth, especially teenagers. I want to be that person who can offer them the same kind of support that First Place gave me because you never know how someone you help could go on to help others in the future.

* Title IV-E is the major source of federal funding for educating and training the child welfare workforce. Students receiving stipends must commit to employment with the state or county public child welfare agency for a specified period of time.

A Donor's Story: Professor David Kirp

Professor Kirp is a **New York Times** contributor, the James D. Marver Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley, and a tireless advocate for young people. He was one of the earliest supporters of First Place for Youth; founders Deanne Pearn and Amy Lemley were still graduate students at UC Berkeley when they approached Professor Kirp to discuss the idea that launched First Place for Youth.

We recently spoke to Professor Kirp about what shaped his career and his decision to become and remain a supporter of First Place:

I've always been interested in education, in community building, and in giving people the social capital they need to succeed. After law school, I began working in the relatively new field of law in education policy and, gradually, my scope of interest expanded from education to youth issues more generally. I realized that the conversation around these issues had to be different. We can't blame young people for the lack of opportunities they've been offered.

When I heard what Amy and Deanne were working on, I was excited by the idea. While foster care wasn't making headlines, I knew something about the tough situations foster kids faced and how often they fell through the cracks. Anything that could change the arc of these young people's lives was worth paying serious attention to. I decided I wanted to help in any way I could; back then I gave them an office and secretarial support, and now, I still give to First Place.

I choose the organizations I support based on their impact, quality, and outcomes. Having been a supporter since the beginning, I feel a particular pride at how First Place has maintained high standards in these areas even as the organization has grown. First Place for Youth has the power to be truly transformational. The interventions they provide aren't just for the moment; they turn the tide toward a lifetime of success.

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Our Impact in 2016

Last year, First Place provided education and employment counseling and housing to 476 current and former foster youth with high needs in six California counties. An additional 1,000 young people received support in academics, job seeking, building independent living skills, and avoiding risky behaviors.



Outcome data show:

While 40% of the nation's former foster youth experienced homelessness by age 24, **75%** of First Place youth have a stable home.

While fewer than 50% of the nation's foster youth finish high school, **96%** of First Place youth earned their high school diploma or GED, or were actively enrolled in school.

While only 20% of the nation's eligible foster youth enroll in college after high school, **81%** of eligible First Place youth attended college.

While only 29% of California's foster youth find jobs in the first two years after leaving foster care, **81%** of First Place youth obtained employment.

First Place Locations

Bay Area: Last year, First Place provided housing and education and employment counseling to more than 300 young people in four Bay Area counties. 90% are both working and in school.

Santa Clara County: One year into our expansion into the San Jose area, we've moved 30 at-risk foster youth from instability and homelessness to safe homes.

Los Angeles County: Our collaboration with Art+Practice in South LA will help us double the number of youth we serve in southern California over the next three years.



Revenue

Government	13,076,884
Foundation, Corporate, Individuals	3,659,008
Donated/Miscellaneous	85,310
Net Assets Released from Donor Restrictions	1,125,954
Total Revenue	17,947,156

Expenses

Program	14,921,621
General/Administration	1,964,352
Fundraising	691,710
Total Expenses	17,557,683

Statement of Financial Position

Current Assets	7,490,879
Fixed Assets	574,003
Other Assets	2,567,925
Total Assets	10,632,807

Total Liabilities	1,273,575
Equity	9,359,232
Total Liabilities and Equity	10,632,807

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