

*The* **HUB585**

**COMMUNITY SUPPORTED  
FOSTER HOME**

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## THE OPPORTUNITY:

“Each year, more than 20,000 children age out of foster care without being adopted at all. According to data on foster children who ‘age out of the system, one in five will become homeless after age 18; only 58 percent will graduate high school by age 19, and fewer than 3 percent will earn a college degree by age 25. Seventy-one percent of young women who age out are pregnant by 21 years old.” (US Department of Health and Human Services). New York has roughly 15,332 youth in the foster care system, with approximately 500 residing in Monroe County.

Often, these youth experience homelessness, resulting in them living unsupervised on the streets, in abandoned buildings, with friends, or with strangers. These living situations place youth at higher risk for physical abuse, sexual exploitation, substance abuse, and death. Rochester, New York is not immune from the issue of youth homelessness; however, Rochester has not yet fully put in place the funding, services, and strategies to address the issue.

Once aged out of the system and on the streets, youth are faced with a lack of a stable living arrangement, educational resources, health care, and financial obstacles that make exiting homelessness difficult. In addition to lacking employment skills to escape homelessness, the majority of these youth also lack the necessary life skills to live and maintain permanent housing in the community in which they live.

## SPECIALIZED NEEDS FOR GIRLS:

Although the Hub585 intends to offer this model broadly in the future, the first home will focus on teenage girls in the foster care system. “While the research for a number of years has strongly suggested that there is a need for unique and different strategies for girls than boys, most institutional and community-based programs are not responsive to the special needs of girls” (Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, 2009). For years, research has recommended that programs offered to system-involved girls include a focus on building healthy relationships and supportive family connections and intensive family-based programs. Furthermore, research suggests “instituting a comprehensive approach, addressing physical and mental health needs, focusing on strengths rather than deficits, training caregivers to be responsive to the interpersonal nature of girls, serving as role models, and meeting their physical, psychological, and emotional safety needs” (Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, 2009).

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## OUR SOLUTION:

### SUPPORTING FOSTER FAMILIES



The Community-Supported Foster Home Program is a new development of The Hub585 and is designed to provide care and support to youth in foster care ages 13-21. This model places youth in foster care in a home with a foster parent who is a paid professional employed by The Hub585 and licensed through the Monroe County Department of Human Services.

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Through specialized training (provided through Monroe County and The Hub585), the foster parent becomes the care coordinator for the youth. The foster parent then assures that the Plan of Care designed by the Care Coordination Teams is developed and executed. The foster parent becomes the youth's primary support person and advocate.

The home will be certified as a Monroe County Foster Home by Monroe County after an inspection that certifies the physical structure complies with all foster home regulations. Each child living in the home remains under the care of Monroe County and will receive all traditional case management services and supports related to safety, permanency, and well-being from their Monroe County Caseworker. Each Foster Parent will be certified by Monroe County and will receive all of the required and offered trainings and supports provided by Monroe County. Foster Parents must adhere to all OCFS's certification requirements. The Hub585 will also employ licensed Monroe County Foster Parents to serve as Relief Foster Parents, providing extended support for the Full-Time Foster Parents at the home. All of the youth will be placed in the home by Monroe County.

The role of the Hub585 is to provide additional financial and communal support to the Foster Parents, enabling a foster parent to be available full-time and at home to foster youth who require that level of support. Additionally, the Hub585 will oversee the supervision and maintenance of the property and provide additional programming and educational support beyond what the foster home level of care traditionally provides for each foster youth residing in the home. The Hub585 will create an environment that provides safety, encouragement, empowerment, support, hope, and healing. Our Life Launch program partners each youth with a volunteer mentor team. The home will also provide life skills training and tutoring. Pregnant and parenting teens will also be accepted and receive services through community partnerships. We will collaborate with other community partners to provide counseling (individual and group), case management, and GED/credit recovery resources for our youth.

Through our proven success, we are continually changing perceptions and behaviors within the community regarding supporting and encouraging youth aging out of foster care. We accomplish this through advocating for our youth, empowering them through education, and helping them develop their own voice.

Community-Supported Homes are a new way to provide services than traditional foster care because it allows local communities to draw on local strengths and resources and find innovative ways to meet the unique and individual needs of children and their families.

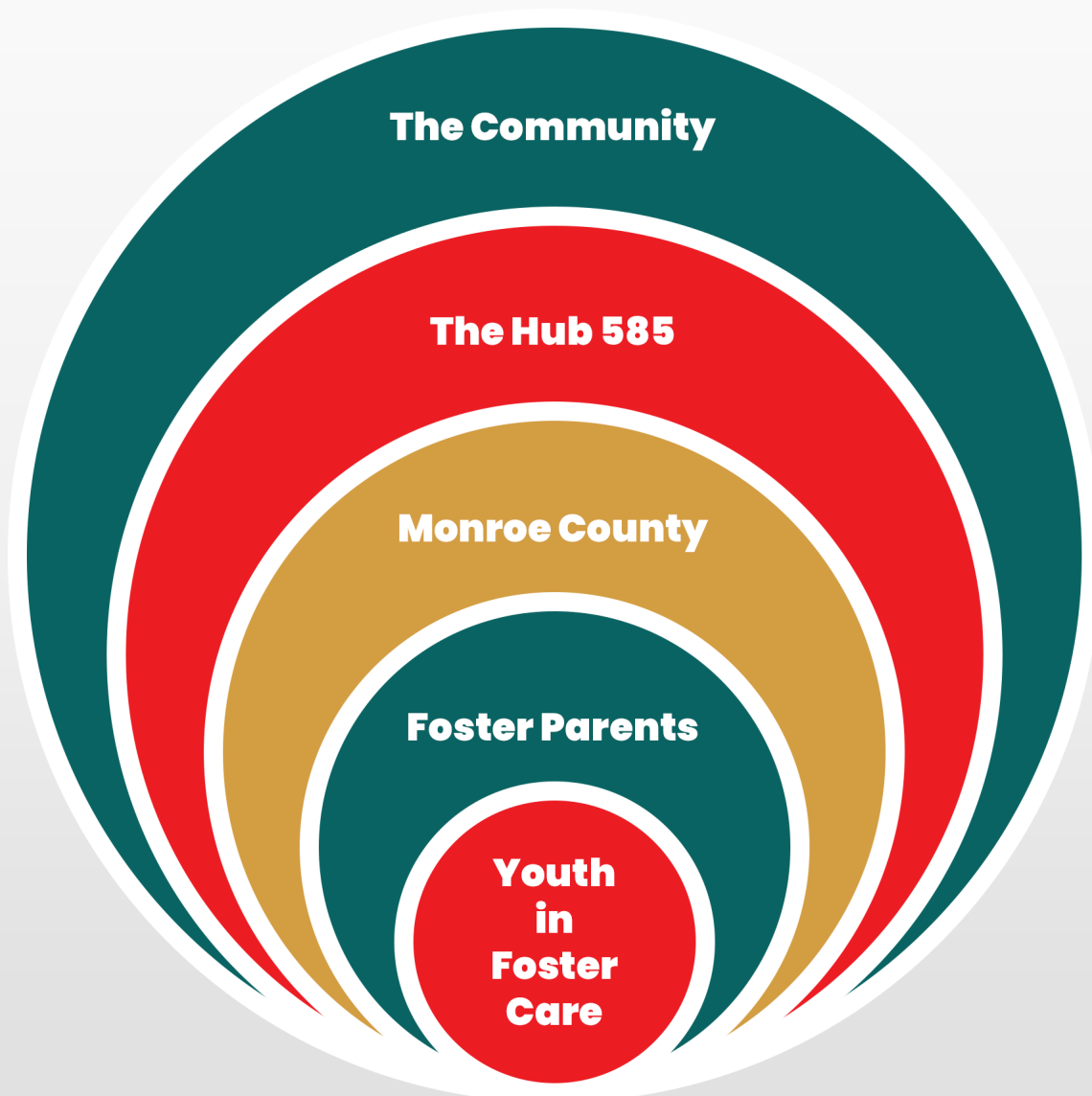
The Hub585 will assist in the following:

- Developing foster care capacity.
- Building a community of hope and healing for foster families.
- Engaging the community to help.
- Coordinating and delivering services to youth in foster care and their families.

Community-Supported Homes allow The Hub585, DHS, and the community more flexibility to innovate. This increased flexibility comes with greater responsibility and accountability for outcomes such as safety, permanency, and well-being.



# **Creating layers of support for teens in foster care.**



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## OUR PHILOSOPHY:

All of Hub585's programs and services are grounded in the philosophies of the Hope Theory. The Hope Theory defines hope as "The belief that your future can be brighter than your past and that you have the power to make it so." We choose to focus on hope because the research proves that hope is the single best predictor of well-being.

We have adopted the definition and approaches to building hope from Camp HOPE America which states that hope is "believing in yourself, believing in others, and believing in your dreams." Our Community-Supported foster home is designed to help them see it, be it, and aspire to it. However, we understand that Adverse Childhood Experiences pose the greatest threat to hope in children. Therefore, we apply extra efforts to understanding trauma's toxic impact and addressing it according to each youth's individualized needs.

At The Hub585, we believe that all children can thrive when provided with a community of hope and healing where every youth has a champion.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The guiding principles of Community-Based Care:

- Above all, youth are safe from abuse and neglect.
- Youth increase in hope, a sense of belonging and overall well-being.
- Youth are placed within the community.
- Youth are appropriately served in the least restrictive environment.
- Youth have stability in their placements.
- Connections to family and others important to the youth are maintained.
- Services respect the youth.
- Youth are provided opportunities, experiences, and activities similar to those enjoyed by their peers who are not in foster care.
- Youth are fully prepared for successful adulthood.
- Youth have opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- Youth are reunified with their biological parents when possible.

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## THE FOSTER PARENTS:

Professional Foster Parents are Monroe County-certified foster parents who have participated in an enhanced training program to teach them to use their creativity and consistency to become committed caregivers and care coordinators.

### Advantages of being a Foster Parent at The Hub585's Community-Supported Home

- You will make a real impact on the life of a child
- 24/7 support is available
- There is the potential for full-time family income
- You will receive ongoing training
- You will join a team of experts serving vulnerable youth

### Qualifications to Become a Foster Parent at The Hub585's Community-Supported Home

- Families must have at least one stay-at-home parent
- Parent(s) must have experience working with challenging children
- The family must be committed to providing trauma-informed care

## OUR CURRICULUM:

The Hub585 provides safe, supportive temporary homes for children and youth working towards reunification with relatives, permanent placement through adoption, or self-sufficiency. We are committed to providing quality care and stability for our foster children while working towards a more permanent and stable plan for their future.

Each Community-Supported Home follows a curriculum that works youth through 8 goals:

- **GOAL 1:** Providing a thriving and safe environment for girls aging out of the foster care system or at risk of homelessness.
- **GOAL 2:** Teach youth valuable skills to build healthy habits and independent living skills that will make them self-sufficient adults.
- **GOAL 3:** Youth will be afforded opportunities to advance their education and personal development.
- **GOAL 4:** Promote whole-person health and assist youth in obtaining essential resources
- **GOAL 5:** Give young ladies the opportunity to serve their community and become active members of society.
- **GOAL 6:** Teach young ladies career skills and sustainability by creating opportunities for employment, internship, externships, and leadership training.
- **GOAL 7:** Provide opportunities for our youth to build permanent connections.
- **GOAL 8:** Increase each girl's sense of belonging; hope that will contribute to long-term goal completion and sustainability.



## OUTCOMES:

- Reduction in the number of foster youths in restrictive placement settings.
- Reduction in the number and frequency of runaway episodes.
- Improve school attendance and performance.
- Improved well-being (physical, emotional, and mental)

## EVIDENCE OF PROFESSIONAL FOSTER CARE MODEL SUCCESS:

Based on the findings from a Professional Foster Care Program pilot through Wraparound Milwaukee:

*Based on your experience, what are the strengths of this foster care approach?*

The responses to this question seemed to address the broad spectrum of underlying principles to operational integrity. Direct answers are:

- Training;
- Ongoing support provided by Wraparound staff;
- Individualized program;
- Normalizes the stigma of mental health care;
- Opens up a closed system;



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- Freedom to be creative;
  - Has Wrap integrity;
  - Its honest, gives actual time it takes to care for kids as they need to be cared for, emotionally and physically;
  - Terrific crisis support; and
  - Allows families to become more self-sufficient, aware of needs, practice parenting strategies and mend the relationship with their child.

*What were the successes you experienced with the child?*

The responses about the girls that established permanency are as follows:

- “K” had no identity and had lots of trauma in family.”
- “She acquired a sense of belonging in the world and developed respect and some acceptance of herself.”
- “She is ready for high school.”
- “Taught parent to provide unconditional regard.”
- “Both parent and child overcame their fears.”
- “She is stable, happier, and verbal.”
- “She has life that she owns.”
- “She is reconciling with mom.”
- “She can give to others.”

The responses about the girls that did not achieve the permanency plan:

- “S” was so very angry, kicked in walls was disrespectful, and a runner.”
- “In our home, all these behaviors stopped.”
- “Reduction of disrespect to parents.”
- “Continues to be a runner but is more respectful.”
- “Her spirit did change.”
- “She wants to come back to the home.” “She wants her whole team back.”
- She will listen to me and would do whatever I ask her if she was emotionally able to do it.”

*Describe how this special foster care arrangement made a difference for the child.*

Although there were a number of responses, the following statement sums up the collective sentiment: “When they leave, they know they are loved. That’s why they stay in touch.”

*What are the things you really liked about being a Professional Foster Care mom?*

- “Get to use my education and be a mom.”
- “Individualized work.”
- “Able to work with both parent and child.”
- “Really get to know and understand the child.”

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## RESOURCES:

- [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Foster\\_Care/Community-Based\\_Care/default.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Foster_Care/Community-Based_Care/default.asp)
- <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2019/02/20/foster-parents-have-become-professionals-in-some-states>
- <https://www.hfyny.org/foster-home-programs/>
- <https://county.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/cntyHHS/Wraparound/PROFESSIONALFOSTERPARENTPROGRA.pdf>





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