

SOAR *for Youth*

Support, Opportunities, and Rapport

Youth ought to be able to have fun, be well protected, and given proper guidance. This does not happen naturally when their parents are not around. It is difficult to achieve when a youth is placed in foster care.

Nationally, only 50% of foster youth complete high school by the age of 18 and only 20% of those who graduate from high school attend college. As a result, a high percentage of emancipated foster youth end up on the streets. Studies show that the problem is not that foster youth have less desire to pursue higher education. Many foster youth do not receive encouragement to study hard, are not provided with information about applying to college, or are not given the opportunities to explore their options. We believe that supporting these youth in achieving high school graduation and pursuing higher education, as well as helping them with the transition from foster care to emancipation, will counteract that outcome,

In community partnership with UC Berkeley, SOAR aims to help the Bay Area foster youth aged 11-18, graduate from high school, attend college, and succeed in life with a purpose.

Each year, a new group of SOAR youth is carefully selected. Once selected, the cohort receives 4-7 years of continuous support, beginning with 3 consecutive years of residential pre-collegiate academies held on the UC Berkeley campus. In addition to the summer academies, we host events to help our youth stay connected. These events reinforce and augment the academic and social support provided in the academies. The curriculum includes:

- Academic enrichment in critical subject-matter areas such as math.
- College orientation and guidance.
- Outdoor adventures where teamwork is key.
- Life-skills training, including help with personal finance.
- Career development, including job search and interview skills.
- Connection to scholarships and services that can provide a safety net for our graduates.

Our summer program graduates continue to receive academic support until they graduate from high school including college-preparation workshops, access to advocates and tutors, and interaction with school counselors.

SOAR is intentionally a multi-layered, multi-year program that demonstrates our commitment over time. Each year's academy, combined with mentoring, support, and interim activities, builds our youths' confidence, life skills, and academic strengths, while encouraging them to learn and practice responsible behaviors. We believe this long-term commitment is the key to success for these young people, who have previously lacked consistency, continuity, and advocacy in their lives.

We ask for your support of our young people. Your gift, at the time when our Federal and State governments are unable to provide support, will help create an environment to give foster youth a chance to soar.

Yes ...I want to help foster youth to soar. My check made payable to SOAR for Youth (Federal and California tax deductible to the extent allowable by law) at PO Box 1291, Berkeley, CA 94701 is enclosed.

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$1,700 (summer camp for one youth) \$_____ Other

Name _____ email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____