



Green Chimneys Sugar Hill Office

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Dear Child Welfare Colleagues:

I am writing to inform you of a wonderful opportunity for young adults in foster care, ages 18- 20, who are preparing for independent living. Green Chimneys Children's Services SILP (Supervised Independent Living Program) has been in existence for over 10 years with a special dedication to the needs of LGBTQ youth in care (though open to all!) and has recently opened two new apartments in NYC. This means that young people who are approved for the program can move in immediately.

According to the Reach Institute, up to 50% of former foster/probation youth become homeless within the first 18 months of emancipation. This can largely be attributed to the difficult transition from foster care to independence. In group homes, youth are often provided all of their material needs, cared for by round-the-clock staff, and do not have to pay bills or manage money. While this is an appropriate model for many youth that need intensive supervision, there are many youth in care that are high functioning, highly responsible, and ready to move to a next level. Once youth are discharged from a group home, they are forced to budget, provide for themselves, and find their own support system with little experience. It is this transition where youth often stumble, and the SILP seeks to make this transition much smoother.

In the SILP, youth are provided with their own apartment (shared by another SILP resident), with no staff members present. This allows the young people to experience a new degree of independence. However, staff work in nearby offices and are available as needed to assist the young person. It is this "golden parachute" that prevents SILP youth from stumbling upon their transition to independence. In fact, over 90% of SILP youth who completed the program have stably transitioned into their own apartment or to a discharge resource with little-to-no difficulties.

While at the SILP, young people are required to attend regular case planning meetings, life skills groups, and as-needed counseling. Additionally, they are required to maintain employment and/or be enrolled in an academic program.

It is our belief that such a program is an ideal transition for youth in care seeking independence, and it is with this in mind that we have recently opened these new apartments. If you have any residents in your programs who you believe would be a good fit for this program or if you or your residents would like to learn more, please contact our intake coordinator, Erin Padula, at (212) 677-7288 x 208 or myself to discuss the application process.

Additionally, we have also begun offering independent living trainings for staff and residents in other agencies. If you would be interested in having any of your youth or staff further informed or trained about the process of transitioning to independent living, please contact me and we can set up a time where one of our team members will provide the training at your location, tailored to your agency's needs.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Fulwiler, MSW
Program Director, AOBH/SILP
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