July was pretty action-packed for AMP, and we’re not looking to slow down at all for the rest of the summer. We’re starting to get things lined up for our legislative agenda for AMP Day on the Hill in January. (Yes, we really do start this early!) For those of you who are newer to AMP and may not know about Day on the Hill, this is our annual trip to the Iowa State Capitol, where we hold a press conference, meet with the politicians who represent us, and advocate for change in the child welfare system. Our youth drive this process and we’ve had several laws come out of AMP efforts. To see past events, visit: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/happenings/amp_day_on_the_hill/; to help with planning for next year, be sure to visit your local AMP Council or contact your local Council Facilitator with feedback.

**Shania’s Story:**

Shania is currently 15 years old and has been in foster care for two and a half years. She entered into foster care after Shania and her siblings were abuse by her father and later neglected when their father moved away. Since entering into care two and a half years ago, Shania has been in one foster home.

Entering foster care was at first a struggle for Shania because of a couple different reasons. Shania was raised in a small town and was then moved to a much larger town when she went to her foster home. This was hard because she is a quiet, reserved person and this made it hard for her to make new friends. While living in her foster home, Shania was also separated from her biological siblings which was very hard for her.

While transitioning into foster care was a struggle, things did start to look up for Shania. When asked what some positive things about being in foster care were, Shania first replied by saying, “I found someone who loved me.” She was talking about her foster parents and went on to say that she felt the love from them that she didn’t get from her parents. Shania’s foster parents also made it clear that the situation she was in was not her fault and that they truly cared for Shania. Her foster parents also reconnected Shania with her 18 year old sister. Shania stressed how important this reconnection was by saying, “she is my whole support system.” Her sister means everything to her, believes in her, and always encourages her to do better.

Since entering into foster care, Shania has also gotten involved with Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP). Being a part of this group has helped her meet new people and has allowed her to feel like she can talk and share her story without being judged by others. Shania’s favorite thing she has done with AMP was going to the State Capitol for “AMP on the Hill.” This was her favorite because she liked being around so many people who were all making a difference and she also enjoyed getting to talk to legislators herself.

Throughout her life, Shania said that graduating the GRLS program is the accomplishment she is most proud of. The GRLS Program is for teens who are struggling with their behavior and focuses on things like anger management and having a positive outlook. Trying to have a positive outlook was especially hard for her because she was so mad at the things that had happened in her life. The staff at the GRLS Program and one staff member in particular that she referred to as, “The other mom I never had” really cared for her and helped her work on being more positive.

Shania’s foster parents, older sister, the GRLS Program, and AMP have all had a huge impact on her life. They have all helped her to become strong and independent and have also shown Shania that she does not need someone else to make her happy.
AMP Activities Across the State

Ames
Facilitator: Terri Bailey  
Email: tbailey@yss.org  
Phone: 515.249.7089

Facilitator: Julie Holscher  
Email: jholscher@yss.org  
Phone: 515.291.0689

Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/ames_amp/

Meets @ Youth & Shelter Services Youth Activity Center on Third Floor (420 Kellogg Ave., Ames)

Thursday 8.3.17 5:30 PM—7:30 PM: Food @ First—meal (need girls to volunteer)

Monday 8.7.17 4:00 PM—6:00 PM: Food @ First—market (need boys to volunteer)

Tuesday 8.8.17 4:00 PM—8:00 PM: Links of Life Youth Conference—The Bridge, Lutheran Church of Hope 925 Jordan Creek Parkway, West Des Moines

Thursday 8.10.17 6:30 PM—8:30 PM: Nicolette Brink—Handling Life’s Challenges

Thursday 8.17.17 5:30 PM—7:30 PM: Food @ First—meal (need girls to volunteer)

Monday 8.21.17 4:00 PM—6:00 PM: Food @ First—market (need boys to volunteer)

Thursday 8.24.17 6:30 PM—8:00 PM: Planned Parenthood of the Heartland

Burlington
Facilitator: Debbie Schmidt  
Email: debraschmidt319@gmail.com  
Phone: 260.241.1127

Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/burlington_amp/

Meets @ Christamore Family Treatment Center (905 South Iris, Mt Pleasant)

Thursday 8.10.17: Drug Enforcement (Mt Pleasant Police Dept. Presenter: Lt Murray)


Cedar Rapids
Facilitator: Shelby Holsapple  
Email: shosapple@foundation2.org  
Phone: 319.651.0688

Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/cedar_rapids_amp/

Call facilitator for details.

Council Bluffs
Facilitator: Coming soon!

Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/council_bluffs_amp/

Davenport
Facilitator: Hannah May  
Email: mayhannah.davenportamp@gmail.com  
Phone: 815.768.9505

Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/davenport_amp/

Call facilitator for details.

Des Moines
Facilitator: Yahaira Espinosa  
Email: yaya.xo4997@gmail.com  
Phone: 515.943.5885

Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/des_moines_amp/

Contact facilitator for details!

Des Moines Mobile
Facilitator: Yahaira Espinosa  
Email: yaya.xo4997@gmail.com  
Phone: 515.943.5885


Dubuque
Facilitator: Indigo Channing  
Email: jessica.perry@hillcrest-fs.org  
Phone: 563.542.9736


Monday 8.7.17 6:30 PM—8 PM: AMP Meeting—Poetry Slam

Thursday 8.10.17 6 PM—8 PM: Co-munity Dubuque Game Night @ The Smokestack (62 East 7th St., Dubuque)

Tuesday 8.15.17 6:30 PM—8 PM: AMP Meeting on Finances @ AY McDonald Fellowship Hall in the Hadley Chapel (Hillcrest Family Services Main Campus, 2005 Asbury Rd., Dubuque)
Eldora State Training School
Facilitator: Paul McNamara   Email: pmcnamara@yss.org   Phone: 319.404.6356
Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/eldora_sts_amp/

Fort Dodge
Facilitator: Cassie Johnson   Email: cjohnson.ysc@frontier.com   Phone: 515.570.4867
Facilitator: Kate Cardenas   Email: office.ysc@frontier.com
Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/fort_dodge_amp/

Marshalltown
Facilitator: Alyson Hicks   Email: Mtownamp@hotmail.com   Phone: 641.751.1776
Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/marshalltown_amp/
Tuesday 8.1.17: Combo meeting for AMP & TLP (Guest speaker from Veterans home to talk about the importance of giving back/volunteering.)
Tuesday 8.15.17: Celebration for a member & focus on legislative agenda ideas.
Thursday 8.24.17 6 PM—8 PM @ Toledo Library: First meeting of mobile Tama County Council (What is AMP?)

Mason City
Facilitator:
Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/mason_city_amp/

Ottumwa
Facilitator: Holly Dommer   Email: hdommer@ahfa.org   Phone: 641.682.3449
Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/ottumwa_amp/

Sioux City
Facilitator: Jen Schaper   Email: jschaper@childrenssquare.org   Phone: 712.255.9061
Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/sioux_city_amp/
Meeting details to be announced.

Waterloo
Facilitator: Jessica (Perry) Christman   Email: jperrychristman@gmail.com   Phone: 515.451.4233
Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/waterloo_amp/
Meets @ Grace Lutheran Church (1024 West 8th St., Waterloo)
Tuesday 8.17 6:30 PM—8 PM (Know Your Rights with Iowa Legal Aid)
Tuesday 8.22.17 6:30 PM—8 PM AMP New Member Training (with lots of “Clean Out the Closet” giveaways!)

The AMP Patnership of Iowa Foster Care Youth Councils is a collaboration of 10 organizations led by YSS. The Iowa Department of Human Services is the primary grant funder for AMP, with donations and local community support supplementing local youth AMP councils.

The Partnership includes: American Home Finding Association (Ottumwa Council), Children’s Square USA (Council Bluffs & Sioux City Councils), Foundation 2 (Cedar Rapids Council), Four Oaks (Waterloo Council), Francis Lauer, a YSS organization (Mason City Council), Youth Shelter Care of North Central Iowa (Fort Dodge Council), YSS (Ames, Marshalltown, & Davenport Councils), Iowa Homeless Youth Centers, a YSS organization (Des Moines Council), Hillcrest Family Services (Dubuque Council), and Young House Family Services (Burlington Council).

The partnership networks with other stakeholders, including but not limited to, the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, Iowa KidsNet, the Iowa Aftercare Services Network, Juvenile Court Services, as well as both governmental and private agency service providers.
Iowa Parents of Children with Behavioral Health Conference

JOIN US!
This FREE conference is specifically designed for parents of children with mental health issues. Participants will leave with increased knowledge and awareness of pediatric behavior health issues, resources available, and skills and strategies to navigate the challenges of behavioral health. While the conference is entirely free to parents, we ask that persons wishing to attend pre-register so that we have enough space, food, and childcare available. Professionals and pre-professional students are only $10. Donations are welcome and allow for us to continue to maximize our efforts across the state.

WHERE & WHEN
• September 9th 9am-3:20pm
• Boy Scout Mid Council Iowa Headquarters
• 6123 Scout Trail, Des Moines, IA 50321 (off of 63rd Street)
• Free pizza lunch will be provided!

TOPICS
• medicine management
• caregiver wellness
• transitioning to adulthood
• crisis management
• IEP's/504 plans and parent rights
• relationship building
• suicide prevention
• legislative action
• mental health and LGBTQ youth
• AND MUCH MORE!

REGISTER!
Those interested in sponsoring an expo table and all other questions may contact Jennifer Ulle-Wells at info@pleasepassthelove.org.

To register, visit pleasepassthelove.com!

Questions?
Contact us at info@pleasepassthelove.org

Please Pass the Love is committed to increasing school-based mental health supports to improve the quality of life and educational opportunities for children, families, and educators as well as offer culturally responsive comprehensive services and evidence-based supports to school systems. We strive to bridge positive relationships between the educational and mental health communities to more effectively prevent and address mental health issues for our children and adolescents throughout the state of Iowa.
What is AMP?
AMP is a youth-driven, statewide group that seeks to unleash the full potential for personal growth among foster and adoptive children in Iowa. AMP offers leadership opportunities, service learning projects, speaking opportunities, and educational/vocational assistance. Amp also provides the life skills youth need to become self-sufficient, independent adults.

WHO CAN COME?
Any youth between 13 and 21 can attend an AMP meeting if they have been placed out of the home at some point in their life. They could have been in foster care, relative care, residential, group home, or a shelter. If you have any questions, please contact your local facilitator.

For more information contact: Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP)
YSS / 125 South 3rd Street / Ames, Iowa 50010 / P 515.233.2250 EXT. 4575
www.ampiowa.org / Facebook: Achieving Maximum Potential - AMP (Group)

AMP involves young people as advocates for themselves and as a voice for system-level improvements in child welfare policies and practices. Through supportive productive partnerships with adults, youth are authoritative advocates for making foster care more responsive and effective.

Members of AMP also encourage others to open their homes to teens in foster care, or to adopt. AMP youth educate legislators, child welfare professionals, juvenile court representatives, foster parents and the public about foster care and adoption from a youth perspective.

GET INVOLVED
Whether you are able to offer an hour, afternoon, or perhaps a lifetime, AMP can benefit from your time, talents and treasures.

- Allow us to speak at your event: AMP youth have a compelling story to share, and would welcome the opportunity to speak at your next luncheon, meeting or event.
- Share a skill, talent or hobby: The majority of youth who reach adulthood while in foster care do not get the chance to develop critical life skills that enable others their age to succeed. Please consider sharing your skills and knowledge with our youth.
- Donate a service or product: Teens leaving foster care have the same needs as others their age, as they move toward living independently. Furnishings, linens, personal hygiene products, cleaning supplies, towels, kitchen supplies, etc. are welcomed by donors to help AMP youth succeed.
- Provide financial support: Visit ampilowa.org to make a secure online donation to AMP’s lead organization, YSS. You can also mail your contribution via check to: YSS 420 Kellogg Avenue, Ames, Iowa 50010. Please make your check out to YSS and note “AMP” in the memo line. To ensure your financial support is allocated to the AMP council of your choice, also include the location in the memo line.