



**Your Basic TOOL-KIT**  
**Keep in Touch (KIT) is a program sponsored by Just in Time (JIT)**

**Our mission:** JIT's mission is prevention of jobless and homelessness among emancipated foster youth, by creating a stable environment and providing what is needed to ensure school or job success. Although they may receive subsidized housing and scholarships, these former foster youth lack crucial ingredients--including emergency assistance, basic home furnishings, and specific tools to succeed at work and school. More importantly, continuous friendship and mentorship from JIT is extraordinarily effective. We stay in touch with youth, providing guidance and encouragement to ensure his/her success. Our youth say they wouldn't have succeeded if we had not helped at critical times.

**The need:** Left on their own these youth are vulnerable, as statistics show:

- Up to 45 percent will be homeless within a year
- Approximately 50 percent under the age of 21 are unemployed.
- Many are victims of family violence and likely to perpetuate the cycle of violence
- Up to 50 percent are arrested within 2-4 years of leaving foster care
- More than 70% of all state penitentiary inmates have spent time in the foster care system
- Fewer than half of foster youth graduate from high school
- A mere 10 percent of those who graduate attend college
- Approximately 3 percent obtain a bachelor's degree

When a youth cannot surmount an obstacle, a downward spiral begins. By acting as a surrogate family, JIT offers hope and inspiration to continue in a positive direction, thereby helping to prevent unemployment, homelessness, and crime.

**The outcome:** JIT strategy is effective because financial assistance is combined with mentoring and long-term encouragement. In April 2009, we conducted an informal telephone survey of 12 JIT youth (6 male; 6 female) who contacted JIT between 2003 and 2008. We learned that 100 percent were employed or in school. Specifically: 2 had graduated from four-year colleges and were employed full time; 2 were seniors about to graduate from four-year colleges; 1 owned his own business; 6 were enrolled in four-year colleges, and 1 was enrolling in a four-year college from community college. On average, each youth reported at least four JIT interventions over 1-6 years. They received: funds for emergency car repair, rent, food, or utilities; furnishings for their first homes or dorms; laptops and printers, eyeglasses, or educational tools, such as goggles and dissection kits. Mentoring was mentioned as extremely helpful—knowing someone was there for them. JIT's intervention at critical times kept these youth on track toward success with their careers and/or post-secondary education.

**As A KIT volunteer, you are on the front line to help keep our JIT youth on track!**

**You agreed to:**

- Be a KIT volunteer for one year.
- Attend 2 meetings a year.
- Complete a feedback form after the second exchange with your youth.
- Provide the minimum communication level (one communication per month for 10 months via e-mail, phone, or in-person in agreement with your youth.)
- Respond in a timely manner to communication from your youth.
- Meet your youth in public places.
- Keep your conversations confidential unless there is an emergency.
- Listen carefully to understand how best you can assist your youth.
- Provide a background check through Live Scan. (Numerous Live Scan locations throughout San Diego. Google: *Live Scan locations, San Diego*)

**Some things to ponder about your youth. S/he MAY:**

Have lived in many different foster placements

Have moved from school to school, losing credits and continuity

Be lacking appropriate role models

Be lacking appropriate social skills

Be distrustful of adults

**Be reluctant to open up and share information at first**

Be slow in returning your communication

Need help and not know how to ask for it

Be manipulative and know how to work the system

**Open communication showing general concern for how s/he is doing:**

*How are things going at school/work?*

*Tell me about your favorite subject/teacher/boss/co-worker/friend.*

*Have you participated in .... (specific interests, hobbies, sports, other activity. See the KIT application.)*

**Show empathy by appropriate self-disclosure:**

*When I was in school ...,*

*In my first job ...,*

**Some topics to avoid:**

- personal information about yourself or your family or where you live
- religious, political or other personal beliefs
- continual references to bad things that happened

**Contact information:**

**For KIT questions, contact Lorri Hilbert:**

E-mail: [kit@jitfosteryouth.org](mailto:kit@jitfosteryouth.org)

Phone: (858)748-4253

**Please do NOT contact the JIT office or Meredith about KIT matters.**

**KIT applications and forms: <http://jitfosteryouth.org/KIT>**