Child Crisis Arizona Adopts UMOM Program to House Older Foster Youth

July 12, 2021 Phoenix, AZ – Child Crisis Arizona is expanding services to foster youth of all ages with the adoption of the Independent Living Program for foster youth from UMOM.

This program houses 50 youth ages 16-21 who are preparing to transition out of foster care or out of the state’s voluntary extended foster care program. Through no fault of their own, these youth have no biological family to care for them and there is a severe shortage of foster homes for this age group. In this program youth live in an apartment with a roommate and learn important life skills. Professional staff provide meals, guidance, and counseling, and ensure the safety of youth while navigating their way into adulthood. This unique program is also one of the only group homes for pregnant or parenting girls in foster care in Arizona.

The Independent Living Program has been through several changes over the years. Originally it was a program of Tumbleweed Youth Centers and was brought under UMOM’s services in 2017. As of July 1, Child Crisis Arizona took ownership of the program expanding the agency’s continuum of care for children in foster care from birth to adulthood.

“We are thrilled to adopt this program into our family,” said Torrie Taj, CEO of Child Crisis Arizona. “It provides a vital stepping stone for youth in the foster care system. We are grateful that UMOM recognized the need for this program and trusted us to move it forward.”

“Child Crisis Arizona is the ideal organization to take over operations of the Youth Independent Living Program,” said Jackson Fonder, UMOM CEO. “They are known as the state’s experts in this work and are dedicated to the mission of helping young people transition from foster care to adult life. We are pleased to work with them and the state Department of Child Services (DCS) to ensure the changeover is seamless, and youth continue to receive uninterrupted services.”

The program is run through two locations in Phoenix with housing to serve 50 youth. Several beds are also reserved for teens who seek shelter through QuikTrip’s Safe Place® program. Any teen who goes to a QuikTrip or Valley Metro location in the Valley and asks for help is given temporary shelter until a safe alternative can be found.
The program is funded through philanthropy and contracts with DCS. Donations can be made online and may qualify for the Arizona Foster Care Tax Credit. There are also immediate openings for caring staff interested in assisting this unique population. For more information call 480-834-9424 or visit childcrisisaz.org.

The majority of UMOM employees working at the Independent Living Program sites will be retained by Child Crisis Arizona.

**About Child Crisis Arizona**
For more than 44 years, Child Crisis Arizona (CCA) has served the Valley’s vulnerable children, youth and families and is committed to ending child abuse and neglect through prevention, education and intervention programs. CCA offers emergency shelters for children, teen moms and their babies; a group home for teen boys in the foster care system; foster care and adoption services; as well community-wide parenting classes, workshops and support groups, and early education programs for low-income families. Child Crisis Arizona serves and supports children from birth into young adulthood, ages 0-21. Our vision is “Safe Kids. Strong Families."

**About UMOM:**
UMOM New Day Centers is a nonprofit serving Maricopa County, Arizona with a mission to prevent and end homelessness with innovative strategies and housing solutions that meet the unique needs of each family and individual. UMOM offers emergency shelter and a wide range of supportive services to families and single women experiencing homelessness. Learn more at www.umom.org.