

VOICES OF FOSTER YOUTH

October is foster youth voice month and SOS Children Villages Florida is joining Selfless Love Foundation to let everyone know that their voices matter. By using their voices effectively, foster youth create a powerful tool to share their perspective which can impact change.

These four young adults whose lives have been a part of the child welfare system and are currently members of the SOS "Next Steps" program, have shared what they feel is most important to them that you know about life in foster care.



RYAN MOHORNE

"My name is Ryan Mohorne. I am 25 and I was in the foster care system for 15 years. Right now, I am an Internal Communications Coordinator, and grad student at Florida State University. The one thing I want to share about being a foster youth is our struggle does not define us, we are a peculiar set of individuals who will change the world."



STEPHANIE

"My name is Stephanie and I am 22 years old, and I have been in the foster care system for 7 years. Right now, I am currently working full time, taking care of my 5-year-old son, and working towards attending medical school."

The one thing I want to share about being a foster youth is that it really does take a village. Even when you're feeling alone, when you're surrounded by that supportive village, it makes all the difference in the world."



BRIANNA WALDREP

"My name is Brianna Waldrep, and I am 22 years old, and graduated from the University of South Florida with a B.A. in Health Sciences. I entered the foster care system when I was eight years old until I aged out at eighteen. Right now, I am at Florida Atlantic University pursuing a degree in nursing. What I would like everyone to know about foster care is that it makes for a complex life. Not having the support and stability of one consistent family caused me to rely on myself and my decisions way too early in life. My decisions were not always good ones, and sometimes I have learned things the hard way."



ROBERTO MONTANEZ JR.

"My name is Roberto Montanez Jr. I am 26 years old, and I been in foster care since I was 11 years old. I am a history teacher and the assistant head coach for varsity football and varsity basketball at Monarch High School, and I am working to become the head coach. The one thing I would share about being a foster care youth is that we are not victims but kids who are going through some life changing adversity. Once you get through it you become stronger as a person, and it can lead you down the path of success."