



**Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation Awarded \$150,000 from Mercy C.A.R.E.S.  
Grant to Support Rapid Re-Housing Assistance for Arizona Foster Youth**

(PHOENIX – August 12, 2024) – Mercy C.A.R.E.S. recently awarded Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF) a 2024 Mercy C.A.R.E.S. Community Reinvestment Grant in the amount of \$150,000. Funding will be used to support AFFCF’s rapid re-housing assistance for Arizona’s foster youth.

“This incredible, impactful gift will greatly uplift and empower AFFCF’s capacity to serve our state’s foster youth, ensuring children stay safe, sheltered and supported,” said Luis De La Cruz, president and CEO of AFFCF.

AFFCF’s Rapid Rehousing program is a branch of the nonprofit’s Keys to Success program, which serves foster youth from ages 16 to 26. This age group often experiences difficulty finding stable housing upon aging out of the state’s foster care system and are at risk of experiencing homelessness. For youth in foster care, they are unlikely to have developed a good system of credit or rental history to make acquiring steady housing easier. The Rapid Rehousing program is designed to reliably place youth in housing, thus allowing them to focus on education and career development in order to achieve self-reliance.

“Last year marked the inaugural year of AFFCF’s Rapid Rehousing program, and the nonprofit provided 126 youth with housing coaching and supportive services. To date, 100% of these children maintained their housing, and 73 young adults avoided becoming homeless through receiving emergency rental assistance and other supportive services provided by AFFCF,” said De La Cruz.

Mercy C.A.R.E.S., which stands for Community Action Resources Education and Service, is Mercy Care’s community giving initiative. Through grant funding, sponsorships, volunteer efforts and board participation, Mercy C.A.R.E.S. supports AHCCCS’ Whole Person Care Initiative, which addresses social risk factors to improve health outcomes.

“This partnership removes a challenging barrier for youth aging out of foster care by providing a stable living environment, says Trisha Stuart, Mercy Care director of community relations. “Mercy Care is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of all Arizonans, and particularly those who are underserved with complex health needs. We are happy to partner with AFFCF in making a positive impact on our community.”

To view AFFCF’s full resource database for foster parents & guardians, financial assistance services, scholarships for foster youth and more, visit [affcf.org](https://affcf.org).

**About AFFCF**

Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF) provides foster care support by closing critical funding and service gaps. AFFCF has over 40 years of experience ensuring Arizona’s foster care population can participate in the same activities as their non-foster care peers, achieve self-sufficiency through employment, education, and housing programs and pursue post-secondary success. AFFCF is dedicated to changing the story of foster care in Arizona and qualifies for the Arizona Foster Care Tax Credit. Visit [affcf.org](https://affcf.org) for more information.

**About Mercy Care**

Mercy Care is a not-for-profit Medicaid managed care health plan, serving AHCCCS members in Arizona since 1985. Mercy Care is a local company sponsored by Dignity Health and Ascension Health. Mercy Care provides access to physical and behavioral health care services for Medicaid-eligible families, children, seniors, and individuals with developmental/cognitive disabilities. Learn more at [www.MercyCareAZ.org](http://www.MercyCareAZ.org).

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