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Children's Home Society gets new home

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Posted: 2010 Jan 14 - 23:36

Grand opening set for Jan. 17

By Jessica Tuggle

jtuggle@hometownnewsol.com

VERO BEACH - After two years of planning and building, the Children's Home Society of the Treasure Coast will host a grand opening at its new housing facility in Vero Beach on Jan. 17 at 1 p.m.

The Youth Transition Center is a new facility specifically designed to house young adults, ages 18 to 23, who have aged out of the foster care system.

The public is invited to see the eight independent living apartments that will house up to 20 young adults in the coming months

"These youth have faced unimaginable abuse and neglect," said Lawrence Brooks, executive director of the Children's Home Society Treasure Coast division.

"The YTC will help them develop life management skills and interpersonal skills, with the ultimate goal of a successful transition into adulthood," he said.

The apartments were built on the same campus as Baines Hall, a group home for girls, which is located at 650 10th Street.

The Children's Home Society is the only organization on the Treasure Coast that provides day-to-day case management and hands-on help with the challenges of daily living for young adults who have aged out of the system and are no longer eligible for state assistance, according to a press release.

According to the Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, the 18-23 demographic is the fastest-growing homeless population in Florida.

"Our board asked the logical question: What happens to these youth when they turn 18?" said Mr. Brooks.

"We were horrified by the response and decided that we needed to facilitate a successful transition into society for youth who have aged out," he said.

Young adults in the program will have stable housing, be encouraged to continue their education and have assistance with securing employment, as well as develop adult life skills.

The capital campaign for the construction of the new facility began two years ago with a need of \$5 million. Thanks to generous donations from the community, a little more than \$3.7 million has been raised to date.

Continued funding for the program is critical to long-term sustainability and donations are very much needed, officials said. By June 30, the goal is to get to \$4.5 million.

1/18/2010
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