

**Keynote Luncheon Address of Patrick McCarthy, President & CEO,  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation  
The Winston-Salem Foundation 2011 Community Luncheon  
“Celebrate the Power and the Promise of Community Leadership”  
Benton Convention Center, Winston-Salem, NC  
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Good afternoon everyone. I want to thank Beamer Aston for that introduction and thanks very much to Scott Wierman and Kay Lord and to the entire Winston-Salem Foundation Board for asking me to be here today. Congratulations also to today's award winners and thank you to all of you, the community leaders, the county and city officials, the non-profit organizations, the funders of volunteers.

As I was saying to Scott this morning as we were walking over from the hotel, it is an amazing accomplishment for a community foundation to sponsor a luncheon annually and to have 924 people in the room supporting its work and supporting the change efforts within this community. It's really a terrific testament to this beautiful city.

Obviously the Winston-Salem Foundation plays a vital role in your community through the many initiatives and programs they sponsored by inspiring hundreds of donors and other citizens to contribute their time, their money, their energy, and their support to making this community stronger. They pull together the different interests of lots of different folks around common themes and it really shows in the results that you're achieving here.

So, I'm truly honored to be here and to share some of my thoughts on community leadership. I do have to begin by admitting that it feels just a little presumptuous for me to be up here giving a speech about community leadership to 924 community leaders.

I've met some folks personally over the last couple of hours and I've heard a lot about the background and the accomplishments that you each bring. So it's clear that I could learn a lot more from you than you are about to learn from me about this issue. However, one of the things that goes with the job that I have is what I call the hood ornament effect. It's one of those things where sometimes if you don't show up, people notice, but when you do show up, you don't add that much to the proceedings.

So, I actually have in my office a hood ornament from a 1957 Rocket 88 that reminds that sometimes it's a matter of showing up and having the opportunity to share my thoughts with folks who have wiser thoughts than that.

Given that, I'm going to stick with what I know the most about. And what I know the most about is the need for community leadership and taking on the challenges for some of today's most vulnerable kids and families. And as I talk about the community leadership elements that are necessary, I'm going to focus not surprisingly on the very issue touched on by our previous speakers.

Al Gore was famous for saying that it's not always that everything hasn't been said, it's just that not everybody has had a chance to say it yet. And given the fact that we've already had a terrific

presentation of some of the core ideas, prepare yourself to have them reinforced, because I think they're important.

So, now there are lots of different versions and different theories of what leadership is all about. I assure you, I won't bore you with any attempt to cover this literature. However, I will say that community leadership needs at least five elements. First, I think it starts with the assumption that no one part of the community can solve today's complicated interconnected problems, so it starts, number one, with partnership.

Second, partnerships work best when all the partners are focused on the same goals and when there's a deep commitment to measuring progress on those goals. In other words, there is a shared accountability for results. Not for rhetoric, but for results. And there should also be a relentless obsession with examining and re-examining and re-examining the data and seeking input from those folks who are affected as to whether we're making progress or not.

Third, community leadership builds partnerships that draw on the different contributions from all parts of the community. Because when those contributions are aligned, when they're coordinated, the whole becomes so much more than the sum of the parts.

Fourth, community leadership also recognizes that coming up with new solutions for more difficult problems requires hearing from some voices who may have been left out of the conversation in the past and who may in fact bring exactly that different perspective that you need to come up with a different solution.

And, finally, community leadership recognizes that every attempt to solve an important community problem ends up being an opportunity to build capacity, to build relationships, to raise and engage additional leaders and to increase the sense that this is a community with the energy, the optimism, and the commitment to make a better community for everyone.

So, it's not just about solving the problem we have in front of us. It's about building the capacity so we can take on more problems as we move forward.

So, now, I want to turn to an example of a challenge that requires exactly that blend of those five elements of community leadership; and, that's the challenges faced by these young people who have been in foster care and who now must make the difficult transition to adulthood. As you've heard perhaps no youth face a tougher set of challenges than these young people who leave foster care if they don't have a strong connection to a family. Young people whom we sometimes say age out of the system - isn't that an interesting kind of term. They age out, it's almost like they're a fine wine. They've aged out of the system.

What it actually means though is they've reached the age when they are no longer eligible for all the supports and services that have helped them through development and they now must find those supports and services elsewhere.

Over the last ten years, this group nationally has grown from about 20,000 young people per year to almost 30,000 youth. But when you include the youth who are on the path towards aging out, as well

as those who have recently aged out, the actual number is closer to 180,000 youth nationwide. That's a big number.

However, it's a number you can get your arms around. In Forsyth County, I suspect that Joe Raymond of the Department of Social Services will be able to give you a list of who's likely to be aging out of foster care. It's accountable, you can see their faces, you know where they are, you can find them - it's the kind of number that we're talking about here.

In too many systems in this country, even today, it is still common practice to drop a young person on the doorstep of a homeless shelter on his eighteenth birthday. This is becoming less the norm than it used to be, thanks to the hard work of lots of folks in the system and enlightened policy changes in many states, but it still represents a symbol of what happens to all too many young people, young people who we took from their families under the idea that we were going to do a better job than their own families could at raising them and supporting them. And then we drop them off at a homeless shelter when they're 18 or the symbolic equivalent to that, say good luck to you, here's a small stipend that will maybe help you get the first month rent on an apartment. Let us know how it goes. And actually then we don't ask how it goes.

On almost every measure as we hear, young people who age out of the foster care system, who don't have a permanent connection to a family, experience much worse outcomes than other young people. Less likely to finish high school or complete college, more likely to have extended periods of unemployment, more likely to experience homelessness, poverty. More likely to become a teen parent. More likely to have serious mental health problems. More likely to be arrested. More likely to be incarcerated. The list goes on as you saw with the specific statistics earlier.

I should point out, as Joe did, in the interview that he gave that many of these youth actually despite the challenges that they face, do remarkably well. They have that combination of resilience, perseverance, character, and a fair amount of luck, so that they avoid these negative outcomes. But overall, the odds of success for these young people are much longer than the odds of success for the average young person.

Now, here's a frightening statistic. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative asked the group to do a study of what it costs. If you think of these 30,000 young people - a cohort of them aging out of foster care - what does it cost society in battle terms over the course of their lifetime? And they did some complicated analysis and they decided to focus primarily on what it cost and educational failure and family formation problems, criminal justice costs. And they came up with a number close to six billion - with a b -billion dollars per year that we are spending on this cohort of 30 thousand young people who graduate year after year after year after year - six billion dollars.

So, for those who are perhaps not has moved by the compassion or the need for social justice, let me suggest to you that that is not a wise investment of six billion dollars.

So, what does it take for a young person to get on a path to success after experiencing foster care? Well, they need to have a good education including completing high school and achieving a post secondary credential. That means we have to figure out how to insure that their educational needs are addressed while they're in care. We need to figure out how they had stability so they don't bounce from

school to school to school. The young woman who spoke about being in five foster homes and a group home, I would wager strong odds that she had four or five or six school changes between the time middle school and high school. And we've got to make sure they have the kind of guidance and mentorship to help them track their educational course.

Second, they need to learn to make good personal choices. A staggeringly high number of teens in foster care end up becoming parents much too young, reducing their own odds of success and placing the long terms prospects of their children at risk.

We also need to reduce the odds that a young person who experiences foster care will end up in the juvenile or adult criminal justice system. That means providing the kind of supervision, consistency and sense of hope necessary to avoid criminal behavior on the one hand and at the same time coming up with alternatives to detention and incarceration so that an impulsive moment of very bad judgment doesn't become a life sentence of diminished opportunity.

Their mental health and other behavioral issues must be addressed with effective relevant and easily available services and supports. The Casey Foundation and others are now working with several child welfare systems around the country to promote the development and implementation of more evidence base services so we can reduce the common mental health issues in foster care often experience.

They need experience in the work force as a stepping stone to a successful career. So, the Casey Foundation and a number of partners are working with some of the nation's top experts and work force development to find the most effective models for building pipelines to good jobs and opportunities for young people who are transitioning from foster care. They need good, safe housing. And we're now seeing some states working with child welfare systems to help with that transition. They need money. Now, I've got four young folks in their 20's, I had four teenagers at the same time, in fact.

Actually I didn't have a moment of silence for that entire period of time. But in any event, they need money and I can tell you that even though my kids are now in their 20's there is still that occasional phone call that says, "Dad, I had this happen, I had that happen." And of course we make the speech about "Well, you're on your own now and you've got to be self-reliant, how much do you need?"

So, they need money, they need income, they need an opportunity to build their savings and assets. We're seeing through the Jim Casey work in 12 states that local funders are coming together to insure the young people who leave foster care have both that immediate financial support and also that opportunity to accumulate savings. And I really want to recognize the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation for their contribution to the development of an individual development program here in North Carolina.

Young people need the opportunity - this is very important - young people need the opportunity to contribute their own leadership, their own ideas, their own values to the planning and decisions that affect them. The entire Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative has been shaped and then reshaped by young people like Beamer and others here today who have helped to insure that a response to their needs in ways that make sense to them.

And finally all young people need a permanent connection to adults who will commit to them for the long haul, a family for life. This family may take a variety of forms, it may be returning to their birth family if their birth family is able to care for them; extended kin, close family friends, former foster parents, adoptive parents, guardians; but the research is absolutely clear. Young people who have a stable connection to a family or other committed adult do much better than those who lack such connections. So, when you look at the range of things I just talked about, and it was a lot of stuff, young people transitioning from foster care need to be - what they need to be on a path to success - two things become absolutely clear.

Number one, these are the exact same things that all young people need to be successful. And, number two, for youth without the support of a permanent family, these are the things that a community as a whole needs to rally together to provide the support.

Which brings me to the emerging partnership between the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative in Forsyth County. Thanks to the community leadership of the Winston-Salem Foundation and the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation and many other partners sitting in this very room, the Jim Casey model relies on this kind of mobilization of the entire community leadership to step up and take responsibility for improving outcomes for these young folks.

Jim Casey relies on a community partnership board and you met some of those folks who have stepped up here in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County to do that, relies on the youth leadership board. Beamer is heading that up. It requires the collection and use of data that guide the initiative and to evaluate the results. I was very pleased to see that you had the data, you led with the data about what's going on with young people today.

The initiative needs to provide financial support, financial coaching and an opportunity to build assets and it needs to help with housing, employment, health and mental health and finally needs to help young people form and sustain lifelong connections to families.

Now the Casey Foundation supported the development and testing of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Model in the original demonstration sites together with our cousin foundation, Casey Family Programs - yes, there's a few Caseys in this mix here. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative goes towards the cost of maintaining the initiative's national infrastructure, their technical assistance, their data gathering, their data analysis capacity, the national advocacy. And we're in the midst of co-designing with some partners a rigorous, randomized control trial, so we can even -- we can strengthen the evidence that this is a model that works.

I'm here today to tell you and pleased to announce that the Casey Foundation will commit to an additional ten years of national funding of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative at a cost of 40 million dollars. With the exception of the 40 million dollars, that's what's known as a cheap applause line.

As they moved from the initial demonstration sites to the replication of this model, we've been immensely gratified by the take-up that we see among local and county and state funders coming together to support new sites. To date, the initial sites that started in individual cities in lots of states around the country -- those individual city sites are expanding to statewide replication. And we've also

seen statewide replication begin in Florida, Indiana, Nebraska, Hawaii and now welcome, North Carolina.

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities now has more than 14 or 15 foundations contributing to its development. Foundations like the Eckerd Foundation, the Sherwood Foundation, Geis Foundation, Hawaii Community Foundation, and with the addition of the Winston-Salem Foundation and Kate B. Reynolds, that number continues to grow. So with the youth in transition community initiative of Forsyth County, we believe, can pave the way for your community to make a real difference for the next generation of young people.

Now, clearly, you know best how to fit the ideas and principles of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative to North Carolina's needs. I can tell you that other states - in other states, community leaders from across the spectrum have come together with young people to change - to create change and there's a number of similar kinds of things they've done in all these different states.

States look to their educational policy and practice to insure foster kids don't bounce around from school to school and that every kid has an opportunity for post secondary continuing education. States are looking at their placement patterns because we know that when you over rely on group care, that is when you put a child in group care, not because the child needs it, but because the system is not able to provide the kind of foster care, family based treatment that they ought to be receiving - then that begins that path towards aging out without a permanent family.

States look to extend foster care supports beyond 18 and there's now federal support to do this beyond 18 to age 21. The research again shows rather convincingly, using longitudinal research that providing support beyond age 21 through the child welfare system improves outcomes for kids. States are also looking at extending Medicaid services to at least age 21 for this population, the building work force pipelines. And, finally, most importantly, other states are supporting these youth leadership boards that we talked about earlier.

So, I firmly believe that we are on the cusp of taking this idea, which we've now demonstrated in 12 states and beginning in a 13<sup>th</sup>, we are positioning ourselves to be able to do something that is critically important and that is to go to real national scale. We ought to be able to solve this problem at national scale.

This has been a very long talk and after all that, you're probably wondering if I have a specific pitch to make and I do - and here it comes: If you represents a funder, I'm urging you to join with the Winston-Salem Foundation and with Kate B. Reynolds and others to support the funding of the Jim Casey work here in Forsyth County and across the state and join this network of funders from across the country.

This initiative is focusing on a high needs population but it's also a high payoff population of young people. This initiative has concrete actionable strategies. It's got a track record of success in lots of places. There's an opportunity here to make deep systemic and therefore long lasting change and an excellent chance of going to the national scale over the next five to 10 years. Frankly, it's a good investment and it's a chance to build on a decade's worth of development and testing and a proven track record across the country.

If you represent the public sector, I'm urging you to work with the young people in the community to fashion strategies that fit your system and strategies that will improve the opportunities and prospects for those kids in your care. In particular, we need more effective strategies to reduce the odds that kids will age out in the first place without a permanent family. We need more specialized permanency initiatives for older youth in care, such as family funding, extreme recruitment, and permanency teaming models that are popping up around the country.

If you represent the business community, we need your participation, your leadership and your commitment to these young people so they can secure a foothold on the path to success. We need your focus on accountability and bottom line results to make sure we're making real progress on the outcomes we're trying to improve.

If you represent a service providing agency, we need your close partnership, your practiced expertise, and your deep knowledge of the needs of these young people that you serve every single day.

If you represent an advocacy organization, we need your help to educate policy makers and the general public about the need to do better by these young people to insure they have all the opportunities, skills and supports they need to become successful, happy, contributing citizens.

It's rare that you can say in any community that in one room you have all the people you need to solve a tough problem. This is one of those moments. The people in this room - in this room - carry the best hope, the energy, and the wisdom for mobilizing support to build a stronger community and to take on this particular challenge.

Thank you again for the privilege of sharing these thoughts and for all you do for this beautiful place.

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