

100% Success: Homelessness Prevention of Foster Youth -By Magic!

Portals Of Wonder was invited by **the Independent Living Resource Center, Hunter College School of Social Work** to deliver our pioneering design of Methods and Materials for the training of foster care professionals.

The staff from among 63 foster care agencies in the New York Metropolitan area were introduced to an exciting new approach that strengthens the bond between staff and foster youth, helping prevent homelessness.

“Precious few facilitators offer what Portals Of Wonder supplies: a road map to finding ‘that home within’ which empowers youth (in foster care) to embrace their dreams and visions for the future... the staff of Portals Of Wonder are truly wondrous...a poignant and magical experience...”

– Michael Texeira, Training Manager, Independent Living Resource Center, Hunter College School of Social Work

Prior to the Fall of 2002 training, this program was applied to homeless and foster children in Hannover and the lower Saxony region under the auspices of the **German Government’s Department of Social Services, Division of Foster Youth.**



This program helped children and youth break from the chains of drugs, violence and Neo-Nazi youth gangs.

Social Worker **Bettina Vorbeck**, who joined as Executive Director of Portals Of Wonder’s Germany Satellite Program in 2000, explained that without families or loved ones, at-risk youth between the ages of 11-19 years old run away from social residences during the holidays and end up living on the street. Because of suicide, drugs and gang violence, some never return.

Programs were delivered throughout December and January. Over Christmas and New Years, joyous holiday magic and music workshop programs ran continuously from the afternoon till 2:30 in the morning.

According to succeeding reports in February from the supervising residential staff at the Department of Social Services, Portals Of Wonder’s programs successfully **“reversed the trend – resulting in a 100% runaway prevention rate and return of youth to schools in January”**. Portals Of Wonder’s presence made a resounding impact by touching these young lives with hope, creative expression and wonder.

Portals Of Wonder’s ongoing Professional Development program for foster care staff, coupled with arts education workshops and performances with foster youth, has improved the quality of life for hundreds of New York youth in foster care and transitional housing. With adequate funding to support an ongoing program, that number is expected to increase to thousands.