

## NATIONAL FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH

Mark first came to a Friends of Youth foster care home when he was 13 years old, suffering from depression and a lack of social skills. His father's girlfriend did not want to parent Mark and his father had abandoned him.

Mark is like many teens referred to Friends of Youth Foster Care. Working as a team with our foster parents, we combine the nurturing environment of a healthy family with the specialized skills of master's level case managers and treatment aides. Our approach provides a safe and caring atmosphere that includes support through counseling, crisis intervention, and preparation for post-foster care life.

Once in a Friends of Youth foster home, Mark lived with another foster brother, attend high school, and received the counseling and support necessary to overcome his behavioral challenges. For the first time, he felt like he was part of a home and community.

The Friends of Youth Foster Care Program serves children and youth ages 6 through 17 who have significant behavioral, emotional or substance abuse problems. Friends of Youth has expanded foster care for unaccompanied boys and girls in this country. These teens benefit from our experience with traumatized and abused children. We are currently recruiting bilingual foster care parents at our new El Centro de la Raza office in Seattle.

Mark is now 20 years old and has a full-time job and his own apartment in Seattle. He is preparing to attend college and get a business degree. He is active in his church, helping them develop a website and other computer projects. Mark is happy, self-sufficient, and credits much of his success to Friends of Youth.

The month of May is National Foster Care Awareness Month. Throughout the year our foster parents provide a stable, loving home for our foster youth. It is foster parents who are the most trusted individuals in a troubled teen's life. They are the people who offer the most profound impact for a successful future. Friends of Youth truly appreciates the perseverance and commitment our foster parents demonstrate each day. Their hard work and patience makes a lasting difference in the lives of young people.