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WORKING WITH EMANCIPATED FOSTER YOUTH:
AN OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT OF CAMERON HILL ASSOCIATES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Deborah Nava Baeza
Omyia Nikol Thurston

June 2003


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Approved by:


Dr. Janet Chang, Faculty Supervisor
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5/24/03
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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the outcomes of emancipated foster youth who have completed aftercare services with Cameron Hill Associates (CHA) in San Bernardino County. Thirty-nine graduates of the CHA Aftercare Program completed a quantitative survey covering the areas of educational status, employment status, housing, and general program-related questions. Pre-test data for all respondents was extracted from intake data contained in CHA client files. Post-test data was gathered by using a self-administered questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequency distributions, measure of central tendency, and dispersion. Results of this study will be utilized by CHA in planning best practices for working with their current and future clientele.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

There is an evident lack of self-sufficiency in the lives of America's foster youth. Research submitted by the Office of Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation suggested that each year 20,000 eighteen-year-old youth leave their foster placement to make a life for themselves unprepared (Ensign, 1991). According to Benstein (2000), within two and a half to four years of leaving foster care, 51% were unemployed, 46% had not completed high school, 25% had been homeless for at least one night, and 40% were on public assistance and incarcerated. This clearly suggests that a problem exists in the lives of America's adolescent foster youth.

Statistics clearly point to the need for independent living programs, which provide skills primarily in the areas of education, housing, and employment. Independent living programs are needed due to the fact that adequate self-sufficiency skills have not been provided to foster youth in care. Foster youth are educationally deprived due to lack of stability. A recent survey conducted by

the Department of Education, found that more than twice as many foster youth had changed schools three or more times since the fifth grade than non-foster youth (as cited in Blome, 1997). If youth are to establish an educational foundation, it is imperative that multiple school changes be limited. In addition to the disrupted education, it is noted that educational achievement level of foster youth is low (Blome, 1997). Franshel stated "that 59% of foster children are functioning below level, including 11% who are three to five years behind" (as cited in Blome, 1997, p. 44).

As a direct result in educational deficits, school performance is affected drastically. A study conducted by Citizens Committee for Children of New York, found that only 34% of the eighteen year olds that were studied had completed high school at the time (as cited in Cook, 1988). Further research stated that 77% completed their GED and less than 15% were in college preparatory classes. Consequently, foster youth are faced with challenges when it comes to employment. In a concentrated study conducted by Barth (1990) of 55 young adults who left care, it was concluded that almost one third indicated that the lack of education and skills was a

barrier to obtaining the kind of work that they wanted.

Barth continues to say:

Respondents experienced extreme financial hardship. More than half (53%) indicated that they had had serious money troubles (like not being able to buy food or pay bills since leaving care), 33% reported that they had done something illegal to get money. Descriptions of these problems and illegal activities include living in a car, stealing for food, prostitution, and selling drugs. (1990, p. 424)

Foster youth have not gained the skills necessary to get a job, which leads to desperate measures to survive when they leave the system.

Another problem that foster youth encounter when emancipating from foster care is housing. They usually have little support and lack of transitional plans to locate stable housing, and as a result many foster youth become homeless shortly after their emancipation. Several studies in New York documented that former foster youth were fast becoming a significant proportion of the homeless population (Allen, Bonner, & Greenan, 1988).

Allen et al. (1988) also found that most young people who utilized New York shelters had previously participated in the foster care system. Furthermore, homeless foster youth tend to become incarcerated after being discharged because of lack of direction. "A California survey

revealed that a remarkable two thirds of the inmates in the state prison system and one third of the children in the juvenile detention system had previously been in foster care" (Moynihan, 1988, p. 484).

To address these issues, in 1986 the Independent Living Initiative amended Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to provide federal funds to all 50 states to assist foster youth in regards to developing their independent living skills. These services were available to all youth in care between the ages of 16 to 18 years of age. Furthermore, in 1999 the Foster Care Independence Act extended these services by doubling the funds and mandating each state to provide services until the age of 21 (Collins, 2001). This law gives foster youth the opportunity to further develop their independent living skills, as well as the support needed to help gain their self-sufficiency.

However, although the federal government mandates that independent living services be provided, "states are allowed substantial flexibility in the design and implementation of the independent living programs" (Collins, 2001, p. 273). Thus, although each state and/or county has its own independent living programs which

offer basic services such as education and employment assistance, daily living skills training, and individual and group counseling, the quality of services and delivery approach differ from agency to agency. Similarly, the quality and extent of aftercare services (services to emancipated youth through age 21) provided differs greatly from county to county. Whereas one county might provide case management and continued living skills and employment training through age 21, another county may offer only a referral hotline that emancipated youth between the ages of 18 and 21 may contact when needed. Such discrepancies in service can greatly affect the success rate of emancipated youth from county to county.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to conduct an outcome assessment on one such aftercare agency: Cameron Hill Associates. The County of San Bernardino contracts with Cameron Hills Associates to provide aftercare services in the form of life skills training, employment and education assistance, supervised living, case management, and follow-up for emancipated youth to age 21. Cameron Hill Associates is currently the sole agency providing

such services to former foster youth in the County of San Bernardino. The staff of Cameron Hill Associates prides itself on the personalized and individual approach that is taken with each youth who utilizes the agency's services. Thus, not only does the agency provide more extensive services than a number of surrounding Southern California counties, but it also appears to do so with dedication to the social work values of respect, self-determination, and meeting the client where he or she is at.

In order for Cameron Hill Associates to continue to best serve their clients, they must be aware of the true outcomes of the services provided. For the purposes of this research, the specific outcomes assessed were the clients' level of employment, education, housing stability, and overall establishment of basic living skills upon completion of services by Cameron Hill Associates.

The type of research design that best addressed these issues among emancipated youth who received aftercare services through Cameron Hill Associates was a quantitative approach. A purely quantitative approach most likely allows for reaching the greatest number of

respondents via a survey or questionnaire. However, the inclusion of one to two open-ended questions at the end of the quantitative survey allowed these researchers to gather additional feedback and anecdotal information about the quality of services provided in the exact words of the clients themselves. Additionally, the best data sources were both clients and case records, and the optimum manner through which to collect data were via questionnaires and data extraction.

This study utilized systematic random sampling in order to obtain a large enough pool of respondents while still avoiding bias in selecting participants. Every effort was made to truly reflect the client population of the agency. The independent variable of this research was the type, amount, and quality of aftercare services at Cameron Hill Associates. On the other hand, the dependent variable was the levels of employment, educational status, housing stability, and overall establishment of basic living skills among the emancipated youth served by the agency.

Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

Major entities concerned with this issue include Cameron Hill Associates, as well as the federal government, state government, individual counties, aftercare and independent living programs, and, of course, the clients themselves. Cameron Hill Associates is concerned with this issue for obvious reasons; namely, as the service providers, they would need to know whether or not their current services are actually working so that they may be refurbished (or even expanded) as necessary. As the source of the Title IV-E monies that support such services, the federal government would be interested in knowing that its funding is being used appropriately and effectively. Additionally, state governments would be concerned with this issue for two reasons: 1) as the funding liaison between the counties and the federal government, the state is accountable for the appropriate usage of such funding, and 2) it is in the best interest of the state economy that, as citizens of the state, the youth reach the highest level of productivity possible. Individual counties are concerned with this issue because not only must they answer to the

higher levels of government regarding usage of funds, but low levels of employment and overall life stability among emancipated youth may create drains among other county resources, including public assistance and law enforcement. Other aftercare and independent living programs would be concerned about the results of this study because they may influence the practices of other agencies. Finally, the clients themselves would be concerned with this issue because, of everyone involved, they have the most at stake as the practices of Cameron Hill Associates directly affect the lives of these youth.

It is important to understand this issue further so that Cameron Hill Associates can be aware of the exact service areas in which the agency may or may not be succeeding, allowing them to expand or refurbish their services as needed. Additionally, if it is found that the agency enjoys a high degree of success with its clients in regard to self-sufficiency, Cameron Hill Associates may serve as a model for neighboring counties wishing to improve upon their aftercare services. The services provided by Cameron Hill Associates may contribute to the social work practice because it can demonstrate to other agencies how to effectively serve the youth within this

population. Thus, the findings of this study may influence social work practice in the area of working with emancipated youth by introducing a new model for best practices in this area. Additionally, social policy could be affected if it is shown that this agency is so effective with its clientele that state or federal policymakers use it to set a new standard for mandated services to be provided for emancipated youth. With this in mind, the research question that this study sought to answer is: "What are the outcomes of the youth who participate in Cameron Hills Associates aftercare program?"

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature regarding aftercare services for emancipated foster youth is scarce but steadily growing in response to the irrefutable need for continued support services for this population. In researching this issue, it is virtually impossible to separate the need for in-care independent living programs from the need for aftercare services to provide continued support to emancipated foster youth. Thus, this review begins with a brief overview of legislation and outcomes of early independent living programs; followed by an overview of educational, employment, and housing trends among youth who have aged out of foster care; and ends with a discussion of Ansell's (as cited in Cook, 1988) Continuum of Independent Living Preparation as the guiding theory for the current research.

Outcomes for Emancipated Foster Youth

Moynihan (1988) discussed the reauthorization of the expiring Foster Care Independent-Living Initiative enacted in April 1986 under the Budget Reconciliation

Act. The Independent-Living Initiative (section 477, Title IV-E of the Social Security Act) provides services to IV-E foster children ages 16 to 18 to help them make an easier transition to life on their own. This initiative was established once it was brought to legislative attention that children were being discharged from the system unprepared to function in society. However, this issue had been familiar to social service practitioners working with this population for many years and preliminary models of independent living programs were created as early as the 1970s.

Mauzerall (1983) reviewed an early independent living project, The Casey Family Program, which was established in Idaho in 1972. Recognizing that resistive emancipators require specialized services, the program used a groupwork approach through which adolescents learned employment- and housing-related independent living skills. Some of the youth were also placed in the Lemmon Grove Emancipation Home, a transitional living facility owned by licensed foster parents who acted as landlord and landlady of the property. In this environment, the adolescents received hands-on training in independent living skills and taking responsibility

for oneself. In essence, the placement provided a safe environment through which adolescents could be treated as young adults on the verge of independence who were learning to be responsible for their own choices. Mauzerall (1983) concluded that the combination of these approaches helped to move adolescents toward successful emancipation by first providing initial discussion and exposure through the groupwork and then providing valuable experiential training through which adolescents could apply what was learned in groups.

Still, even after legislation mandated the creation of independent living programs in the 1980s, emancipated foster youth continued to exhibit extreme difficulties in transitioning to independent adult life. Barth (1990) conducted a study of 55 former foster youth who had left the San Francisco Bay Area foster care system between one and ten years prior to the start of the study. All participants had been at least 16 years old at the time of their emancipation and none had been principally involved in the juvenile justice or mental health care systems, although some participants had committed crimes and were incarcerated at the California Youth Authority after aging out of the foster care system.

In terms of employment, Barth (1990) found that the median annual income for the youth was \$10,476 with the median hourly wage at \$6.21. Although many participants reported satisfaction with their current jobs, 29% cited lack of education and relevant skills as the greatest obstacle to finding the type of work they actually preferred. Additionally, 53% experienced extreme financial hardship which prevented them from being able to pay for such necessities as food or rent, while 33% reported that they had been forced to resort to illegal means of getting money (including stealing, prostitution, and selling drugs).

In terms of education, 55% of Barth's (1990) sample exited foster care prior to receiving a high school diploma and only 43% of these participants underwent subsequent education or training after release from foster care. In regard to housing, 29% reported that at some point they either did not have a home or were moving one time per week or more, with the average participant having lived in six places. Additionally, 39% reported continued problems with housing, with 64% reporting worries about lack of food or money. When asked about suggestions for social workers, most participants cited a

need for life skills education and housing assistance prior to leaving the foster care system. In analyzing the situation closely, one can see that not only is there a need for the provision of independent living preparation prior to leaving the foster care system, but there is a great need for continued services and support after leaving care as well.

Education

Since education is a critical factor that contributes to the success of adulthood, providing additional support in regard to aftercare can allow many former foster youth the opportunity and resources they need to succeed in school. A study conducted by Scannapieco, Schagrin, and Scannapieco (1995) compared a group of 44 foster care youth that received independent living services and 46 youth that did not receive services. They found that 50 percent of the youth that had participated in ILP had obtained their high school diploma by the completion of the program compared to 13 percent that had not participated in the program (Scannapieco et al., 1995).

Further research conducted by Mallon (1998) looked at the outcomes of 46 young men in New York who received independent living services. He found that 75 percent had completed high school or a G.E.D at the time of discharge. In addition, data collected from the Arizona Friends of Foster Children After Care Project reported that out of 64 youth 47 percent were enrolled in high school, college, or a training program; 50 percent had completed high school; and 10 percent had completed a vocational training program (Irvine, 1988).

Therefore, the result of the studies are consistent in their findings that adolescents "aging out" of the foster care system who are involved in after care programs have better outcomes than those who are not involved in such programs (Collins, 2001). These programs not only provide youth with the supportive services needed to obtain their education, they also provide financial assistance which makes it more feasible for youth to attend school.

Although research demonstrates that youth that participate in aftercare program have reported a number of successful rates, it is necessary to find research of the outcomes of the youth once they have left these

programs for a period of time. Since aftercare programs serve youth up until the age of 21 years, there are many youth that have not yet completed post secondary education upon leaving the program. In order to further develop this research, information on the educational status of former foster beyond 21 is essentially important.

Employment

Employment is another area which affects youths' ability to attain self-sufficiency. North, Mallabar, and Desrochers (1988) identify employability as one of the highest priority needs of emancipated foster youth, as the ability to find and keep a good job will directly affect the youth's income and level of self-sufficiency. North et al. (1988) cite basic education, career awareness, exploration, and job search and job maintenance skills as necessary facets of work preparation and place responsibility on foster care agencies for helping youth to develop an independent living plan which clearly emphasizes the importance of work.

Using New York state as an example, North et al. (1988) emphasized the Jobs, Independence for Youth (JIFY) Project which employs the use of job clubs to teach participants job-seeking skills. Further, North et al. (1988) recommended the following resources for agencies seeking to increase the level of employability amongst emancipated foster youth: the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which helps in establishing preparatory programs for disadvantaged individuals looking to enter the workforce; Job Corps, which provides a variety of training and employment-related services for young adults through residential Job Corps center; public school programs with a school-to-work emphasis; and informal networks between agencies, businesses, and volunteers who can serve as tutors and mentors.

In studying the issue of employment among emancipated youth, the most popular type of study appears to be that of follow-up or outcome assessment (Mech, 1994). Thus, researchers tend to look at what has already been done and how it was done, rather than implement experimental models to develop new methods for working with emancipated youth in this area of need. Mauzerall (1983) conducted one of the earliest studies into this

area of concern. Looking at the Casey Family Program, she found that the agency's groupwork approach (in which seven adolescent foster youth regularly met with a social worker for eight weeks) was helpful to clients in learning how to find jobs, complete employment applications, and present a successful employment interview. One of the most effective methods for teaching interviewing skills was by recording mock interviews and using guided group feedback for determining the areas of strength and needs for improvement of each participant (Mauzerall, 1983).

Mallon (1998) looked at youth who had been discharged from Green Chimneys Children's Services (a New York City based agency) from December 1984 to December, 1987. In terms of employment, he found that 72% of clients were working full-time at discharge from the agency. The types of employment held by these clients were service-oriented and included clerical, child care, retail, and food service positions. Of those clients who were unemployed at time of discharge, 80% did not possess a high school diploma or GED (Mallon, 1998). Such contrast speaks to the interrelatedness between

educational attainment and level of employment among emancipated youth.

Barth (1990) conducted a study of 55 emancipated youth in the San Francisco Bay Area who had left the system in recent years. In terms employment, Barth found the average annual income of his sample to be \$10,476, with only 51% reporting paid vacations, 36% sick leave, and 44% health benefits. These results are particularly disturbing when one considers that the vast majority of emancipated youth do not enjoy the benefit of having the safety net of a family who could help support them in the event of a health-related emergency. In fact, 53% of respondents indicated serious money problems, such as inability to pay bills or buy food; and 33% reported having engaged in illegal activities (including stealing for food, prostitution, and selling drugs) to make ends meet. Of the participants in Barth's (1990) study, 29% reported a lack of education and relevant job skills as the greatest barrier to finding satisfactory employment.

As valuable as this type of data is, Mech suggests that methodological improvements be made in studying emancipated youth:

Emphasis should be placed on conducting prospective-type longitudinal studies that include three components: (a) descriptions of client characteristics (who is served?); (b) descriptions of services provided, with services described in operational (verifiable) terminology; and (c) outcomes in terms of measurable results. Emphasis on the interrelatedness of client characteristics, services/interventions, and outcomes is familiar territory, but studies that clearly link services with outcomes and services to client/profiles are virtually nonexistent. (1994, p. 607)

Additionally, Mech suggests readiness for self-sufficiency as a needed area for research, as new technologies and increasing work-force skill-level requirements necessitate the attainment of marketable employment skills for emancipated youth prior to leaving the system.

Housing

Mech (1994) cited Banh's research in which 37% of the sample had reported difficulty in finding their first place to live. A contributing factor to this difficulty was the cost in obtaining a first residence, which generally includes a security deposit plus first and last month's rent. With foster youth having financial deficits, move-in costs constitute a significant barrier in obtaining a stable living arrangement. McMillan and

Tucker (1999) found that the most common living arrangement amongst their sample was moving in with relatives, including biological parents, which raises questions about the potential for instability due to continued dysfunctional lifestyles.

In some states, arrangements available for youth over 17 years old and still in care involve apartments rented by the young person, boarding houses, family homes where adults are not responsible for supervising the young person, and special supervised apartment buildings (Hardin, 1988). As an example, Arizona offers independent living arrangements to dependent youth 17 and older who are working full-time or attending a full-time educational program (Hardin, 1988). Oregon, on the other hand, employs a system which provides direct payments to dependent youth for housing and other independent living needs (Hardin, 1988). These services give young people the opportunity to practice living independently while still receiving supportive services from the agency (Kroner, 1988).

Theory

Dorothy Ansell's Continuum of Independent Living Preparation (as cited in Cook, 1988) can be used as the guiding theory for the current study. According to Ansell (as cited in Cook, 1988), every individual moves through four distinct stages on the road to adult independence and self-sufficiency. Phase 1 consists of the Informal Learning stage, in which basic living skills are learned through observing and mimicking family members. Phase 2 consists of Formal Learning, in which an individual learns basic living skills through formal instruction and participation in extracurricular activities. In Phase 3 (Supervised Practice), the individual is learning through the experience of living in an independent-living situation away from parents or guardians (such as a college dorm), but is still enjoying the safety net of being able to return to the parents' home or turning to the parents for other types of assistance when necessary. Finally, Phase 4 of the continuum consists of Self-Sufficiency, in which the young person is viewed as an adult and expected to financially support him/herself without the benefit of a safety net. The average age for

the general population in the United States is approximately 27-28 years old.

This theory can be applied to the proposed research in the following manner: foster youth are not able to complete the four phases in the traditional manner because of their unique situations of being separated from their families of origin at an early age. While other children are experiencing Phase 1 with their families, foster youth do not have parents or family members to watch as they go to work everyday—they have no job models. As for Phase 2, foster youth many times are forced to change schools relatively often and are not able to participate in extracurricular activities which could provide much-needed job skills. In Phase 3, while many young people are acquiring their first jobs so that they can earn extra money for proms and such, foster youth are finding work out of bare necessity as they are completely responsible for themselves and are not able to use their families as a safety-net to help make ends meet. Finally, emancipated youth are forced to reach Self-Sufficiency (Phase 4) at a much earlier age, as they are released from the child welfare system at age 18 and

do not have parental support nor safety to which to return to help make his/her way in the world.

For the purpose of this study the researchers will focus on "Phase 3", where a young person is no longer living with an adult and is given an opportunity to practice what they have learned and learn from their mistakes. During this period, youth will still have resources available to them through aftercare to assist them with establishing their goals. Next, the researchers will further explore the youths' success as they leave the "safety net" of the aftercare program and move into "phase 4" of the model. At this point, the researchers will examine how the youth are functioning as young adults and maintaining their self-sufficiency. According to this theory, many emancipated foster youth experience deprivation or deficit in their preparation for independent living due to lack of parental support and other relevant support systems.

Summary

The preceding review began with brief overview of the legislation, early programs, and trends that have contributed to the current understanding of the issues

faced by emancipated foster youth. Specific areas of difficulty for youth aging out of the foster care system include education, employment, and housing—all of which are vital components for self-sufficiency. These distinct areas were shown to be intertwined so that lack of stability in one category would profoundly affect the youth's ability to attain success in the other spheres of adult independence. Finally, Ansell's Continuum of Independent Living Preparation (which describes the stages through which every individual moves to achieve adult independence and self-sufficiency) was introduced as the guiding theory for the current study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter will review the study design, sampling methods, data collection and instrument, procedures, protection of human subjects, and data analysis which were employed in analyzing the outcomes for emancipated foster youth served by Cameron Hill Associates.

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to assess the outcome of Cameron Hill Associates' efforts to prepare emancipated foster youth for adult self-sufficiency. These efforts were evaluated from the perspective of former foster youth who have completed services at Cameron Hill Associates. In lieu of a formal pretest, this research utilized data extracted from intake assessments completed for each client at time of entrance into the aftercare program. Additionally, this study employed a written questionnaire consisting of several close-ended questions and two open-ended questions to function as a post-test. Due to time limitations, it was not possible for the current study to develop a formal

pretest, as newly entering clients will not complete their services with Cameron Hill Associates until approximately 2005. Thus, in order to conduct research on former Cameron Hill Associates clients who have already completed services during the time span allowed by this study, it was necessary to utilize data which was already contained in their client records. It was only with the use of such data that the researchers were able to form an accurate picture of where each respondent was at the start of aftercare services, as well as progress made since completion of services.

This study utilized a quantitative approach in order to make it more feasible to obtain a larger sample size. Furthermore, the use of close-ended survey questions decreased the need for subjective interpretation of responses. An additional advantage to using close-ended questions was that it allowed respondents to complete the survey in a shorter amount of time, thereby increasing the probability for a higher return rate. A drawback to this approach, however, was that respondents were limited to predetermined responses and did not have the opportunity to clarify such responses in their own words. To adjust for this limitation, two open-ended questions

were included at the end of the questionnaire to allow respondents to express personal opinions and experiences in their own words. Responses from these open-ended questions were not statistically analyzed, but rather used for anecdotal purposes.

In order for Cameron Hill Associates to continue to best serve their clients, they must be aware of the true outcomes of the services provided. For the purposes of this study, the specific outcomes assessed were the clients' level of employment, education, housing stability, and overall establishment of basic living skills upon completion of services by Cameron Hill Associates. Thus, the research question to be answered was: "What are the outcomes of the youth who participate in Cameron Hill Associates aftercare program?"

Sampling

The sample for this study consisted of thirty-nine graduates of Cameron Hill Associates aftercare program. Respondents must be a minimum of 21 years of age and must have completed services with the agency prior to participating in this study. The age requirement was selected because services to emancipated foster youth by

Cameron Hill Associates cease upon arrival of the youth's twenty-first birthday. Furthermore, the decision to target youth who have completed services was made because the study of adult self-sufficiency necessitates that respondents be at a point in their lives where self-sufficiency is a realistic expectation for them.

The researchers were granted full access to client records by the Executive Director of Cameron Hill Associates, Raymond Howard. Mr. Howard was deeply interested in the results of this outcomes assessment and granted permission for the researchers to access client records to extract data collected during intake assessments, as well as to identify potential respondents to contact regarding participation in this study.

Data Collection and Instrument

Data was collected via data extraction of client records (pre-test) and completion of a six-page quantitative survey (post-test). Information was extracted from client records in the areas of demographics, educational status, employment status, housing status, and services utilized. In addition to the areas listed above, the quantitative survey also included

participant reactions to the Aftercare Program.

Independent variables measured were the services provided through the Aftercare Program and dependent variables were the housing, educational, and employment status of the graduates. Independent and dependent variables were measured at the nominal and ordinal levels.

Instruments used were the intake assessment form used by Cameron Hill Associates and the six-page quantitative survey. The intake assessment form was developed by the staff at Cameron Hill Associates when the Aftercare Program was first initiated. The six-page quantitative survey was created by the current researchers for the purpose of this study. The survey was designed to reflect areas covered by the intake assessment form and questions were generated based on services provided by Cameron Hill Associates with the additional goal of finding the level of satisfaction of clients who have completed services at the agency. The instrument was pretested by three respondents and adjustments were made according to respondent feedback.

Strengths of the current instrument included the relevance of questions to the lives of the respondents, allowing respondents to feel more comfortable in

answering each item. Further, these questions allowed the respondents to express their personal feelings and give something back to the agency that helped them in their transition to adulthood. In addition, the questions were not intrusive or time-consuming. The major limitation of the questionnaire was that the respondents were not able to clarify their responses or elaborate on the reasons for their responses.

Procedures

The researchers began with a list of 250 emancipated foster youth who completed services at Cameron Hill Associates and attempted to call each individual to verify current mailing addresses. Packets containing informed consent forms, questionnaires, and debriefing statements were mailed to the first 25 confirmed addresses in February, 2003. Each packet also included a letter from the Director of Cameron Hill Associates, Raymond Howard, stating the purpose of the study and encouraging participation in the study as a way to continue to help other youth needing aftercare services. Participants were provided with a self-addressed stamped envelope to use for returning completed questionnaires to

Cameron Hill Associates. Upon receipt of each completed questionnaire, respondents were given \$10.00 for participation in the study. Additionally, as completed questionnaires were received, the researchers matched code numbers located at the top of each questionnaire to a master list containing code numbers and names of aftercare program graduates so that data may be extracted from the appropriate client files.

All packets were mailed out on or about February 17, 2003, and participants were asked to return questionnaires within 30 days. The researchers began entering the data in the SPSS program during the time period of March 4 to March 11, 2003. An additional 30 survey packets were mailed to newly confirmed addresses during the week of March 10, 2003. Data collection and analysis were completed by April 20, 2003.

Protection of Human Subjects

The identity of each participant was held in strict confidence. The researchers assigned a code number to each questionnaire form and each code number corresponded to the name of a Cameron Hill Associates graduate. The list showing the names and corresponding code numbers was

available only to the researchers and was destroyed upon completion of all data collection and analysis.

Additionally, all participants were asked to complete a notice of informed consent, which described the purpose of the study, as well as explained the voluntary nature of participation in this study. Participants were notified that they are free to withdraw from the study without penalty at any time. In order to maintain confidentiality, participants were not asked to sign the informed consent form, but rather to mark an "X" in a specified area. Furthermore, participants were given a debriefing statement listing contact information for counseling services available should participation in the study result in discomfort or distress for the respondent.

Data Analysis

Quantitative procedures utilized in answering the research question primarily included descriptive statistics of the sample. Further, the descriptive statistics included frequency distributions and measure of central tendency, as well as dispersion.

Variables measured included services utilized by respondents, as well as current housing, educational, and employment status. In addition, questions pertaining to the participants' reaction to services by the agency were used to analyze client level of satisfaction with Cameron Hill Associates. Responses to the open-ended questions included at the end of the survey were not statistically analyzed, but rather used for the examination of themes or patterns.

Summary

As described in the preceding chapter, the goal of this study was to evaluate the outcomes of the youth who have participated in Cameron Hill Associates Aftercare Program. Care was taken to collect and analyze data in a thorough manner while simultaneously protecting the confidentiality of all respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. There were a total of 39 young adults who emancipated from the foster care system in the study sample. The age range of the sample was 21 to 24 years and the mean age of the respondents was 21.33 years. In this study, more than half of the respondents (64.1%) reported that they had started services at Cameron Hill Associates at the age of 18, while 10.3% began at 19 years, 7.7% at 17 years, 5.1% at 17.5 years, and 5.1% at 16 years of age. The remaining 7.7% of the sample did not respond to this item on the survey. Of the 39 respondents, 69.2% were female and 30.8% were male.

In regard to the ethnicity of the respondents, almost half (46.2%) were Caucasian, 30.8% were African American, 12.8% were Hispanic, and 2.6% reported other. More than three-quarters (76.9%) had never been married and 23.1% were married at the time of this study. Approximately half (46.2%) reported that they had children and 53.8% reported that they had no children.

The range in regard to the number of children per respondent who reported having children was one to three. In addition, four respondents reported that either they or their partner was pregnant at the time of this study.

One of the primary services offered by Cameron Hill Associates is to ensure that young adults obtain the proper documentation to help them gain self-sufficiency. Of the 39 respondents, 100% reported having their birth certificate; 97.4% reported having a social security card; and 87.2% reported having a California identification card. Additionally, approximately half (56.4%) reported that they had a California driver's license. In regard to public benefits the respondents are currently receiving, 59% reported being enrolled in Medi-Cal; 7.7% received TANF; 7.7% received food stamps; 2.6% received SSI; 2.6% received childcare assistance; and 2.6% received unemployment compensation at the time of this study. No respondents reported receiving General Relief (GR), GAIN, Worker's Compensation, disability, or Section 8 benefits at the time of this survey.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender (n = 39)		
Male	12	30.8%
Female	27	69.2%
Ethnicity (n = 36)		
African American	12	30.8%
Non-Hispanic Caucasian	18	46.2%
Hispanic	5	12.8%
Other	1	2.6%
Marital Status (n = 39)		
Never been married	30	76.9%
Married	9	23.1%
Children (n = 39)		
Have children	18	46.2%
Do not have children	21	53.8%
Age (n = 39)		
Age at Intake		
16.0-17.5 years old	7	17.9%
18.0-19.0 years old	29	74.4%
Current Age		
21-22 years old	37	94.9%
23-24 years old	2	5.2%
Documentation/Current Benefits (n = 39)		
Birth certificate	39	100.0%
Social Security card	38	97.4%
California identification card	34	87.2%
California driver's permit	6	15.4%
California driver's license	22	56.4%
SSI	1	2.6%
TANF	3	7.7%
Unemployment	1	2.6%
Medi-Cal	23	59.0%
Childcare assistance	1	2.6%
Food stamps	3	7.7%
Other benefits	1	2.6%

Educational Status of Respondents

As shown in Table 2, approximately three quarters (74.4%) of the respondents graduated from high school, while 5.1% had completed a GED and 2.6% were in the process of completing a GED. At the time of this survey, 17.9% had not completed high school or a GED. Of the 39 respondents, 20.5% had already graduated from a vocational program and 7.7% were currently enrolled in such a program. An additional 7.7% had previously attended a vocational program, but did not complete it. The primary reason stated for not completing the program was that the participants had decided to pursue vocational education at a later date ($n = 3$). Forty-one percent of the respondents reported that they had not attended a vocational program. In regard to college, 46% reported that they had not previously attended college; 25.6% reported that they had previously attended college but did not complete it, primarily due to financial hardship ($n = 3$); and 23.1% reported that they were currently attending either a university or community college. At the time of this study, 23.1% listed an Associate's degree as their educational goal, while 17.9% listed a vocational certificate, 12.8% listed a

Bachelor's degree, 7.7% listed a Master's degree, and 5.1% listed a Doctoral degree. One third (33.3%) of respondents did not list any educational goals.

Table 2. Educational Status of Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Completion of High School (n = 39)		
Graduated high school	29	74.4%
Completed GED	2	5.1%
Enrolled in GED program	1	2.6%
Have not completed high school or GED	7	17.9%
Completion of Vocational Program (n = 30)		
Currently enrolled in vocational program	3	7.7%
Graduated vocational program	8	20.5%
Attended vocational program, but did not complete	3	7.7%
Have not attended vocational program	16	41.0%
College Attendance (n = 37)		
Currently attending college	9	23.1%
Attended college, but did not complete	10	25.6%
Have not attended college	18	46.2%
Educational Goal (n = 26)		
Vocation certificate	7	17.9%
Associate's degree	9	23.1%
Bachelor's degree	5	12.8%
Master's degree	3	7.7%
Doctoral degree	2	5.1%

Employment Status of Respondents

Table 3 shows the employment status of the respondents. At the time of this study, more than half

(69.2%) reported that they were currently employed. More than one quarter (28.2%) reported that they were not employed, while 2.6% did not respond to this item. Of those respondents who were employed, almost half (48.1%) reported that they currently work more than forty hours per week, while 33.3% reported 21-30 hours per week, 14.8% reported 31-40 hours per week, and 3.7% reported working 11-20 hours per week. In terms of gross monthly income, 40.7% reported earning \$1,501-\$2,000 per month; while 37% reported \$1,001-\$1,500; 7.4% reported \$501-\$1,000m and 7.4% reported earning less than \$500 per month. Only 3.7% reported earning \$2,001-\$2,500 per month. In regard to hourly wages, 25.9% reported earning \$8.01-\$9.00; 22.2% reported earning \$6.25-\$7.00; 14.8% reported earning \$9.01-10.00; 11.1% reported earning \$11.01-\$12.00; 7.4% reported earning \$7.01-\$8.00; 7.4% reported earning \$10.01-\$11.00; 7.4% reported earning \$12.01-\$13.00; and 3.7% reported earning more than \$15.00 per hour.

Table 3. Employment Status of Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Current Employment (n = 38)		
Currently employed	27	69.2%
Not currently employed	11	28.2%
Number of Hours Worked per Week (n = 27)		
11 to 20 hours	1	3.7%
21 to 30 hours	9	33.3%
31 to 40 hours	4	14.8%
40 or more hours	13	48.1%
Gross Monthly Income (n = 26)		
Less than \$500	2	7.4%
\$500-\$1,000	2	7.4%
\$1,001-\$1,500	10	37.0%
\$1,501-\$2,000	11	40.7%
\$2,001-\$2,500	1	3.7%
Hourly Wage (n = 27)		
\$6.25-\$7.00	6	22.2%
\$7.01-\$8.00	2	7.4%
\$8.01-\$9.00	7	25.9%
\$9.01-\$10.00	4	14.8%
\$10.01-\$11.00	2	7.4%
\$11.01-\$12.00	3	11.1%
\$12.01-\$13.00	2	7.4%
\$15.01 or more	1	3.7%
Benefits Provided by Current Employer (n = 27)		
Health insurance	10	37.0%
Dental insurance	9	33.3%
Life insurance	7	25.9%
Sick time	15	55.5%
Paid vacation time	15	55.5%
Length of Current Employment (n = 27)		
1 to 6 months	2	7.4%
6 months to 1 year	2	7.4%
1 to 2 years	13	48.0%
2 to 3 years	7	25.9%
3 to 4 years	2	7.4%
Unemployed respondents (n = 11)		
Previously employed	7	63.6%
Currently seeking employment	3	27.2%

Of the twenty-seven respondents who reported that they are employed, 55.5% reported receiving job benefits such as sick time and paid vacations; 37% receive health insurance; 33.3% receive dental insurance; and 25.9% receive life insurance through their employers. Approximately half (48%) of the employed respondents reported that they have been employed at their current jobs for one to two years, while 25.9% reported two to three years, 7.4% reported three to four years, 7.4% reported six months to one year, and 7.4% reported one to six months at the time of this study. For those respondents who had been at the current jobs for less than one year, all (n = 4) had been previously employed and the reasons for seeking new employment were higher wages (n = 2), better employment (n = 1), and being laid off (n = 1). As for those respondents who reported that they are currently unemployed (n = 11), 63.6% reported that they were previously employed, but only 27.2% reported that they are currently seeking employment.

Housing Status of Respondents

Table 4 shows the housing status of the 39 respondents of the survey. Approximately half (51.3%)

reported that they were currently renting an apartment, 28.2% reported other housing options, 7.7% reported renting a house, and 2.6% reported renting a room. Close to one quarter (23.1%) reported living by themselves, 23.1% reported living with a spouse, 15.4% reported living with relatives, 12.8% reported living with a roommate, 12.8% reported living with a girlfriend/boyfriend, and 10.3% reported living with friends. In addition, almost three quarters (74.4%) report that they are responsible for paying rent, while 25.6% report that they do not pay rent. Of the 39 respondents, 35.9% reported living in their current residence for 1-2 years, 28.2% reported 6 months-1 year, 15.4% reported 1-6 months, 12.8% reported 2-3 years, and 7.7% reported 3-4 years.

In regard to the number of times that respondents had moved since emancipating from the foster care system, approximately half (51.3%) reported that they had moved 1-2 times, 30.8% reported that they had moved 3-4 times, 10.3% reported moving 0 times, 5.1% reported moving 5-6 times, and 2.6% reported that they had moved 7-8 times at the time of this study. The reasons for moving were as

Table 4. Housing Status of Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Current Housing (n = 35)		
Renting apartment	20	51.3%
Renting house	3	7.7%
Renting room in house	1	2.6%
Other	11	28.2%
Household Composition (n = 39)		
Live alone	9	23.1%
Live with roommate(s)	5	12.8%
Live with friend(s)	4	10.3%
Live with boyfriend/girlfriend	5	12.8%
Live with spouse	9	23.1%
Live with relatives	6	15.4%
Other	1	2.6%
Rent (n = 39)		
Responsible for paying rent	29	74.4%
Not responsible for paying rent	10	25.6%
Length of Time in Current Residence (n = 39)		
1 to 6 months	6	15.4%
6 months to 1 year	11	28.2%
1 to 2 years	14	35.9%
2-3 years	5	12.8%
3-4 years	3	7.7%
Number of Times Moved Since Emancipated from Foster Care (n = 39)		
0 times	4	10.3%
1 to 2 times	20	51.3%
3 to 4 times	12	30.8%
5 to 6 times	2	5.1%
7 to 8 times	1	2.6%
Homelessness (n = 39)		
Been homeless	5	12.8%
Have not been homeless	34	87.2%

follows: needed larger living space (41%), conflict in previous home (28.2%), wanted to live in a better location (23.1%), and financial problems (10.3%). One

third of the respondents (33%) reported "other" as their reason for moving.

Additionally, 12.8% of the sample reported being homeless at some point since they left foster care. Only three respondents answered the question asking for the length of time that they had been homeless. One respondent reported being homeless for 1-7 days and two respondents reported being homeless for 32 or more days. The primary reason reported for the causes of homelessness was conflict in the home. Furthermore, only one respondent reported staying in a shelter for at least one night.

Status at Point of Intake into Cameron Hill Associates

Clients are normally referred for services at Cameron Hill Associates via a referral from the Independent Living Program approximately six months prior to emancipation from the foster care system. Of the 39 respondents, 87.2% possessed an original copy of their birth certificate upon intake at Cameron Hill Associates, while 71.8% were enrolled in Medi-Cal, 69.2% had a Social Security card, 64.1% had a California identification card, and 12.8% has a California driver's license. In

terms of educational status at intake, 51.3% were not enrolled in school; 25.6% were enrolled in high school; 10.3% were enrolled in community college; 7.7% were enrolled in adult school; 2.6% were enrolled in a vocational school; and 2.6% were enrolled in a university. In regard to grade level at intake, 56.4% had completed high school; 23.1% were in the 12th grade; 12.8% did not complete high school or a GED; and 7.7% were in the 11th grade. Furthermore, 66.7% were not enrolled in a vocational program at intake, while 28.2% were either currently enrolled in or had completed a vocational program.

In regard to employment status at intake, 41% of the respondents were employed, with 50% of those employed respondents working 21-30 hours per week, 25% working 21-40 hours per week, 18.7% working 11-20 hours per week, and 6.2% working 40 or more hours per week at the point of intake. In terms of wages, 62.5% of the respondents were earning \$5.01-\$6.00 per hour at the time of intake, 31.2% were earning \$6.01-\$7.00 per hour, and 6.2% were earning \$7.01-\$8.00 per hour. One third (33.3%) of respondents had previous work experience at the time intake. In regard to money management, 33.3% of

Table 5. Status at Point of Intake into Cameron Hill

Associates

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Documentation (n = 39)		
Birth certificate	34	87.2%
Social Security card	27	69.2%
California identification card	25	64.1%
California driver's license	5	12.8%
Medi-Cal	28	71.8%
Educational Status (n = 39)		
Enrolled in high school	10	25.6%
Enrolled in adult school	3	7.7%
Enrolled in vocational school	1	2.6%
Enrolled in community college	4	10.3%
Enrolled in university	1	2.6%
Not enrolled in any school	20	51.3%
Completion of High School (n = 39)		
In process of completing high school or GED	12	30.8%
Have completed high school/GED	22	56.4%
Did not complete high school/GED	5	12.8%
Vocational Program Status (n = 37)		
Enrolled in or completed program	11	28.2%
Not enrolled in program	26	66.7%
Employment Status (n = 39)		
Currently employed	16	41.0%
Not currently employed	23	59.0%
Number of Hours Worked per Week (n = 16)		
11 to 20 hours	3	18.7%
21 to 30 hours	8	50.0%
31 to 40 hours	4	25.0%
40 or more hours	1	6.2%
Hourly Wage (n = 16)		
\$5.01-\$6.00	10	62.5%
\$6.01-\$7.00	5	31.2%
\$7.01-\$8.00	1	6.2%
Financial Management (n = 39)		
Have at least one bank account	13	33.3%
Have checking account	4	10.3%
Have savings account	11	28.2%

respondents had at least one bank account at the time of intake. Of these respondents, 10.3% had a checking account and 28.2% had a savings account.

Independent Living Skills

Table 6 shows the current independent living skills of the study participants. A majority (69.2%) of participants reported that they currently have some form of bank account. Of the total sample, 43.6% reported that they have a checking account and 59% reported that they have a savings account. Further, 30.8% reported having at least one credit card.

In terms of transportation, approximately half (48.7%) of the participants own their own cars, while 41% use the bus as their main form of transportation. Of those who own their own cars, 68.4% participated in the Car Match program, through which the county matches funds put forth by the youth in order to assist in purchasing a car. Additionally, 73.6% of those participants owning cars also report having automobile insurance.

Table 6. Independent Living Skills

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Financial Management (n = 39)		
Bank account established	27	69.2%
Checking account established	17	43.6%
Savings account established	23	59.0%
Credit card account established	12	30.8%
Transportation (n = 39)		
Bus	16	41.0%
Walk	1	2.6%
Car	21	53.8%
Other	1	2.6%
Car Ownership (n = 38)		
Have own car	19	48.7%
Participated in Car Match Program	13	33.3%
Program/Service Participation (n = 39)		
Scattered Site Program	7	17.9%
California Conservation Corps	5	12.8%
Transitional Housing Program	3	7.7%
Computer Camp	17	43.6%
Program/Service Completion (n = 39)		
Scattered Site Program	7	17.9%
California Conservation Corps	2	5.1%
Transitional Housing Program	0	0.0%
Computer Camp	17	43.6%
Employment Services (n = 39)		
Referral Assistance	22	56.4%
Transportation Assistance	8	20.5%
Interview Skills	11	28.2%
Job Search Leads	22	56.4%
Interview Clothing	13	33.3%
Application Assistance	14	35.9%
Bus Passes	11	28.2%
Education Services (n = 39)		
Locating School/Program	16	41.0%
Application Assistance	12	30.8%
Transportation Assistance	8	20.5%
Financial Aid Applications	17	43.6%
Assistance with Other Programs	6	15.4%
Illegal Activity (n = 39)		
Convicted of felony or misdemeanor since age 18	2	5.1%
Participation in illegal act	1	2.6%
Type of illegal act Selling drugs	1	2.6%
Robbery or burglary	1	2.6%

In regard to educational assistance, 46.2% of the study participants reported receiving a scholarship from the Independent Living Program (ILP). An additional 41% reported receiving assistance with locating a school program from Cameron Hill Associates, while 30.8% received help with filling out admissions applications. Close to half (43.6%) of the sample received help with completing financial aid applications through Cameron Hill Associates and 20.5% received assistance with transportation to locate educational programs through the agency.

In the area of job skills, 56.4% of participants reported receiving referrals for jobs through the agency. One-fifth (20.5%) of respondents received transportation assistance such as rides to job interviews, while 28.3% reported receiving help with interview skills. More than half of all respondents received job search leads and approximately one-third reported receiving interview clothing (33.3%), assistance in completing job applications (35.9%), and bus passes for employment-related purposes (28.2%). No respondents reported that they participated in mock interviews through the agency.

In regard to other programs offered through Cameron Hill Associates, only 17.9% of the respondents reported that they participated in and graduated from the Scattered Site Program. Few respondents (12.8%) participated in the California Conservation Corps and even fewer (5.1%) completed the program. Only 7.7% of the current sample participated in the Transitional Housing Program and none of these respondents completed the program. However, 23.1% of respondents reported that they received financial assistance for housing through the agency. Furthermore, 43.6% of respondents attended the Computer Camp. No respondents reported participating in Job Corp or the military.

In terms of participation in illegal activities, only 5.1% of respondents reported being convicted of a felony or misdemeanor offense since the age of 18. Reported illegal activities included selling drugs (2.6%) and robbery or burglary (2.6%). No participants reported involvement in prostitution, shoplifting, fraud, or other illegal acts. No other respondents reported that they ever participated in any illegal act for survival needs.

Participant Reaction to Agency Services

Table 7 shows the respondent reactions to services offered by Cameron Hill Associates. An overwhelming majority (84.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the program provided guidance to handle personal life situations. A similar percentage (82.1%) viewed the program as a support system while preparing for adulthood. Likewise, 84.6% agreed or strongly agreed that the program offered the necessary tools needed to gain self-sufficiency. A majority of participants (82%) felt that the program was sensitive to their individual needs. Almost all (94.9%) of respondents felt that the program was worthwhile overall. An additional 84.6% either agreed or strongly agreed that the one-on-one training provided by the program was helpful in reaching personal goals. A similar percentage (84.3%) felt that the program needed to be longer and 82% agreed or strongly agreed that the program was available when he/she was in crisis. A smaller majority (76.9%) felt prepared to live independently at the end of the program and 69.2% of the respondents felt that the program helped them to develop support from community resources.

Table 7. Participant Reaction to Agency Services

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Provided personal guidance (n = 39)		
Strongly disagree	2	5.1%
Disagree	4	10.3%
Agree	23	59.0%
Strongly agree	10	25.6%
Program was support system (n = 38)		
Strongly disagree	2	5.1%
Disagree	4	10.3%
Agree	17	43.6%
Strongly agree	15	38.5%
Offered tools for self-sufficiency (n = 38)		
Strongly disagree	2	2.6%
Disagree	3	7.7%
Agree	20	51.3%
Strongly agree	13	33.3%
Sensitive to individual needs (n = 39)		
Strongly disagree	1	2.6%
Disagree	6	15.4%
Agree	21	53.8%
Strongly agree	11	28.2%
Program was worthwhile overall (n = 38)		
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	1	2.6%
Agree	25	64.1%
Strongly agree	12	30.8%
Program included one-on-one training (n = 39)		
Strongly disagree	1	2.6%
Disagree	5	12.8%
Agree	21	53.8%
Strongly agree	12	30.8%
Program needed to be longer (n = 39)		
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	6	15.4%
Agree	13	33.3%
Strongly agree	20	51.3%
Program was available during crisis (n = 38)		
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	6	15.4%
Agree	19	48.7%
Strongly agree	13	33.3%

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Felt prepared to live independently (n = 39)		
Strongly disagree	1	2.6%
Disagree	8	20.5%
Agree	19	48.7%
Strongly agree	11	28.2%
Program helped develop support from community resources (n = 39)		
Strongly disagree	1	2.6%
Disagree	11	28.2%
Agree	17	43.6%
Strongly agree	10	25.6%

Comparison of Respondent Status at Intake and Exit from Services

Table 8 shows a comparison between the status of respondents at intake into Cameron Hill Associates and at the time of exit from the agency. In terms of documentation, there was a notable rise in the percentage of respondents who acquired birth certificates, Social Security cards, California identification cards, and driver's licenses after initiating services with Cameron Hill Associates. The rise in number of driver's license is particularly significant, as restrictions on liability make it extremely difficult for youth to acquire driver's permits and licenses while still in foster care. The decrease in the number of respondents receiving Medi-Cal benefits is also important, as the opportunity to obtain health insurance coverage through full-time employment

becomes more likely with the increase in respondents' age and job skills.

In regard to education, there was a large number of respondents who were still enrolled in high school during intake, but by the time of exit there were zero. The most notable increases in frequency were in the areas of high school graduation and enrollment in college. At the time of exit, there were no respondents who had graduated from college. However, this is likely due to the age limit of the program at the time of exit.

Looking at employment, there was a large increase in the number of respondents who are currently employed and in the number who are employed full-time. Additionally, the hourly wages of respondents increased by the time of exit, as more than half were earning more than \$7.01 per hour as opposed to the 2.6% of respondents who were in this pay range at the time of intake. In terms of financial management, the number of respondents who reported having established at least one bank account more than doubled by the time that they completed services with Cameron Hill Associates.

Table 8. Comparison of Respondent Status at Intake and Exit from Services

	Intake		Exit	
	Freq. (n)	Perc. (%)	Freq. (n)	Perc. (%)
Documentation (n = 39)				
Birth certificate	34	87.2%	39	100.0%
Social Security card	27	69.2%	38	97.4%
California ID	25	64.1%	34	87.2%
California drivers license	5	12.8%	22	56.4%
Medi-Cal	28	71.8%	23	59.0%
Education (n = 39)				
Graduated HS/GED program	22	56.4%	31	79.5%
Enrolled in GED program	0	0.0%	1	2.6%
Enrolled in high school	12	30.8%	0	0.0%
Have not completed HS/GED	5	12.8%	7	17.9%
Enrolled in college	5	12.8%	9	23.1%
Employment (n = 39)				
Currently employed	16	41.0%	27	69.2%
Employed full-time	1	2.6%	13	33.3%
Employed part-time	15	38.5%	14	36.0%
Hourly wages				
\$7.00 and below	15	38.5%	6	15.4%
\$7.01 and above	1	2.6%	21	53.8%
Financial Management (n = 39)				
Bank account established	13	33.3%	27	69.2%
Checking account	4	10.3%	17	43.6%
Savings account	11	28.2%	23	59.0%

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The major findings of the current study will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter. Furthermore, the researchers will review limitations which affected data collection and analysis. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for social work practice, policy, and research in the area of aftercare services for emancipated foster youth.

Discussion

The current study utilized a sample composed of 39 respondents who completed aftercare services with Cameron Hill Associates, of which the vast majority included Caucasians and African Americans, with very little representation of Hispanic and other ethnic groups. Of these respondents, most had never been married although there were some respondents who reported they were married. Additionally, approximately half of the respondents reported they had children, with the number of children ranging from one to three. The majority of respondents who participated in this study began

receiving services from Cameron Hill Associates at the age of 18.

While analyzing the data, it became clear that Cameron Hill Associates had demonstrated significant success in working with emancipated foster youth. In regard to education, most respondents in this sample had either graduated from high school or completed their GED. In comparison to Scannapieco et al.'s (1995) sample, where only 50% of the youth had obtained their high school diploma upon receiving ILP services, nearly 80% of the current sample achieved this same goal by the time they exited Cameron Hill Associates' program. Based on these findings, it appears that young adults who have continued services upon emancipating from the foster care system have a greater chance of pursuing their educational goal with the continued support available to them. This is also a valuable tool that allows young adults the opportunity to further their education beyond high school and enter into postsecondary educational programs. The current study found nine youth who were currently enrolled in college, as well as eleven youth who are currently enrolled in or have graduated from vocational programs. In light of the scarce educational

opportunities that have historically been available to emancipated foster youth, these findings are evident that continued services make a difference in the lives of these young adults.

In terms of employment, the current sample is a perfect example of the financial struggles experienced by emancipated foster youth because they are dependent solely on their own incomes and do not enjoy the luxury of parents or a family network for financial support. Nearly seventy percent of the respondents are currently employed and more than half were earning well-above minimum wage at the time of this study. This finding is comparable to Mallon's (1988) study in which 72% of youth were working fulltime at discharge from a New York City-based agency. It appears that employment-related services provided by Cameron Hill Associates are beneficial in assisting youth in obtaining higher-wage positions. Such services may also be related to the high numbers of clients pursuing further educational achievements, as the staff at Cameron Hill Associates strongly encourages youth to develop and gain skills which allow them to secure more lucrative positions.

With regard to housing, the current sample greatly differed from McMillan and Tucker's (1999) study in which the most common living arrangement was with relatives, including biological parents, yet only 15.4% of the current sample reported living with relatives and none reported living with biological parents. In the current study, there was a large majority that reported that they lived either on their own or with a spouse. In addition, nearly 75% reported that they were responsible for paying rent. One of the significant findings was that there appeared to be a great deal of stability in terms of length of time in current residence as more than half of the respondents reported to be living in their current residence for more than one year. Furthermore, the current sample differed from previous literature in that only 12.8% reported having been homeless for at least one night, while 25% of Benstein's (2000) and 29% of Barth's (1990) samples reported the same. Furthermore, in Barth's (1990) study, the average participant reported having lived in six places since emancipation from the foster care system, while 61.5% of the current sample reported moving two or less times since emancipation. Thus, it appears that the services provided by Cameron Hill

Associates work a great deal toward helping the youth to maintain stable housing accommodations.

Limitations

While completing this research project, it became apparent that there was difficulty in locating former clients who had participated in Cameron Hill Associates' program. This became evident once the researchers went through a list of 262 potential respondents and were only able to locate 57 of these individuals. As a result, the researchers had a small sample size of 39 respondents from the 57 candidates to whom survey packets were mailed. Therefore, this small number of respondents may deviate from the true trends of the major findings as far as the housing stability of all former participants of the program.

Furthermore, Cameron Hill Associates assesses young adults by using the Daniel Memorial Life Skills Assessment to determine the deficient areas in terms of their independent living status. However, the researchers were unable to use this assessment in their measurement due to the agency not conducting an outcome assessment to make a comparison of what skills they had learned while

participating in the program. Thus, although the researchers were able to extract some information from case files and documentation, there was not enough intake data available to qualify as a true pretest instrument.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

Based on the above-named limitations, the researchers suggest that Cameron Hill Associates develop a more intense follow-up strategy in order to locate and easily contact these former participants. In doing so, the agency would be able to incorporate a more accurate determination of these young adults' lives as they continue to strive for self-sufficiency. Additionally, yearly follow-ups would enable the agency to develop a mentor program through which graduates of the aftercare program could be paired with incoming clients who would benefit from their experiences and peer expertise.

Furthermore, in developing a more thorough intake assessment, the agency would be able to better gauge the current needs of young adults entering their program. Such an instrument would also allow the agency to better accommodate these young adults' individual needs by gaining a more thorough understanding of the details

pertaining to them. In regards to the Daniel Memorial Life Skills Assessment, it would be beneficial to the agency to retest the young adults using the same assessment in order to measure outcomes for each client upon exiting the program.

Finally, the researchers recommend that Cameron Hill Associates conduct follow-up research to the current study by utilizing the instrument with the same sample every two years. By doing so, the agency would have an opportunity to assess the progress of this group of former clients on a longitudinal scale. The data gathered through such research could then be utilized for various purposes, including program planning and grant purposes.

Conclusion

As described in the preceding chapter, the researchers found that Cameron Hill Associates appears to enjoy a good deal of success in providing aftercare services for emancipated foster youth, particularly in the areas of educational achievement, employment gains, and housing stability. Although the researchers encountered limitations to data collection which could make it difficult to generalize the current findings to a

broader sample of emancipated foster youth, the findings will continue to be useful to the agency in future program planning and development.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT

Statement of Informed Consent

Our names are Omyia Thurston and Deborah Baeza. We are graduate students in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at California State University, San Bernardino. We are conducting a research project on the effectiveness of the Aftercare Program at Cameron Hill Associates in preparing emancipated foster youth for self-sufficiency. The purpose of this study is to help Cameron Hill Associates continuously improve services to emancipated foster youth.

The data from the attached questionnaire will be used for research purposes only and will not be individually listed on any report. The information from this research is confidential and your participation will remain anonymous. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. When you have completed the study, you will be given a debriefing statement in addition to \$10 for participating in the study.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Raymond Howard at Cameron Hill Associates at 1894 Commercenter West, Ste. 305, San Bernardino, CA 92408 or call him at (909) 890-4301.

By placing an "X" in the box below, you acknowledge that you have been informed of, and understand, the nature and purpose of the study and you freely consent to participate. You also acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age.

☐

Please place an "X" in the box above

Date

APPENDIX B
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The study you have just completed was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of services offered through the Aftercare Program at Cameron Hill Associates. This study is also designed to obtain feedback from former participants of the Aftercare Program regarding usefulness of services in preparing them for self-sufficiency.

Thank you for participating in this study and for not discussing the contents of this survey with other people. If you would like to receive a summary of the results, a report will be available to you through Cameron Hill Associates after July.

If you feel uncomfortable or distressed as a result of participating in this study, you are advised to contact Raymond Howard at Cameron Hill Associates at 1894 Commercenter West, Ste. 305, San Bernardino, CA 92408 or call him at (909) 890-4301.

APPENDIX C
RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Please check:

- Gender: ☐ 1. Male ☐ 2. Female
- Ethnicity: ☐ 1. Afro-American ☐ 4. Asian
☐ 2. Non-Hispanic Caucasian ☐ 5. Other, please specify _____
☐ 3. Hispanic
- Marital Status: ☐ 1. Never been married ☐ 4. Divorced
☐ 2. Married ☐ 5. Widowed
☐ 3. Separated

Do you have any dependent children? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, how many: _____

Are you currently pregnant or is your partner currently pregnant? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please fill in:

Your Current Age: _____

At what age did you start receiving services from Cameron Hill Associates? _____

Please check all that apply:

Please indicate what documentation you have:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Birth Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Driver's Permit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Social Security Card | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. California Driver's License |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. California ID | |

Please indicate which, if any, of the following benefits you are receiving:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. SSI | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Unemployment | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Medi-Cal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. TANF | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Worker's Comp | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Child Care Assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. GAIN | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Food Stamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. GR | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Section 8 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Other, specify _____ |

II. EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Please check all that apply in each category:

High School

- ☐ 1. I am currently attending high school/adult school. If yes, please answer the following:
How many credits do you currently have? _____
When do you plan to graduate? _____
- ☐ 2. I graduated from high school. If yes, what year? _____
- ☐ 3. I am currently enrolled in a GED program.
- ☐ 4. I completed my GED. If yes, what year? _____
- ☐ 5. I have not completed high school or GED.

Vocational School

- ☐ 1. I am currently enrolled in a vocational program.
- ☐ 2. I graduated from a vocational program. If yes, please answer the following:
When did you complete the program? _____
Type of certification received: _____
- ☐ 3. I previously attended a vocational program, but I did not complete it. If yes, why did you stop? Check all that apply:
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. financial hardship | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. conflict with work schedule |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. childcare problems | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. not interested in school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. decided to pursue at later date |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. other: _____ | |
- ☐ 4. I have not attended a vocational program.

College

- ☐ 1. I am currently attending college. If yes, please answer the following:
Name of college: _____
Major: _____
Degree you are working toward: AA AS BA BS
Anticipated graduation date: _____
- ☐ 2. I have graduated from college. If yes, please answer the following:
Name of college: _____
Major: _____
Degree received: AA AS BA BS
Year graduated: _____
- ☐ 3. I previously attended college, but I did not complete it. If yes, why did you stop?
Check all that apply:
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. financial hardship | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. conflict with work schedule |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. childcare problems | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. not interested in school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. decided to pursue at later date |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. other: _____ | |
- ☐ 4. I have not attended college.

What is your educational goal?

- ☐ 1. To obtain a certificate in vocation
- ☐ 2. To obtain an Associate's degree (AA/AS)
- ☐ 3. To obtain a Bachelor's degree (BA/BS)
- ☐ 4. To obtain a Master's degree (MA/MS)
- ☐ 5. To obtain a Doctoral degree (MD/PhD/JD)

III. EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Are you currently employed?

- ☐ 1. Yes (If yes, complete Section A.)
- ☐ 2. No (If no, complete section B.)

Section A

Where are you currently employed? _____

What is your current title? _____

How many hours per week do you work?

- ☐ 1. 1-10 hours
- ☐ 2. 11-20 hours
- ☐ 3. 21-30 hours
- ☐ 4. 31-40 hours
- ☐ 5. 40+ hours

What is your gross monthly income (income before taxes)?

- ☐ 1. less than \$500
- ☐ 2. \$500-\$1,000
- ☐ 3. \$1,001-\$1,500
- ☐ 4. \$1,501-\$2,000
- ☐ 5. \$2,001-\$2,500
- ☐ 6. \$2,501-\$3,000

What is your hourly wage?

- ☐ 1. \$6.25-\$7.00
- ☐ 2. \$7.01-\$8.00
- ☐ 3. \$8.01-\$9.00
- ☐ 4. \$9.01-\$10.00
- ☐ 5. \$10.01-\$11.00
- ☐ 6. \$11.01-\$12.00
- ☐ 7. \$12.01-\$13.00
- ☐ 8. \$13.01-\$14.00
- ☐ 9. \$14.01-\$15.00
- ☐ 10. \$15.01+

Do you receive any of the following benefits from your employer? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ 1. health insurance
- ☐ 2. dental insurance
- ☐ 3. life insurance
- ☐ 4. sick time
- ☐ 5. paid vacation

How long have you been at your current employment?

- ☐ 1. 1-6 months
- ☐ 2. 6 months-1 year
- ☐ 3. 1-2 years
- ☐ 4. 2-3 years
- ☐ 5. 3-4 years
- ☐ 6. 4+ years

If you have been at your current employment for less than 1 year, please answer the following:

Were you previously employed? ☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No

If yes, where were you previously employed? _____

How long did you work there? _____

Why did you seek other employment?

- ☐ 1. higher wages
- ☐ 2. fired from job
- ☐ 3. closer to home
- ☐ 4. temporary position
- ☐ 5. better employment opportunity
- ☐ 6. closer to school
- ☐ 7. laid off

Section B	
Were you previously employed?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 2. No
If yes, where were you previously employed? _____	
How long did you work there? _____	
Why did you leave?	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. higher wages	<input type="checkbox"/> 5. better employment opportunity
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. fired from job	<input type="checkbox"/> 6. closer to school
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. closer to home	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. temporary position	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 2. No	
Are you currently seeking employment?	

IV. HOUSING

Where are you currently living?

- ☐ 1. I am renting an apartment
- ☐ 2. I am renting a house
- ☐ 3. I have bought a house
- ☐ 4. I am renting a room in someone else's apartment
- ☐ 5. I am renting a room in someone else's house
- ☐ 6. I am renting a room in a motel
- ☐ 7. other: _____

Who do you live with?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. by myself | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. boyfriend/girlfriend | <input type="checkbox"/> biological parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. roommate | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. relatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. friends | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. former foster parents | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ |

Are you responsible for paying rent?

- ☐ 1. Yes If yes, how much do you pay? _____

☐

2. No If no, who pays the rent? _____

How long have you lived in your current residence?

☐

1. less than 1 month

☐

3. 6 months-1 year

☐

5. 2-3 years

☐

2. 1-6 months

☐

4. 1-2 years

☐

6. 3-4 years

If you have lived in your current residence for 1 year or less, where did you live previously? Please check all that apply.

☐

1. own apartment

☐

5. with friends

☐

2. house

☐

7. with relatives

☐

3. room for rent

☐

8. with

☐

4. motel

☐

girlfriend/boyfriend

☐

5. shelter

☐

9. other: _____

Why did you move? Please check all that apply.

☐

1. space

☐

4. financial problem

☐

2. location

☐

5. end of lease

☐

3. conflict

☐

6. cheaper rent

How many times have you moved since you left foster care?

☐

1. 0 times

☐

5. 7-8 times

☐

2. 1-2 times

☐

6. 9-10 times

☐

3. 3-4 times

☐

7. more than 10 times

☐

4. 5-6 times

What were your reasons for moving? Please check all that apply.

☐

1. I needed a larger living space

☐

2. There was a conflict in my previous home

☐

3. I wanted or needed to live in a better location

☐

4. I was having financial problems and could no longer afford to live in my previous home

☐

5. I could afford the rent in my previous home but I wanted to move to a place that was

☐

less expensive

☐

6. Other: _____

Have you ever been homeless?

☐

1. Yes

☐

2. No

If you answered yes, how long were you homeless?

☐

1. 1-7
days

☐

3. 15-21
days

☐

32 or more
days

☐

2. 8-14
days

☐

4. 22-31 days

What were the circumstances that caused you to become homeless?

☐

1. conflict in the home

☐

2. financial difficulties

☐

3. evicted or asked to leave residence

☐

4. termination from foster care

☐

5.

other: _____

—

Have you ever spent at least one night in a shelter?

☐

1. Yes

☐

2. No

V. GENERAL QUESTIONS

Do you have a bank account?

☐

1. Yes If yes, what
type?

☐

Checking

☐

savings

☐

2. No

Do you have credit cards?

☐

1. Yes If yes, how many? _____

☐

2. No

What do you use for transportation?

☐

1. bus

☐

3. walk

☐

5. car

☐

2. bike

☐

4. friends

☐

6. other

At anytime did you utilize the Car Match program to purchase a car?

☐

1. Yes If yes, how much? _____

☐

2. No

Do you own a car?

☐

1. Yes If yes, do you have car insurance?

☐☐

1. Yes 2. No

☐

2. No

Have you ever received a scholarship from ILP?

☐

1. Yes If yes, how much? (Please include the total amount received.)

☐

2. No

Have you ever participated in the Scattered Site Program?

☐

1. Yes If yes, did you graduate?

☐☐

1. Yes 2. No

☐

2. No

Have you ever participated in CCC?

☐

1. Yes If yes, did you complete the program?

☐☐

1. Yes 2. No

☐

2. No

Have you ever participated in Job Corp?

☐

1. Yes If yes, did you complete the program?

☐☐

1. Yes 2. No

☐

2. No

Have you ever participated in the military?

☐

1. Yes If yes, did you complete your term?

☐☐

1. Yes 2. No

☐

2. No

Have you ever lived in the Transitional Housing Program?

☐

1. Yes If yes, did you complete the program?

☐☐

1. Yes 2. No

☐

2. No

Have you every received any financial assistance for housing needs?

☐

1. Yes If yes, how much did you receive? _____

☐

2. No

Have you ever attended the Computer Camp?

☐

1. Yes

☐

2. No

What kind of assistance have you received, if any, with obtaining employment? Please check all that apply.

☐

1. referrals

☐

2. transportation

☐

3. mock interview

☐

4. interview skills

☐

5. job search leads

☐

6. interview clothing

☐

7. filling out applications

☐

8. provided bus pass

What kind of assistance have you received, if any, pertaining to your educational needs? Please check all that apply.

☐

1. locating school program

☐

2. filling out admissions application

☐

3. provided transportation

☐

4. completing financial aid applications

☐

5. applying to other programs (EOPS, etc.)

Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor since the age of 18?

☐

1. Yes If yes, what was the charge?

☐

2. No

Have you ever participated in an illegal act for survival needs?

☐

1. Yes

☐

2. No

If yes, what was the act?

☐

1. prostitution

☐

4. fraud

☐

2. selling drugs

☐

5. robbery/burglary

☐

3. shoplifting

☐

6. other: _____

VI. PARTICIPANT REACTION

The following questions pertain to your opinion of the services you received from Cameron Hill Associates. Please circle the answer which most closely reflects your opinion.

The program provided me with guidance when I needed to handle personal life situations.

1	2	3	4
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

The program was a support system while I was preparing for adulthood.

1	2	3	4
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

The program offered me the necessary tools that I needed to gain self-sufficiency.

1	2	3	4
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

The program was sensitive to my individual needs.

1	2	3	4
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

The program was worthwhile overall.

1	2	3	4
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

The program included one-on-one training which was helpful to reach my personal goals.

1	2	3	4
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

The program needed to be longer.

1	2	3	4
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

The program was available when I was in crisis.

1	2	3	4
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

When I graduated from the program I felt that I was prepared to live independently.

1	2	3	4
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

The program helped me to develop support from resources within my community.

1	2	3	4
strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree

VII. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. If you need additional writing space, please feel free to write on the back of this page.

What was the most helpful service that you received from Cameron Hill Associates, and why?

What suggestions do you have to improve services for helping foster youth transition into adulthood?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This was a two-person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:

Assigned Leader: Omyia Thurston

Assisted By: Deborah Baeza

2. Data Entry and Analysis:

Assigned Leader: Deborah Baeza

Assisted By: Omyia Thurston

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:

a. Introduction and Literature

Team Effort: Deborah Baeza & Omyia Thurston

b. Methods

Team Effort: Deborah Baeza & Omyia Thurston

c. Results

Assigned Leader: Deborah Baeza

Assisted By: Omyia Thurston

d. Discussion

Assigned Leader: Omyia Thurston

Assisted By: Deborah Baeza