



Unity Care Group, Inc.
"Creating Healthier Communities"

Media Contact
Development
Department
Unity Care Group, Inc.
(408) 971-9822

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Preparing for Independence

San Jose, Calif., (November 25th, 2002) - Most 17-year-olds can't wait to get out into the world. But Scott, Jeremy, Jack, Carlos and Darren (not their real names) stand on the verge of an uneasy freedom. When they turn 18, they will "age out" of the group-home system, where they were placed primarily as the result of juvenile criminal prosecutions.

Currently, they are trying hard to get ready to make it on their own at Emancipation House in San Jose, the last step in the Unity Care system of group homes where they live with adult counselors who provide guidance.

"Here we are on the road to accomplish what we want to do. We're not just treading water," says Jeremy, who aspires to a career in marketing.

Many of them see at least some family members on weekends, but they rarely get any financial support. Even the cost of a haircut comes out of the house money for groceries.

The holidays these teens have spent in previous group homes have been grim. Scott recalls that last year he got "a toothbrush, toothpaste and an umbrella."

This year, gift certificates for clothing, shoes and school supplies (\$25 each) (9A) and contributions to a house pool for outings (increments of \$15 that Unity Care would administer) (9B) would offer alternatives to night after night in front of the television. A haircut fund (\$20 each) (9C) would preserve the food budget. And a computer (\$800) (9D) and printer (\$50) (9E) that they could share would help make finishing the school year a certainty, not a dream.

ABOUT UNITY CARE GROUP

Founded in 1992, Unity Care Group, Inc. is a community-based non-profit multi-service youth and family development agency. Founded with the goal of developing educational and social programs to enrich the lives of at-risk youth, our mission is to provide quality youth and family programs for the purpose of creating healthier communities through lifelong partnerships. For more information contact the Development Department at (408) 971-9822 or visit us at www.unitycare.org.

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