Date: 4/03/18

Foster Care Case Managers, Providers, and Partners:

I'm proud to let you know about opportunities for teens in foster care at the DHS supported Iowa Foster Care Youth Council. You may know them as the Achieving Maximum Potential or “AMP”. I recently visited with youth from AMP and I was heartened by their resilience and passion to help others in the foster care system. The experience moved me to contact you. In this letter I will share a few highlights, with hopes you and a teen you care about will find your way to a local AMP meeting very soon.

**Background:** AMP offers leadership opportunities, service learning projects, speaking opportunities, and educational/vocational assistance to youth ages 13 and older who have been involved in foster care, adoption, or other out-of-home placements. AMP also offers participating youth opportunities to learn various life skills and shares information with youth on resources available to them as they transition from foster care to adulthood.

Since 2011, DHS has contracted with Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. (YSS) for the Iowa Foster Care Youth Council/AMP. YSS subcontracts to ensure there are local councils in communities across the state, such as all of the following:

**Ames, Burlington/Mt. Pleasant, Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Dubuque, Eldora/State Training School, Fort Dodge, Iowa City, Marshalltown, Mason City, Ottumwa, Sioux City, and Waterloo.**

**Local Council Experience:** Youth who attend the AMP meetings experience a welcoming and safe atmosphere, where they can have a snack or meal and learn new skills through games, listening to presenters, or taking field trips.

*An RSVP or membership is never required. Teens attend when they can.*

Most AMP meetings have a combination of life skills training or education about programs and some fun activity to keep youth active and engaged in the meeting.

In 2017, AMP offered program and skills information about:

- Social Skills and relationships
- Education
- Employment
- Health/Mental Health
• Housing
• Transition to adulthood

And these fun activities:
• Poetry reading
• Legislative Day on the Hill
• Overnight Camp
• Statewide youth conference
• Holiday parties

Not everyone can get to an AMP meeting. Therefore, AMP offers uplifting stories and other activities on the AMP website at www.ampiowa.org.

Teens in foster care deserve opportunities to participate in age appropriate social and developmental activities. You can be the one to give a young person you care about this opportunity. You can take them to AMP.

Please contact our youth council program manager, Doug Wolfe, if you have questions or need to find an AMP near you. He can be reached at (515)-242-5452 or dwolfe@dhs.state.ia.us

Thank you for continuing to support children and youth in foster care.

Sincerely,

Jerry R. Foxhoven, Director