

RISE Fundraising Speech

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My name is Jaclyn Beckler and I want to thank you for meeting with me today. I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to learn more about the RISE organization.

I want to start by explaining the need and purpose of our organization. Approximately 1,000 kids age out of the foster care system in Tennessee each year (Adopt Us Kids, 2020). Often these kids that age out have spent much of their life in foster care but were never adopted or able to return to biological family members. As these kids turn 18 and enter young adulthood they often lack family, housing stability, job training, healthcare access, and healthy social supports. Research statistics show that these young adults are at higher risk compared to their non-foster youth peers for incarceration, drug addiction, unplanned pregnancies, homelessness, poverty, and sex trafficking.

RISE's mission and purpose strives to empower these young adults with the resources necessary for self-sufficiency in all aspects of life. Clients will be eligible for RISE services from ages 18 – 21. Our organization offers stable housing apartments so that our clients can avoid homelessness, educational specialists to assist with furthering education, and mental health services to provide therapeutic resources. RISE recognizes that our client population may have complex trauma from historical neglect, abuse, and foster care experiences and will offer both individual and group therapy sessions. A curriculum of independent living classes will be available. These classes will cover basic skills including financial literacy, cooking, creating

resumes, job readiness, and communication, social, and soft skills. Each RISE client will also have a case manager to assist with goals and treatment plans.

Since our RISE clients will also be a part of Tennessee Extension of Foster Care, RISE will regularly collaborate and build partnerships with the Department of Children Services and any other surrounding agencies that may benefit the client. These partnerships will allow each of our clients to have a team of professional supports to assist them in reaching their individualized goals.

There are a couple of unique factors about RISE that make the organization stand out from other Chattanooga based programs. We will offer family housing for those clients that have already had children. Our organization recognizes the importance of family and breaking the foster care generational cycle that many experience. We want to offer support so that our client's children are not in jeopardy of also entering foster care themselves. Another unique factor is that RISE will offer a number of transitional housing spots for those that have aged out of the system but find themselves on a waiting list for more permanent housing. This will include those waiting for RISE or other agency's independent living housing units. The Chattanooga area often sees a trend of long waiting lists that result in short term homelessness from the 18th birthday till being accepted into a program and assigned permanent housing. RISE hopes that our clients and the community will benefit from these transitional housing units and be able to avoid this issue.

Many of the founders of RISE have extensive experience working in the foster care field. Through our experience, we have witnessed first-hand the need in our community for this independent living organization. RISE will directly provide our services by utilizing the

expertise of our leaders and hiring specialists to provide the educational and mental health services. We will also recruit volunteer guest speakers through partnerships with other community businesses and agencies that can share their expertise for the independent living skills curriculum. It is vital for every employee and volunteer of RISE to be trained and competent in providing trauma-informed care when working with our clients. Through our partnerships with DCS and other Chattanooga community agencies, we also hope to regularly receive referrals for potential clientele.

RISE wants to ensure a positive impact is made on our clients through offered services. We will monitor progress by having all clients complete CASEY Life Skills assessments initially and then again every six months. This will allow us to measure what areas of independent living should be included in each individual treatment plan. SMART goals for clients will be created, assessed, and changed as needed quarterly. Additionally, an evaluation process every six months will include workers evaluating SMART goal progress and client's self-reported growth and satisfaction with services.

I hope I've provided a clear picture of RISE's mission, values, and services. Your donation of \$20,000 will be utilized carefully to make a positive impact on our clients and community. The RISE organization is excited to enter a partnership collaboration with you in the near future. I feel that we could be an effective team and with combined resources, those aging out of foster care will establish stable housing and have a chance at a more successful adulthood.

In conclusion, I want to thank you for taking the time out of your busy day to talk with me. I do look forward to further more detailed conversations about how we can help these clients. Please don't hesitate to reach out for any questions you may have at any time.

Adopt Us Kids. (2021). *Tennessee foster care and adoption guidelines*.

<https://www.adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/how-to-adopt-and-foster/state-information/tennessee#:~:text=Information%20on%20children&text=Approximately%201%2C000%20children%20age%20out%20of%20care%20in%20Tennessee%20every%20year.>