

# Strong Able Youth Speaking Out, Inc.

## Newsletter

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### The Mission of SaySo:

Is to work to improve the substitute care system by educating the community, speaking out about needed changes, and providing support to youth who are or have been in substitute care”.

SaySo, Strong Able Youth Speaking Out, is a statewide, North-Carolina based association of youth aged 14 to 24 who are or have been in out-of-home care.

This includes all types of substitute care, including foster care, kinship care, group homes, and mental health placements.

### Contact Info:

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[www.saysoinc.org](http://www.saysoinc.org)

## Giving up is not an option!

Foster care doesn't not determine your future

### 10 reasons not to give up

1. You're too strong
2. Your too close to the finish line
3. You can inspire others
4. Things can change at any moment
5. Believe in yourself and your dreams
6. Keep trying
7. Success doesn't come easy
8. Failure is not an option
9. Your situation is not permanent
10. The finish line is closer than you think



**NOPE**  
**NOT TODAY**  
TOMORROW ISN'T  
LOOKING GOOD EITHER

### SaySo's Upcoming Events

[www.saysoinc.org](http://www.saysoinc.org)

- June 4th Foster Care & Adoption Conference
- June 4th Independent Living Forum (Smithfield)
- June 14th-16th SaySo BOD Orientation (Raleigh)
- July 7th Normalcy Town Hall meeting (Asheville)
- July 13th "It's My Transition" (Raleigh)
- July 26th Normalcy Town Hall Meeting (Onslow)

### Our Sponsors

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NC STATE -GSSWA-Pajamas & Blankets

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# It's Time To Create Your Success Story!



In North Carolina, as a teen you have the legal right to obtain the following medical services without a parent or guardian's permission: Contraceptives (birth control, including Emergency Contraception) Testing and treatment for STDs and HIV, Pregnancy testing and prenatal care. Treatment for substance abuse or mental illness. By law, a doctor cannot tell anyone if you receive these services. This law is called Minors' Right to Consent. [www.shiftnc.org](http://www.shiftnc.org)

**Fundraisers in Durham at Zinburger June 15th & Good berry's July 7th Come Support!!!**



## Alumni Spotlight

### From Tragedy to Triumph: How Foster Care Changed My Life

By : Megan Holmes

I was placed into the foster care system at the age of 15. Uncertain and afraid, I had no idea what to expect living with complete strangers. Little did I know that December 29, 2009, would be the first of the best days of my young life.

I lived in several homes prior to entering foster care, including --my godmother's and, after she passed from stomach cancer, her sister's.

Next was my aunt for 2 1/2 years.... I have been blessed to travel to Georgia, Florida, and Colorado through the LINKS program, which teaches youth in care about independent living skills. I also visited New York with the Boyds. That may not seem like a big deal, but it was a dream for someone like me. I purchased my first car, and I am soon to graduate from North Carolina Central University, double-majoring in Spanish and Social Work.

I now have the privilege of working with other foster youth to share my testimony of how God

blessed me through being placed into substitute care, and how I have grown as an individual from this experience. Although I am not yet where I would like to be in life, I am not where I once was. I am on the right path to seeing myself the way that God sees me, which is unapologetically beautiful.

Read full article at: <http://www.childrensrights.org/from-tragedy-to-triumph->



**Megan Holmes**

Is the SaySo DHHS/ General Assembly Liaison. She has been involved in SaySo for five years. Megan is a senior at North Carolina Central University double majoring in Spanish & Social Work. Megan is the 2016 **Youth On Fire Award** Recipient! **Congratulations Megan !!**



## Successful Page Week-April 24th -28th

SaySo Page week allows young men and women ages 15 & older to learn about the legislative process in North Carolina for an entire week.

SaySo pages participated in daily sessions, committee meetings, and performed other duties including, but not limited to, delivering messages and materials within the legislative complex, answering phones in senators' offices, and passing out documents or running errands in the Senate Chamber during daily sessions.



**Those who served were from Mecklenburg, Gastonia, Durham, Granville, Yadkin, and Chatham. County. Wonderful Job 2016 Pages!**

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month-Article courtesy of Youth M.O.V.E.

Hear from two youth who have over-came these obstacles.

Princess:

Title: Your Life is What You Make It

"From an angry teen and failing grades to graduating from high school. I am now working towards being certified in Project Management and Administration Assistant and now following my dream of working in a group home with kids who have autism --It's amazing! What helped me was actually understanding and facing my worse fear; FAILURE! NC Families United helped me see my full

potential. My advice to all the young people out there is walking your path is not easy trust me I know. With the right support, resources and motivation YOU WILL be the light too. Don't let anybody hold you back from your dreams. We all have a purpose and I believe in all of you!"

Resources:

<http://ok2talk.org>



Andrew

Title: A Statement of Hope

I am proof that you can do anything you put your mind to...if you want it bad enough, but you have to want it bad enough! It was never easy, there were many days I felt like giving up and just walking away. When everything seems to be getting harder and feels like too much, this is when you must stick it through, this is when you have to do your best, you have to believe in yourself. When you do that, you can reach

your dreams.

Remember the harder the moments are, the bigger the reward will be. To overcome and survive is a big accomplishment and if you can survive you can do anything! I believe in you!!"

Credit : YOUTH MOVE

Read more here:

[www.youthmovenational.org/](http://www.youthmovenational.org/)

<http://www.ncfamiliesunited.org/>



## Town Hall Meetings & The Normalcy Act

July 7th -Buncombe County

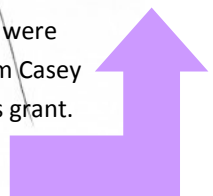
July 26th- Onslow County

Link to the recorded webinar and handouts: <http://fcrp.unc.edu/webinars.asp>

Townhall meetings are panel type forums where youth, resource parents, LINKS Coordinators, DSS SW's, GAL's , group home staff, kinship caregivers, etc come together to view the normalcy webinar and have facilitated discussions led by SaySo Alumni on the normalcy act . **Thanks to: Halifax, Wake & Gaston for hosting town hall meetings with SaySo, Inc on April 19th!**



Town Hall meetings were made possible by Jim Casey Youth Opportunities grant.



## SaySo Alumni goes off to college!

"I'm going to UNC Chapel Hill for dental assisting which is something I love to do. It's a passion and I want to make a difference for me, my son, and everyone else around me."

-Desirae (DJ)



Roman Rys has obtained a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from East Carolina University (ECU). Having multiple ups and downs, I have succeeded. I have succeeded being an output of the North Carolina (NC) foster care system. I aged out in 2010, and have been a part of SaySo since 2010. If it were not for the foster families I had and being a part of SaySo, me obtaining this graduate degree would not have happened. I believe each individual who has experience with the substitute care system in NC has the potential to reach their goals, no matter how unique their lives are and their goals are. Again, I am an output of the NC foster care system. I am one of a small portion of individuals who aged out of foster care that has obtained an undergraduate degree, and a much smaller portion of these individuals who have obtained a graduate degree. Last year, the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) was performed on the child welfare system of NC. We failed in almost all categories, which demanded that NC construct and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Some counties make little effort to align their practice according to the state child welfare manuals, which may be a reason of us failing the federal CFSR. How will the PIP change how we, individuals who experienced the NC substitute care system, meet our goals? If you who are reading this, experienced the substitute care system, than know that I believe in you meeting your goals. **You can do it.. I graduated from the School of Social Work at East Carolina University.**

By: Roman Rys

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