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For Immediate Release:
April 29, 2016

Middlesex Vicinage Holds Aging-Out Youth Conference

Middlesex Vicinage will sponsor a daylong conference to provide information on services available to adolescents ages 16 to 21 who are not in permanent homes and will be transitioning away from the supervision of the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P, formerly DYFS).

The event will take place Friday, May 6 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Professional Center at the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, 30 Van Dyke Ave., New Brunswick.

“Many adolescents who have experienced an out-of-home placement are not aware of the programs, resources and funds that are available to them to assist in their transition to adulthood,” Judge Barbara Stolte said. “This conference contains important resources and information that will help provide a clearer understanding of the services available to our adolescents, such as housing, medical insurance and funding for postsecondary education.”

The conference was created through a partnership between the vicinage’s family division, CP&P, Children in Court Advisory Council, Office of the Public Defender, Middlesex County Office of Law Guardian, United Way of Central Jersey, the Karma Foundation, and the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) of Middlesex. Approximately 80 youth and 25 vendors are expected to attend this year’s event. Additional attendees include judges, family court staff, CP&P caseworkers, shelter staff, CASA volunteers and law guardians.

Assignment Judge Travis L. Francis, Presiding Family Division Judge Deborah Venezia and CP&P Acting Area Director Marisol Garces will welcome the attendees. Michael Fowlin will deliver the keynote address, performing his one-man presentation “You Don’t Know Me Until You Know Me.” Former foster youth will speak about their experiences transitioning out of foster care.

The conference will close with the handing out of awards as well as raffles and gift giveaways donated by the Karma Foundation, the United Way of Central Jersey and Nili’s Closet.

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