



National Edition 20

# Summer Is in the Air!

June Edition 2024

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Get ready for an amazing start to the summer season!

We're thrilled to share some fantastic news as we dive into the sunshine and warm weather. Whether landing a summer job, embracing the great outdoors, or savoring nature's beauty, we've got you covered.

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## Resources for you

**Indulge in Summer Delights - Free Meals!**



**Summer Fun and Funds - Get Employed!**



Even though schools will be out, you can still count on having access to nutritious meals throughout the summer with the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This nationwide initiative offers breakfast, lunch, and snacks at various locations, ensuring that children aged 18 and younger, as well as individuals with disabilities participating in specialized school programs, have access to free meals and snacks.

To discover the nearest Summer Meal Site, click the link below, or alternatively, you can text "Summer Meals" to 914-342-7744 or call 1-866-348-6479.

Get ready to enjoy the bounties of summer feasting!

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.

Now, let the festivities of summer feasting commence!

[Find a site near you](#)

## Introducing the Mental Health Toolkit for Foster Youth



Empowering foster youth, the Mental Health Toolkit is a comprehensive resource designed by foster youth for foster youth. It provides valuable resources, promotes peer support, and highlights the importance of mental health.

Focusing on resilience and self-care, this toolkit offers tailored tools to navigate mental health challenges. If you are looking for a one stop mental health guide, we have it here for you.

[Learn more](#)

If you're on the hunt for awesome summer work that puts money in your pockets, look no further! Unleash your inner artist in a cool workshop or show off your sports prowess as a camp counselor - the opportunities are endless. Not only will you have a blast, but you'll also gain valuable job skills and earn some summertime cash!

Click the link below to discover exciting job prospects in your area. Plus, don't forget to explore the abundance of employment development resources available at [Youth Source Centers](#) for top-notch support!

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.

[Explore a program near you](#)

## FREE Park Passes at Your Library



Unlock the great outdoors without spending a dime by utilizing your trusty Library Card. Many states now offer a fabulous Park Pass Program through local libraries.

With your library card, you can snag a pass to visit National and State parks in your state absolutely free of charge. These passes are valid for a variety of days, but just like borrowing a book, remember to return it on time!

Be sure to check with your local library to see if they're part of this incredible program. States like California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Nevada, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin (confirmed by iFoster) boast the FREE Library Park Pass Program (availability

may vary within the state).

It's time to embark on unforgettable outdoor adventures, courtesy of your library card!

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## Summer Hotlines



The summer season is often a time of leisure and enjoyment, but it can also present challenges unique to the season. Whether it's grappling with feelings of isolation, anxiety, or trouble managing stress, it's crucial for young people to be aware of the support available to them. To that end, we have compiled a selection of crisis helplines tailored to offer assistance specifically to youth during the summer months.

**988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** In moments of crisis, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988) provides round-the-clock support through texting, chatting, or talking with a trained professional.

**Crisis Text Line:** When expressing thoughts through text feels easier, the Crisis Text Line offers free, 24/7 support. By texting "HELLO" to 741741, individuals can connect with a compassionate crisis counselor.

- **Trevor Project:** For LGBTQ+ youth facing crisis, the Trevor Project offers vital support from trained counselors around the clock. Access their toll-free hotline at 1-866-488-7386 or use their instant messaging service at <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>.
- **Boys Town National Hotline:** Available to help both youth and caregivers in need. Access their hotline at 800-448-3000. In addition to calling, teens can now text VOICE to 20121 or email [hotline@boystown.org](mailto:hotline@boystown.org) any day, any time to speak with a trained counselor or visit <https://www.boystown.org/child-family-services/crisis>.
- Youth and caregivers can connect with professionals who understand their experiences, including those in foster care, by visiting [www.yourlifeyourvoice.org](http://www.yourlifeyourvoice.org), calling, texting, or emailing.
- In California, individuals can call, chat, text, and email with the CA Family Urgent Response System (FURS) 24/7 for support, whether they are a youth or a caregiver. For those in foster care, local mobile response teams are available for in-person support during crucial moments. Call 833-939-3877 or visit <https://www.cal-furs.org/>. If you have an iFoster phone, the FURS app is pre-installed for immediate help.

It's important to remember that help is readily available, and you are not alone. Whether through a call or a text, assistance is just a moment away.

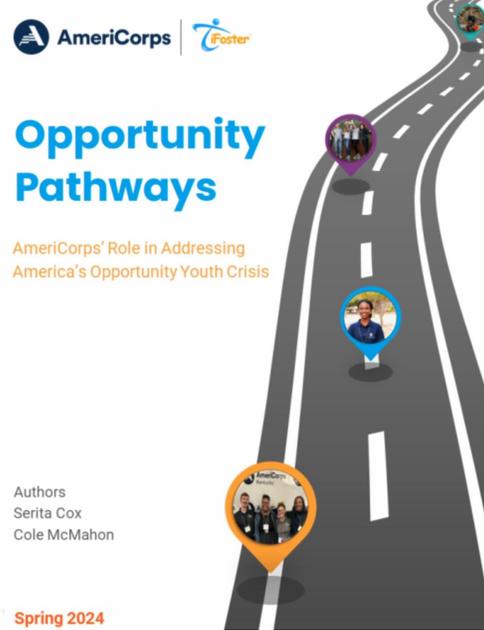
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## Unveiling Opportunity Pathways: A Transformative Plan to Change the Face of Service in America

Opportunity Pathways isn't just a report to AmeriCorps. It is packed with valuable insights and actionable takeaways that can benefit our community of foster youth, caregivers, and youth-

supporting adults. Here's why the report matters to you:

- **Real Stories, Real Impact:** Opportunity Pathways shares personal stories of foster youth and organizations who are experts in bringing their experiences to life. These narratives help you connect on a deeper level and understand the challenges and successes of foster youth.
- **Identifying Systemic Gaps:** The report highlights the systemic barriers and gaps that hinder the success of foster youth and other opportunity youth. It sheds light on areas that need improvement, such as targeted education and training programs, support services, mentorship opportunities, and employment barriers.
- **Advocacy for Policy Change:** Opportunity Pathways offers concrete recommendations for policy changes that can improve the lives of opportunity youth. By advocating for these changes, you can make a difference in creating a more supportive environment.
- **Call to Mobilize and Support:** The report urges people from every level of society to take action and support opportunity youth within their communities. Whether through supporting local programs, advocating for policy changes, or contributing resources, we can all make a meaningful difference.



By embracing the stories, recognizing systemic gaps, advocating for change, and taking action, you can play a pivotal role in empowering and supporting foster youth. Let's use the transformative insights of Opportunity Pathways to create a more compassionate and inclusive society for all.

[Explore the report](#)

## Did You Know?

### Summer Reading Suggestions

This summer, delve into inspiring stories that celebrate the power of family, resilience, and the positive impact child welfare professionals can have on young lives.

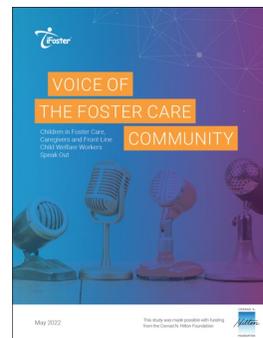
#### For Youths and Adults:

- **Safe: A Memoir of Fatherhood, Foster Care, and the Risks We Take for Family by Mark Daley:** Foster parent Mark Daley opens his heart about the challenges, joys, and transformative experiences of fostering children. His insightful memoir offers a unique perspective on the child welfare system and the profound impact foster parents can have.
- **The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity by Nadine Burke Harris:** In this groundbreaking book, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris sheds light on the science behind childhood trauma and its lasting effects. She also offers a message of hope and healing, outlining strategies to help children who have experienced adversity.

#### For Younger Readers:

- **I Love You More Than Cereal: Maeva and Dad Redefine Love by Justin and Alexis Black:** Maeva loves her cereal! But her father

**Additionally,** review the Voice of the Foster Care Community Reports. These reports are based on over 15,000 voices from our community, giving voice to the needs and recommendations of those directly impacted by the system. You can find them, along with a wealth of other resources, below:



[2022 Report \[Link\]](#)

helps her discover that love is about more than just things. This charming book explores the true meaning of love, kindness, and empathy, all through the heartwarming relationship between a girl and her dad.

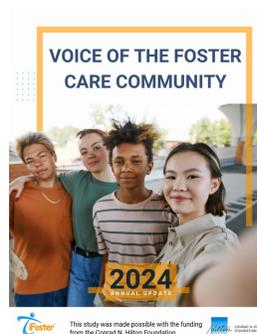
- **The Family Book by Todd Parr:** Another great choice for young children, this vibrant and inclusive picture book celebrates the many ways families can be made.



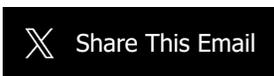
[2023 Report \[Link\]](#)



[2023 Lived Experience Guide \[Link\]](#)



[2024 Report \[Link\]](#)



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!

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