



CASE FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

“Nothing you do for children is ever wasted.”

—Garrison Keillor

Currently, over 400,000 children, from infants to age 21, live in foster care. The average age for a foster child is between 6 - 8, and there are slightly more boys than girls in the foster care system. Children enter the foster care system for a variety of reasons; some have suffered from abuse, some from neglect, and some have been abandoned. And in some cases, their only care giver died, leaving them alone.

While more than three-quarters of the children in foster care will be reunited with their parents or primary caregivers or be adopted, others are left in the system to age out with few skills and fewer resources.

The sad reality is that all these children have experienced loss and trauma at some point in their young lives. And yet, they are no different than other children. They have dreams, like to hang out with friends, are learning to navigate the world, and desperately need the benefits a permanent home provides.

Foster care children suffer some of the same shame, anxiety, and anger a homeless child feels. Through no fault of their own, they have become a problem to be solved by whatever governmental agency has jurisdiction over the city/county in which they live. Sometimes taken from the home they know, or abandoned and left alone, they are thrust into a scary and uncertain future and are now at the mercy of new adults they don't know and probably don't trust.

THE PROBLEM

Foster children often enter the system already suffering from low self-esteem. After all, because they've been taken from their family, for whatever reason, they are suddenly different than all their friends. Then, they might be placed far away from the neighborhood and school they were familiar with, forcing them to start over. Entering a new school puts them under additional stress and into awkward situations when they are asked to explain where they came from or what happened to their parents.

Add to that the fact that foster children are often moved within the system and stay with the same foster family an average of only 13 months. The reasons for the moves might be because the

family is not a good fit, the foster child may show aggression, or the foster family may be moving themselves due to a new job.

In fact, a foster child is moved to a new foster family an average of seven times. That's seven times being told to gather your few belongings and throw them into a large trash bag so that you can be uprooted and plopped down in a completely new and different living situation. Regardless of the reason for the move, this can be a depressing, anxiety producing, and frightening situation these children live over and over.

“Anyone who does anything to help a child in his life is a hero.”
—Fred Rogers

THE NEED

Besides stability, these children need ways to build their self-esteem so that once they leave the foster care system they are better equipped to become productive adults. Unfortunately, the system isn't designed for this, and many of the foster families are themselves ill-equipped to benefit the child in this way.

Therefore, there is a need for other resources that can lift a child's spirit, restore their dignity, and help to rebuild their self-esteem. Only in this way will they have a chance at a new life.

“Low self-esteem is like driving through life with your hand-break on.”
—Maxwell Maltz

THIS IS WHO WE ARE

A large majority of foster children are removed or relocated from home to home with little to nothing but the clothes on their backs and a trash bag to carry what few belongings they may have. Sometimes, these children are moved so often, it's impossible for them to feel normal or to build any kind of meaningful relationship. We see this as a tragedy.

After all, picture yourself as a child, forced to leave a home you've known only for a short time, knowing that you will be thrust into a new and uncertain living situation. Then, think about how you'd feel carrying the few personal belongings you own in a trash bag because no one thought to give you a small suitcase.

Located in Cary, North Carolina, The A.R.K Foundation USA (Acts of Random Kindness) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization devoted to helping restore dignity to foster children by providing free luggage to be used whenever they are forced to move.

Dignity starts from within.

We believe that dignity starts from within, and that many of these children have been stripped of everything, leaving them feeling shameful, anxious, and with a feeling of low self-worth. This can carry over into their relationships with others, affect their schoolwork, and take away any hope they have for a bright future.

A.R.K.'s mission is to help restore a foster child's dignity and self-esteem by providing the simple gift of luggage so that when they move, they can do so with their heads held high.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

We rely on community support to meet our mission. Each gift, no matter how large, helps us to not only meet the need in our area, but expand our reach to foster children throughout the U.S.

All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law and help us to continue to support these children who have so little.

Cash gifts: a donation in cash is always the most efficient way to support what we do, because cash can be immediately applied to priority areas-of-need. You may send a check, make an online donation, or pledge your gift over several months.

In-kind gifts: We do accept a limited number of in-kind gifts, such as graphic design, help with public relations, newsletter writing, and so forth. Please contact us in advance if you have something you think we could use.

Volunteering: We can always use volunteers for any of our marketing or fundraising events. Please give us a call if you're interested

“Every life deserves a certain amount of dignity, no matter how poor or damaged the shell that carries it.”

—Rick Bragg

Won't you help us give a struggling child a simple tool to change their life for the better. Your gift will help to bring a sense of normalcy to a child that has lost so much, and just maybe help to put them on the road to feeling better about themselves.