



Foster Care And The Pandemic

(NAPS)—Recent surveys of youth in foster care found nearly half (49%) expressed an immediate resource need during the COVID-19 pandemic—and you can help reverse that. Distance Learning Access (15%) was the top survey response, with Enrichment Activities (14%), Food Support (4%) and Cell Phones (4%) also discussed.

“The demand for resources is greater than ever,” said Lisa Chin, CEO of Treehouse, which conducted the study. “Whether school is in the classroom



Under the guidance of her Treehouse Graduation Success Coordinator, Karizma plans to shadow a dental hygienist as soon as it's safe.

or online, our youth continue to grow. They need new clothes, school supplies and other essentials.”

The nonprofit organization partners with youth in care so they have a childhood and a future. Collaborating with social workers, foster care liaisons and caregivers to ensure access to resources is critical to success. When there are gaps, Treehouse provides tangible resources, but it can't do it alone.

“Community is such a key part of what we do here, and it's going to take all of us to address this crisis and continue moving forward,” Chin said.

Treehouse also has shifted to connecting with high school students in its Graduation Success program using remote strategies. Even before the pandemic, only about 50 percent of youth in care graduated compared to more than 75 percent who stick with Treehouse.

One student in the program, Karizma, thrives as she completes her schoolwork from home. Last year, she started working with Ruby Zarate, a Graduation Success Coordinator at Treehouse. The two would usually meet weekly in person at school, and have now been staying in touch through frequent phone calls, texts and Face-Time. Although it's going well, Karizma looks forward to everything eventually returning to normal.

“I never thought I would have to sit at home and wish to be at school,” Karizma said with a laugh. “It is a little different. Having Ruby there to remind me and look out for me has definitely helped a lot as I look to my future. I really do think Treehouse is amazing.”

Anyone who'd like to support Treehouse as they partner with youth in foster care to weather the pandemic can make a gift at www.treehouseforkids.org/donate.