

BCFS enables teens to embark on “road to independence”

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SAN ANTONIO—More than 125 San Antonio teenagers took their first steps toward a college degree and brighter future by participating in “The Road to Independence”—a self-sufficiency conference and job fair sponsored by [Baptist Child & Family Services](#).

Employers throughout San Antonio, including the San Antonio Fire Department, gathered to help educate local foster youth on opportunities for their future. (PHOTOS/BCFS)

For 10 years, the BCFS transitional living program has sponsored the conference for young adults aging out of the foster care system, answering questions about how to build and maintain relationships, find housing and employment, apply to college and receive financial aid, and manage money.

This year, BCFS added a job fair to the conference to help connect foster teens with local employers.

“Before I got involved in the BCFS program, I thought maybe I could be a mechanic. But now I’m in college, and have the confidence to start a foundation to help the homeless,” said Michael Ramirez, age 18.

The hardest thing about aging out of the foster care program is feeling that nobody understands what foster children are going through, he said.

“Because of the BCFS program, I can be a living testimony for other kids,” said Ramirez, a Northwest Vista College student. “There are people out there who do understand and who can help.”



San Antonio teens spent a Saturday investing in their future at the Road to Independence conference sponsored by Baptist Child & Family Services.
(PHOTOS/BCFS)

Ernesto Olivares found that help through the BCFS transitional living program.

“You have people who are working with you to make things better,” he said.

While on some levels the youth participating in BCFS’ conference and job fair are typical teenagers, they have had to deal with many issues that are foreign to most young adults. The BCFS transitional living program has helped thousands of teenagers overcome great challenges and will continue support in the future.

When asked what advice he had for young adults about to transition out of foster care, Ramirez grinned and said: “Simple—stick with the program. Those three hours a week will be worth your time. They’ll change your life.”

To find out more about the BCFS’ Transitional Living program, visit www.bcfs.net/transitionalliving.