



National Edition 10

Hot Off the Press: iFoster's Summer Scoop!

July Edition 2023

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Summer is here, and we've got some fantastic news to kick off the season of fun in the sun!

Whether it's finding a summer job, getting outside or enjoying nature, we have you covered better than SPF 70!

Resources for You!

Savor the Flavors: Free Summer Meals



Just because school is out doesn't mean school lunches are done for the summer! The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a national program that provides meals throughout the summer. Depending on location, meals include breakfast, lunch and snacks.

Children 18 and younger may receive free meals and snacks at any open SFSP site. Meals and snacks are also available through SFSP to persons with disabilities who are over age 18 and participate in school programs for people with mental or physical disabilities.

Click the link below to find the Summer Meal Site closest to you or you can text "Summer Meals" to 914-342-7744 or call 1-866-348-6478.

If you can't find a meal site near you and are facing food scarcity, please contact us [here](#), and we will find something for you.

Need a Summer Job?



If you're looking for exciting summer employment opportunities that pay, we've got just the thing. Whether you're eager to unleash your creative side in an art workshop or showcase your sports skills as a camp counselor, there are plenty of options out there for you to explore. Learn great job skills, work at something you enjoy, and make great \$\$\$!

Click the link below to find employment opportunities near you. Also, check out [Youth Source Centers](#) are great places to receive excellent access to employment development.

If you can't find a summer job opportunity near you or need help applying, please contact us [here](#) or call us at 855-936-7837 or text us at 530-550-8001, and we will be happy to help you.

20-20 Vision is Yours for FREE!



Did you lose or break your glasses this school year? Do you need eyeglasses or a new prescription?

iFoster can provide you with FREE eye exams and eyeglasses when your health insurance can't (or won't).

If you or your child's insurance doesn't cover a broken or out-of-prescription pair of glasses, iFoster can help! We can provide certificates for free eye exams and glasses to current and former foster youth up to age 24 through our partnership with Vision Service Plan (VSP).

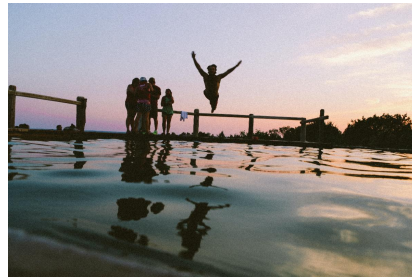
For more information, please see the flyer below or contact:

iFoster Support at 855-936-7837 / text 530-550-8001 / support@ifoster.org

Must be an iFoster Member/Register at www.ifoster.org, it's free!

[Learn More](#)

FREE Park Passes at Your Library



Adventure awaits this summer!

Explore the great outdoors for FREE with your Library Card. Most states now have a Park Pass Program at your local library.

If you have a library card, you can check out a pass to go to National and State parks in your state for FREE. Passes are good for a range of days, and just like taking a book out of the library, you must return it on time!

Check with your local library to see if they are part of the program. States iFoster has confirmed have FREE Library Park Pass Program (may not be available throughout entire state):

- California
- Colorado
- Florida
- Georgia
- Indiana
- Kansas
- Minnesota
- Nevada
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Vermont
- Washington
- Wisconsin

Summer Hotlines Support

The summer season can be a time of joy and relaxation, but it can also bring its own unique challenges. Whether it's feelings of loneliness, anxiety, or difficulty coping with stressors, it's important for youth to know that help is always available. That's why we've compiled a list of crisis hotlines specifically designed to provide support for young individuals during the summer months.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: If you or someone you know is experiencing a crisis, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7. TEXT, CHAT, TALK with a professional who can help. Call or Text 988 / Chat <https://988lifeline.org/talk-to-someone-now/> Or visit <https://988lifeline.org/>

Crisis Text Line: Sometimes, it can be easier to express your thoughts through text. The Crisis Text Line offers free, 24/7 support via text message. Simply text "HELLO" to 741741, and a trained crisis counselor will be there to lend an empathetic ear.

Trevor Project: For LGBTQ+ youth in crisis, the Trevor Project is an invaluable resource. Their trained counselors are available 24/7 to provide support and understanding. Reach out to their toll-free hotline at 1-866-488-7386 or utilize their instant messaging service at <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>



Boys Town National Hotline: Can help youth and caregivers.

Youth go to www.yourlifeyourvoice.org to call, text or email with professionals who understand youth and, in particular, the experiences of youth in foster care.

Caregivers call 1-800-448-3000 if you need to speak to a counselor or need parenting advice.

For those in California, you can call, chat, text, and email with the CA Family Urgent Response System (FURS) 24/7 to get the support you need whether you are a youth or a caregiver. If you are in foster care, a local mobile response teams are available for in person support during critical moments. Call 833-939-3877 or <https://www.cal-furs.org/>. If you have an iFoster phone, the FURS app is already on your phone - just click it to get help.

Remember, you are not alone, and help is just a

Building a Bright Future: Congrats to the First Cohort of iFoster's COLAS Construction Program!

We are thrilled to share the incredible success story of the first cohort of iFoster's COLAS construction program. This program was specifically designed to provide high-quality training and education to foster youth interested in pursuing a career in the construction industry.

During the program, our participants received hands-on training in the day going in the day to day construction areas, and the duties that they would perform on shift. They also had the opportunity to learn about safety protocols and techniques, project management, and other essential skills crucial for a thriving career in the construction industry.



We are proud to announce that every single participant in the first cohort of the COLAS construction program has successfully completed the program! They are now armed with the knowledge and skill set needed to chase their construction dreams. Their accomplishment is awe-inspiring, and we could not be prouder of their hard work and dedication.

At iFoster, we firmly believe that every youth deserves a chance to succeed in life. We are committed to providing them with the resources and support they need to achieve their goals and become successful self-sustaining adults. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the sponsors, donors, and partners who made this program possible. Special thanks go out to COLAS Construction Company and Sully Miller for stepping up and taking a chance on our youth.

To the first cohort of the COLAS construction program - you rock! Your journey to success has just begun, and we cannot wait to witness the remarkable impact you'll make in the construction industry. Embrace your dreams, keep building, and remember that the sky's the limit!

Congratulations, and here's to a future filled with towering successes and unparalleled achievements!

Did You Know?

In Your Own Words

Over the last two years, iFoster has surveyed the community on the issues in the child welfare system and how to improve it. We've received comments and solutions from over 6,000 lived experience voices from youth, frontline workers, and caregivers that have shaped our [Voice of the Community Report and Lived Experience Guide](#).

Did you know that we present all the quotes gathered to the public to help bring awareness and action to our community's needs and wants? You can find all of the voices captured here [In Their Own Words – iFoster \(voiceoffostercare.org\)](#).



I think there is a large misconception that not wanting to be reunified equals not wanting a connection or contact. The reality is it's not that black and white. . . While everyone's experience is unique, for me personally, I had a great experience in care. . . reunification was never really the best route for me during my time in care. And because of this, I'm actually now able to start working towards a relationship with my biological mother, something that would have never, ever been possible if I would have been reunified with her and placed back. . . into that repetitive cycle of trauma and neglect. Placing youth back into their original homes when the root of the cause of the issue that they were removed from in the first place hasn't been fixed only causes more damage. . . for me, getting out on my own and being able to have that independence allowed me to do what I needed to do for my own mental health."

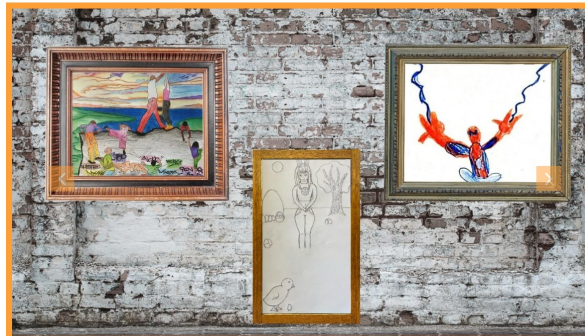
— Teresa (Resa) Ray, TAY Peer Navigator

Art Speaks: Express Your Thoughts on Child Welfare Through Artwork

Calling all artists! We believe that art has the power to convey powerful messages and create

meaningful conversations. That's why we're inviting you to submit your artwork as a way of expressing your thoughts on child welfare.

Child welfare is a topic that affects us all, and we want to shed light on it through the artistry and creativity of our community. Whether you're a painter, photographer, or any other form of visual artist, we encourage you to use your talent to spark dialogue and raise awareness.



Your artwork can address various aspects of child welfare, such as foster care, adoption, children's rights, and the importance of a nurturing environment. It can evoke emotions, tell stories, and ignite discussions that can lead to positive change.

Submit your artwork to our gallery, and let your voice be heard.
Submit your artwork and view other submissions today and make an impact!

[Submit Your Artwork Here](#)



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For more information, please contact: iFoster Support at 855-936-7837 / text 530-550-8001/ support@ifoster.org
Must be an iFoster Member/ Register at www.ifoster.org, it's free!

iFoster | PO Box 159, Truckee, CA 96160

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