



PRESS RELEASE: Ferris Awarded \$397,000 Grant to Strengthen Ferris Youth Initiative

Sandy C Gholston to: Archive

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Included below is a press release regarding the announcement of a \$397,000 grant that Ferris State University has received from the state of Michigan's Department of Human Services to support the Ferris Youth Initiative. Any questions about this release can be directed to Sandy Gholston, News Services and Social Media Manager.

To read the online version of this story, visit:

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/archive/2012/june/fyi.htm>

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Ferris Awarded \$397,000 Grant to Strengthen Ferris Youth Initiative

BIG RAPIDS – Ferris State University was awarded a \$397,000 grant from the state of Michigan’s Department of Human Services to fuel its efforts to help former foster care students in need achieve success.

The three-year “Youth in Transition” grant will be used to hire a life coach for the Ferris Youth Initiative, a scholarship and mentoring program designed to increase higher education opportunities for low-income orphans or those who have aged out of the foster care system. The program teaches skills needed to live independently, connect socially and perform well academically through mentoring and offers a special scholarship for financial assistance.

The addition of a life coach means that the program has a full-time mentor to develop individualized service plans that teach skills needed to succeed in college and to be a successful citizen. The coach also will work with other program mentors to help foster successful mentor-mentee relationships.

“My heart is filled with joy knowing that Ferris State University will be able to continue encouraging and supporting a population of youth who may have experienced struggles that many of us may never experience in our lifetime,” said Leroy Wright, dean of Student Life and the program’s advisor. “Through this additional funding source, we will be able to continue in very intentional ways, to help our Ferris Youth Initiative foster care alumni become independent, even more resilient, and successful leaders in our communities.

“Our main objectives are to graduate our students, applaud their accomplishments and to have given them the tools necessary to navigate life’s toughest and most difficult times,” he added.

Since the program's inception in 2010, 19 students have been awarded a \$4,000 annual FYI scholarship applied to any direct cost at Ferris. Twelve are still pursuing their degrees. About \$82,000 in scholarship money has been awarded.

The grant to fund a life coach is like "striking the lottery," said Nick Campau, coordinator of Student Life and FYI community relations advisor.

"This grant is another aspect of the close collaboration between the state of Michigan and Ferris State University, and how we welcome and support alumni of foster youth to our campus," said Campau, who believes that the program is in many ways consistent with the beliefs of Ferris State University founder Woodbridge Ferris. "The Ferris Youth Initiative program is something that speaks to the heart of Mr. Ferris' mission: education for everyone in Michigan. With the addition of a life coach on campus, it is another way we are setting up these students to succeed at Ferris and to become great citizens."

The program is open to both new and current orphaned and former foster care students who attend Ferris on a full-time basis, live on campus and are 24 years old or younger.

For additional eligibility and program requirements, or to apply, visit <http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/president/DiversityOffice/fofyi/>.

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