

Amazing Kids Foster Amazing Results

Foster kids academic prowess honored at graduation ceremony.

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When young people do well in school, it's something to be celebrated, admired and cherished. When 183 foster youth, who have had a life rougher than most, receive accolades for academic achievement, it's something truly amazing.

On Tuesday, June 7, 183 young adults took the stage at the 22nd Annual "Celebration 2011: Honoring the Academic Achievements of Foster Youth." The event took place at the Walt Disney Concert Hall located in downtown Los Angeles.

Family, friends and foster parents turned out for the momentous occasion to watch the youth receive their merits based on hard work. Among the invited guests were city officials, Dr. Jackie Contreras, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Acting Director, Donald H. Blevins, Los Angeles County Chief Probation Officer, and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

The youth were presented with more than \$700,000 in scholarships, which was provided by many corporations and non-profit organizations. Some of the donors included: the United Friends of Children (UFC), Rising Stars, Coalition for At Risk Youth, KLOS Radio, Evelyn Booker-L.S.C., Los Angeles County Departments of Children and Family Services and Probation and the Los Angeles County African-American Employee Association among others.

Mayor Michael D. Antonovich, Supervisor 5th District addressed the graduates. Film director, Salim Akil of "Jumping the Broom," and TV producer and writer of shows "Girlfriends" and "The Game", Mara Akil were keynote speakers. TV host of "Extra" and actor, Mario Lopez served as emcee for the event.

The Celebration 2011 is a collaborative effort involving DCFS, the county of Los Angeles Probation Department, The Teague Family Foundation and UFC, A non-profit organization that provides the direct and in-depth services that make it possible for foster youth to become self-sustaining adults.