Note from the Facilitators

December is here, and that means **WINTER IS COMING**. That being said, be mindful of the weather as snow and ice starts to become a thing. If school is cancelled or let out early, we don’t meet for AMP. If weather is questionable, use your best judgment. You will also notice a change in typical days for meetings, due to special events/holidays, so check in with your local facilitator. Stay warm, and stay safe!

(Also, apologies from Indigo on the lack of a November newsletter!)

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**CALL FOR ARTISTS!**

The Dubuque AMP council will be hosting an exhibit for National Foster Care Month in May—the theme is on identity, and we’re looking for submissions from AMP youth across the state. For more details, email: jessica.perry@hillcrest-fs.org.

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Variety AMP CAMP**

June 19—June 26, 2018

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**Be on the lookout!**

Mini-Camps and Mini-Conferences are in the works...The first mini-camp happened at Forest Lake Camp in Bloomfield, IA on October 15th; Variety AMP Camp Reunion had 60 youth in attendance. The second mini-camp will be held in Story City on March 24th, 2018 at the Buckels’ farm. Youth will attend Reggie’s Sleepout in Ames after the camp activities.
Ames
Facilitator: Terri Bailey  Email: tbailey@yss.org  Phone: 515.249.7089
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 12.14.17 6:30 PM—8:00 PM: Planned Parenthood...Get the chance to win a gift card by attending and entering your name in the drawing! Join us as we prepare for the holiday season by getting into the spirit of giving and dividing into teams to do Christmas Charades!
Thursday 12.16.17 11:15 AM—end: Des Moines Science Center Holiday Party! IMAX @ 11:15 AM, pizza lunch @ noon., AMP chaperones will accompany youth as they visit the Science Center Exhibits after lunch...
Monday 12.18.17 4 PM—6 PM Food @ First—market (Boys)
Thursday 12.21.17 5:30 PM—7:30 PM Food @ First—meal (Girls)
Thursday 12.28.17 2 PM—4 PM Des Moines Art Center: Tour the art center and see the new exhibit “Drawing in Space”.

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)
Contact Debbie for December meeting info.
First meeting in November was “What does it take to be a leader?” Second meeting was the AMP legislative agenda, with Dave Heaton in attendance.

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/

Meets @ First Church of the Open Bible (1911 E Ave NW) 6:30 PM—8:30 PM Dinner is provided!
Contact Shelby for December meeting info.
Three youth spoke at a PS/MAPP class. November meetings were the AMP new member training and a Thanksgiving dinner for youth by the Junior League.

Council Bluffs
Facilitator: Jenn Kephart  Email: jkephart@childrenssquare.org  Phone: 402.212.1474
Web: http://www.ampiowa.org/en/amp_near_you/council_bluffs_amp/

Meets @ Gym of the Lied Education Center, Children’s Square U.S.A (N 6th St & Ave D).
Tuesday 12.5.17 6 PM—8 PM: We will be doing some teambuilding activities around communication. I look forward to seeing all the youth there. Feel free to share this with any teens in out of home placements in the area. All are welcome.
Tuesday 12.19.17 6 PM—8 PM: Holiday party!
Had a guest speaker about sexuality in the month of November.
Announcing Facilitator Training for “Ricochet: An Extreme Leadership Adventure”

Register no later than December 8! Click Below! FILL OUT FORM

Ricochet 1 & Foundation $50
December 12, 2017
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Ricochet 2 & 3 $30
December 13, 2017
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

ISU Extension and Outreach - Dubuque County - Curriculum $25
Contact Katie Peterson - katiejp@iastate.edu

FACILITATOR TRAINING IS FOR:
- Teachers interested in helping youth develop life skills
- School personnel who work with student groups to gain leadership skills
- ISU Extension and Outreach staff and volunteers working with youth in leadership development
- Youth Organizations working with youth groups
- Volunteers working with youth groups

AT FACILITATOR TRAINING:
- Receive research-based leadership curriculum designed for middle school-age youth. Use Ricochet 1, then build more skills with Ricochet 2 and 3.
- Participate in hands-on, adventure-based leadership experiences to develop 21st Century skills and meet standards — leadership information, leadership attitudes, and communication, decision-making, and stress management skills.
- Gain tools to market your program, celebrate successes, recruit volunteers, etc.

USE RICOCHET WITH:
- School classes, extra-curricular groups, leadership groups, student councils.
- Youth development organization youth groups and youth retreats.
- 4-H Clubs, club officers, County 4-H Councils, camp counselors, etc.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or status as a U.S. veteran. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to Rosa Willburn, Diversity Officer, 2150 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, Ames, Iowa 50011, 515-294-1462, wilburn@iastate.edu.
SAVE THE DATE!
Friday, February 16th and Saturday, February 17th 2018
Achieving Maximum Potential
Spring Conference

Where: Indian Hills Community College
525 Grandview Ottumwa, IA

Activities on Friday starting at 7:00 PM
Registration Saturday 8:00 AM
Conference Saturday 8:45-4:00
Saturday Evening Activities 4:00-10:00 PM

For more info contact:
Holly Dommer at hdommer@ahfa.org
Or
Joe Schulz at growingwt@gmail.com
**Davenport**
Facilitator: Hannah May  
Email: mayhannah.davenportamp@gmail.com  
Phone: 815.768.9505  

Meets @ Annie Wittenmyer Complex-Gymnasium (2800 Eastern Ave)  
Thursday 12.14.17 5:30 PM—7:00 PM Holiday Party in gym @ Family Resources

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

Meets @ Polk County Riverplace (2309 Euclid Ave) Enter through W atrium door, AMP is in Room 1.  
Tuesday 12.5.17 6 PM—8 PM: Critical Thinking games and snacks.  
Thursday 12.16.17 11:15 AM—end: Des Moines Science Center Holiday Party! IMAX @ 11:15 AM, pizza lunch @ noon.  
AMP chaperones will accompany youth as they visit the Science Center Exhibits after lunch...  
Tuesday 12.19.17 6 PM—8 PM: TBA

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

Serves youth in and surrounding Des Moines who live in YESS Shelter, Polk County Detention Center, Orchard Place, Woodward and Youth Homes of Mid-America. This facilitator brings the AMP Council meeting to the youth in their facility.

We have been receiving more youth at our community meetings which is amazing. We did a Thanksgiving wreath craft for our holiday tables and had a friend thanksgiving dinner. Youth volunteered to each bring a food item and a friend to share the meal with and we played Thanksgiving Family Feud game. My mobile areas are doing great! I plan to bring in my old college advisor to talk about college opportunities, programs, and scholarships.

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

Monday 12.4.17 6:30 PM—8:00 PM: Community Game Night @ Multicultural Family Center  
Wednesday 12.6.17 3 PM—8 PM: Gift wrapping for Dubuque Teen Empowerment @ Younkers Cosmetic Department  
Friday 12.8.17 4:00 PM—8:00 PM: Holiday Party **RSVP Required** We’ll be doing a sing-along at an apartment building for senior citizens and people on disability, followed by a spaghetti dinner, treats and games, and a ride through the Hillcrest lights for AMP youth. For planning purposes, we must have numbers ahead-of-time!  
Monday 12.11.17 6:30 PM—8:00 PM: Level Up! @ MFC Looking at the year ahead!  
Wednesday 12.13.17 4:00 PM—5:30 PM: Community Service @ Dubuque Rescue Mission Community Garden...Since it’s winter, we’ll be working in the heated greenhouse. Part of what we’ll do is check up on the mushrooms we are cultivating.  
Saturday 12.16.17 11 AM—Noon: Young Parents Supporting Each other @ MFC A group for pregnant and parenting teens/young adults. This will be our holiday meeting, where we will make ornaments.

In November, we started our service work at the Dubuque Rescue Mission Community Garden—we cultivated mushrooms and got to check out the (heated) greenhouse! We had our monthly game night, a meeting to plan out the next year’s of activities/meetings, and started a local chapter for Teens Against Human Trafficking. One of our meetings focused on disproportionality in the foster care and juvenile court systems—how youth of color are more likely to be involved in the system. We also started work on our Identity Series to be displayed at an art venue in May, which is foster care month.
**Eldora State Training School**
Facilitator: Paul McNamara  
Email: pmcnamara@yss.org  
Phone: 319.404.6356  

**MEETINGS ARE FOR RESIDENTS OF THE STATE TRAINING SCHOOL ONLY.**
**CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.**

AMP meetings are going well. There were 20 youth at the Halloween party. CrossFit is happening on Saturdays. Youth are writing letters to Iowa soldiers in Afghanistan. Birthday parties happened for youth who had August, September, and October birthday. Graduation was scheduled for November. The new recreation center opens late November/early December. Boys have been working w/ volunteers to install new carpet, big TV's, games and music/chill out area and gave input on how it’s used and who gets to use it.

**Fort Dodge**
Facilitator: Cassie Johnson  
Email: cjohnson.ysc@frontier.com  
Phone: 515.570.4867
Facilitator: Kate Cardenas  
Email: office.ysc@frontier.com

**Meets @ First United Methodist Church (127 N 10th St).**
- Monday 12.4.17 5:30 PM—7:00 PM
- Monday 12.18.17 5:30 PM—7:00 PM

Worked with the Fort Dodge police on the kindness rock project. Had a fun Halloween party. Hy-Vee donated pumpkins. Talked with youth about the Insight Advocacy Agenda; they can relate to the situations in the document and loved the quotes. The group is excited about this year’s legislative agenda and youth are asking to speak at AMP Day on the Hill 2018.

**Marshalltown**
Facilitator: Alyson Hicks  
Email: Mtownamp@hotmail.com  
Phone: 641.751.1776

**Meets @ Youth & Shelter Services (11 E State St)**
- **Saturday 12.2.17 10 AM—11:30 AM:** AMP joins YSS “Cookies with Santa @ Trinity Lutheran Church.
- **Tuesday 12.5.17 5:30 PM—7:30 PM:** AMP/TLP meeting “Goody bags for Police Dept.” and winter weather safety.
- **Wednesday 12.6.17 5:00 PM—6:30 PM:** YSS Friends Kickoff @ Marshalltown Public Library.
- **Tuesday 12.19.17 5:30 PM—7:30 PM:** AMP Holiday Party “Christmas Bingo” with prizes and goodies! @ YSS office.

November was volunteer month. Joined with Big Brothers & Big Sisters club and wrote, “Dear Young Person” post cards. These positive messages show love and support to local youth: AMP youth have a unique perspective that comes through in these post-cards. Making plans for a holiday party.

**Mason City**
Facilitator: Collette Whitney  
Email: cwhitney@yss.org  
Phone: coming soon

**Meetings will be starting up soon! Contact Collette for more info.**

**Ottumwa**
Facilitator: Holly Dommer  
Email: hdommer@ahfa.org  
Phone: 641.682.3449
Co-Facilitator: Joe Schulz  
Email: growingwt@gmail.com  
Phone: 641.682.3449

The Ottumwa Council meets on the second Sunday’s of each month at American Home Finding (217 East 5th St.) in Ottumwa from 5:30-7:00 p.m. & the third Wednesday of each month at Ottumwa High School at 12:30pm

Met at Job Corp in November, “What is success?” Created action plans with the youth to achieve success. Nov. 19th Ruth presented human trafficking training to Ottumwa AMP youth. First meeting held at Ottumwa alternative high school had 12 attendees!
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/

Meets @ St. Luke’s Lutheran Church (2309 S. Saint Aubin St.)

There will only be one meeting in December—the holiday party. Contact Jen for more info.

November had one meeting—Thanksgiving dinner. Council is in search of donations for the Holiday party in December. Youth are speaking at PS/MAPP trainings.

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)

Only meeting in December is Holiday party 12.12.17 5:30 PM—7:00 PM @ Pizza Ranch. **Please RSVP by 12.8.17** See insert for details.

Made kindness rocks with youth and gave them to youth to place in their community. Only had one AMP meeting in November—the Thanksgiving dinner. Community members taught youth to cook the dinner, then they enjoyed it together. Planning Future Fest for Waterloo. Foster care alumni are the guest speakers at the event. We will begin the suitcase drive in January 2018.

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.

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 Aftercare Services Network, Juvenile Court Services, as well as both governmental and private agency service providers.

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.

AMP HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

All teens in out of home care and their siblings (foster care, relative placement, guardianship, group care, adopted youth, bio youth with foster and adoptive siblings) are invited to join us for this year’s AMP Holiday Celebration! We will be enjoying an all-you-can-bare-to-eat FEAST at Pizza Ranch in Cedar Falls (on University)! These events are offered free of charge thanks to generous donations! All we ask is that you RSVP by December 8th so we have a good idea how many youth to expect. Please find the details below!

When: December 12, 2017
5:30 to 7 pm

Where: Pizza Ranch (4302 University Ave, Cedar Falls)

Who: AMP Members and potential/new AMP teens

What: Dinner and fun

How: FREE!!! Please contact me if you need a ride!

RSVP: Jessie Christman (Waterloo AMP Facilitator)
515-451-4233
jperrychristman@gmail.com
2017 SUITCASE DRIVE FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF THE SYSTEM

Each suitcase should be filled with the basic items that youth need when moving out on their own. Below is a list of items, created by our older youth, things they needed as they left foster care to begin their journey to adulthood.

New 27 to 30" ROLLING Duffle Bag or Suitcase

Items for filling it with:
- Comforter / Quilt (Twin or Full Size) or “bed in a bag” set
- Sheet set (Twin or Full size)  Mattress Pad  Pillow
- Bath & Hand towels/Wash Cloths  Kitchen Wash Cloths/Towels  Flashlight/Batteries
- Alarm Clock  Laundry Bag  Can Opener  First Aid Kit  Bath Mat  Blanket
- Toiletries: Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Deodorant, Soap

Also needed:
- Laundry Basket (filled with)  Dirty Clothes Duffle Bag  Laundry Soap/Dryer Sheets
- Stain Remover (Shout)  Bleach  Hangers  Roll of Quarters

Other Items for those moving into their own apartment:
- Dishes  Glasses  Silverware  Pot & Pans  Cooking Utensils  Can Opener
- Mixing Bowls  Toaster  Coffee Pot  Kitchen Towels  Hot Pads  Baking Pans
- Plastic Storage Containers  Trash Bags  Cleaning Products (dish and hand soap, Windex, 409, Pinesol etc.)
- Toilet Brush  Mop  Broom  Garbage Can
- Shower Curtain  Basic Home Tool Kit  Toilet paper  Kleenex  Paper towels

AMP youth will encourage recipients of each suitcase to attend bi-monthly council meetings by including information about AMP in the suitcases. These meetings are a place to make friends, build supports and learn skills needed by all young adults living on their own.

Thank you in advance for helping us Achieve our Maximum Potential!
AMP Day on the Hill

The Partnership of Iowa Foster Care Youth Councils, AMP- Achieving Maximum Potential, will hold its 2018 legislative day at the capitol on Monday, January 22, in Des Moines. AMP’s seventh annual event will feature Chris Branstad speaking on the importance of forever families for Iowa’s children as well as several youth sharing their personal experiences in shelter, group, adoption, kinship and foster family care.

AMP youth from 15 foster care youth councils will meet with and educate their local legislators regarding ideas and suggestions for improvements to Iowa’s child welfare system at 1:00pm.

A press conference is scheduled on Monday 2:00- 2:45 p.m. January 22, 2018, on the first-floor Capitol rotunda of the State Capitol Building. AMP youth will also be hand carrying to each legislator a copy of their 2018 Legislative Agenda. The ideas for change in this document were generated by the youth themselves. They reflect their experiences and challenges growing up in Iowa’s out-of home care.

AMP would like to invite all legislators to join us!

A few shots of the Dubuque AMP “Catmas” Tree. Proceeds from our tree will be going toward gifts for our residential youth.

To place a bid, visit https://www.accelevents.com/events/roshukholiday/A/AMP

Items on our wish list include: hygiene supplies, bed sheets, blankets, school supplies, kitchen supplies, towels, and washcloths. Contact Indy if you’d like to help out, or visit our display!