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Middlesex and Union Vicinages to Hold Aging-Out Youth Conference

The Middlesex and Union vicinages will sponsor a conference for youth aging out of foster care on Friday, Nov. 3 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the student center on the Busch campus of Rutgers University, 604 Bartholomew Road, Piscataway.

The conference, “emPower Up!,” will provide information on services available to adolescents ages 15 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 (DCP&P).

New York Times bestselling author and activist Regina Calcaterra will deliver the keynote address. Calcaterra will discuss her memoir, *Etched in Sand*, detailing how she and her four siblings survived an abusive childhood only to find themselves faced with the challenges of the foster care system and intermittent homelessness.

Approximately 80 youth and 30 vendors are expected to attend. Judges, family court staff, CP&P caseworkers, shelter staff, CASA volunteers and law guardians also are expected to attend.

“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,” said Judge Barbara Stolte. “This conference will include 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 among the vicinages’ family divisions, CP&P, Children in Court Advisory Council, Office of the Public Defender, Office of Law Guardian, United Way of Central Jersey and Greater Union County, the Karma Foundation, A Birthday Wish, Scott Hazelcorn Children’s Foundation, Rutgers University, and the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA).

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