



Bringing people together is what i call 'ubuntu,' which means 'I am because we are.' Far too often people think of themselves as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.

Desmond Tutu

quotefancy

News From the Field

National child welfare policy, practice and research

Field Notes



As we adapt to living and working under the social distancing guidelines required by COVID19, The Field Center is acutely aware that the professionals, families, children, and youth involved with the child welfare system face unprecedented additional challenges. This short issue of News From the Field reflects that reality and aims to provide a brief overview of our response during this time.

We continue our work remotely, with various research projects underway and future program development goals remaining intact. Our [social media](#) has pivoted to almost exclusively cover the child welfare system's response to COVID19. We participated in the Virtual Town Halls for Older Foster Youth where

Children's Bureau Associate Commissioner Dr. Jerry Milner answered questions from young people affected by COVID19. We applaud the Children's Bureau for responding quickly and issuing guidance to child welfare agencies.

We also want to direct current/former youth in foster care and child welfare professionals to the Think of Us [Child Welfare COVID-19 Command Center](#) for resources and guidance during the COVID19 pandemic. Think of Us has been a pioneer in the space of systems change and leveraging technology to upgrade the child welfare system.

The child welfare news is dominated by stories of struggling systems, challenges in protecting vulnerable children and youth, and preventing the spread of the virus for individuals housed in close quarters. We are grateful to the Chronicle of Social Change for tirelessly reporting on the virus's impact. To visit the Chronicle's continuing coverage of the pandemic and how it is changing child welfare and juvenile justice, [click here](#).

As we continue to engage in work that places the wellbeing of children and youth front and center with a focus on innovation, impact, and justice, we celebrate our many partners and collaborators in this vital effort. Human rights activist Desmond Tutu says "Bringing people together is what I call 'ubuntu,' which means 'I am because we are.' Far too often people think of themselves as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity."

The Field Center is *because we are*, which we feel even more poignantly in this time of COVID19. Thank you for partnering with us to do well!

Warmly,

Johanna K.P. Greeson
Managing Faculty Director
The Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research

New Resource: Responding to COVID19

The Field Center partnered with four other youth advocacy organizations to produce a guide titled "[Responding to COVID19: How You Can Support Older Youth in Pennsylvania who are Experiencing Homelessness or Have Experience in Foster Care.](#)"

Click [here](#) to view the guide.

Help advance the work of the Field Center

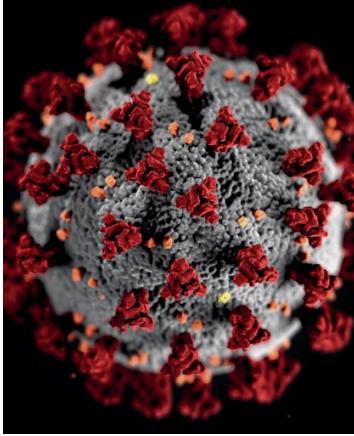
The Field Center is pioneering innovative and critical work in child welfare. Due to our current global health crisis, we are playing an active role in addressing the urgent needs of children and young adults during this particularly vulnerable time.

All gifts made to the Field Center will be generously matched dollar for dollar by the Joseph and Marie Field Foundation.

FOSTER YOUTH & COVID19: A RESEARCH STUDY

Field Center Faculty Directors **Dr. Johanna Greeson** and **Dr. Sara Jaffee**, along with Program Manager **Sarah Wasch**, recently launched an online survey study in response to the COVID19 crisis. The purpose of this national study, titled "The Experiences of Foster Youth During COVID-19" is to assess how older youth in foster care and those who recently aged out of foster care are faring with COVID19 in the key areas of basic needs, education, employment, finances, personal connections, and health/mental health.

Youth aging out of foster care and those who have recently aged out are among the most marginalized groups in this country. They experience countless hardships when they transition from foster care to adulthood on their own, and with the added difficulties of COVID19, these young people are among those bearing the heaviest burden of this crisis. By gaining a clearer picture of these burdens, stakeholders will be better able to advocate for the needs of these young people.



FOSTER YOUTH & COVID-19

To participate in this research study on the impact of COVID-19, you must be:

- Currently in foster care or aged out of foster care
- 18-23 years old



The online survey is available until **May 2, 2020**. Any youth ages 18-23 in foster care or who aged out of foster care is eligible to complete the survey, which takes approximately 10-15 minutes. Participants will be offered the option of being entered into a raffle at the end of the survey to win one of twelve \$25 Target gift cards.

The Field Center will disseminate preliminary results soon after the survey closes with the goal of publishing a future academic paper on the national response to COVID19 as it affects older youth in foster care and aged out of foster care. To visit the online survey, click [here](#).

For more information about the study, please contact the principal investigator, Dr. Johanna Greeson, by phone (215-573-9779) or email (jgreeson@sp2.upenn.edu).

DONATE NOW

To learn more about our work, please contact our Director of Development **Hannah Rawdin** at hrawdin@upenn.edu or (267) 432-9928.

For more information [click here](#).

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CAMPUS SUPPORT PROGRAMS CONTINUE SUPPORTING STUDENTS DURING COVID19

The Field Center's network of campus-based support programs for students with experience in foster care are facing unprecedented challenges during COVID19. With higher education institutions moving most students off campus and moving instruction online, campus coaches are struggling to connect with their students and support their educational and basic needs. The Field Center has continued to be a central resource for program liaisons, disseminating up-to-the-minute information about available resources and providing opportunities for virtual networking sessions for the campus coaches around the state. We are proud of the innovative responses our campus partners have instituted to support the students in their programs, including:



- Emergency food bags and gift cards
- Allowing students without other housing options to remain in dormitories
- Phone calls and text messages to check in from campus coach
- Weekly Zoom dinners for students to maintain social connection
- Providing computers and internet access to students without reliable technology

Higher education professionals around the country seeking to create a student-centered COVID19 response for students with experience in foster care

should visit this [Beyond the Food Pantry](#) brief from the HOPE Center for College, Community, and Justice.



Protecting Children, Preserving Dreams

The Field Center is a collaboration of



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Click the link below to learn more about The Field Center
www.fieldcenteratpenn.org

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