



**PRESS RELEASE: Ferris to serve as host of 2011 Michigan Teen Conference**

**Sandy C Gholston** to: Archive

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From: Sandy C Gholston/FSU  
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Included below is a press release regarding the upcoming 2011 Michigan Teen Conference that is being hosted this year at Ferris State University. Any questions regarding this release can be directed to Sandy Gholston, interim assistant director of News Services. Specific questions about the program can be found by reading the online brochure or by contacting Laura Mitchell of LSSM at [lmitc@LSSM.org](mailto:lmitc@LSSM.org) or by phone at (800) 886-5776.

For Immediate Release  
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**Ferris to serve as host of 2011 Michigan Teen Conference**

BIG RAPIDS – With the theme “Take Charge of Your Journey,” the 2011 Michigan Teen Conference will be hosted this year at Ferris State University on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 21 and 22.

The two-day conference is designed for youth ages 14 to 21 who are preparing to exit foster care, their caregivers and the professionals who work with the young people in that age group. Youth must fall within the age range and be in foster care or independent living to attend the conference. Among the conference’s goals is to help youth in foster care or independent living learn about money management, employment, educational opportunities, healthy relationships, housing and more.

The keynote address will be delivered on Tuesday, June 21 by Jaiya John, a professional speaker, poet, author, youth mentor, youth advocate and founder of Soul Water Rising, a global human relations mission. Marcella Wilson, president and CEO of Matrix Human Services, will offer “Silent No More,” a presentation that speaks to youth on the issues of bullying, intolerance and racism as part of the conference.

“The numbers of youth aging out of foster care is staggering and the transition can be very difficult if we don’t provide the appropriate support and resources to assist these youth in the next phase of their lives,” said Leroy Wright, dean of Student Life at Ferris. “We are excited to be the hosts of the 2011 Michigan Teen Conference.”

Additionally, Wright believes the conference complements outreach efforts already in place at Ferris. One university outreach effort is the Ferris Youth Initiative.

“The conference sheds light on what our university is currently doing with the Ferris Youth Initiative program to provide financial and life skills assistance to alumni of the foster care system, young people who are ages 18 to 24, and low-income orphans,” Wright said. “The FYI program is consistent with our (university) founder’s charge that we – the students, faculty and staff – always look for ways to “make the world a better place.”

Indeed, the stated mission of the FYI is “To positively impact the lives of youth who have aged out of foster care and low-income orphans who attend Ferris State University by providing support and learning opportunities that will promote academic success, character development, and life-enhancing skills.”

Overnight conference accommodations are available in Ferris residence halls.

The conference is sponsored by Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, the Michigan Department of Human Services–Youth in Transition and the Michigan Federation for Children and Families.

For more information about registration fees, funding sources and other important information related to the 2011 Michigan Teen Conference, view the online brochure, here:

<http://www.michfed.org/sites/default/files/2011TeenConfBrochure.pdf>

Anyone with questions can contact Laura Mitchell of LSSM at [lmitch@LSSM.org](mailto:lmitch@LSSM.org) or by phone at (800) 886-5776.

### **2011 Michigan Teen Conference Workshops**

- Eating: It’s More Than Opening a Can
- Alternative Education and Post-Secondary Attainment
- Employability: Hire Me!
- Rental Housing: What You Need to Know about Renting Property
- Family, What Is It Good For? Absolutely Everything!
- Impact of MYOI on Foster Youth
- Social Media for Teens/Young Adults
- Navigating Funding Sources for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care
- Teens and the Law
- “Dollar Sense”: 10 Steps to a Good Money Life
- Spirituality and You
- Organize Your Life: Time Management and Organizational Skills
- From Foster Care to College Campus: The Seita Scholarship Experience

For more information about the Ferris Youth Initiative, visit here:

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/DiversityOffice/fofyi/>

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News Services Web site: [www.ferris.edu/news](http://www.ferris.edu/news)

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