BEST SUMMER EVER

A report on the Impact of the Best Summer Ever.

Best Summer Ever brought together more than 100 participants, making it one of the largest foster youth serving events in LA this year. The ripple effect was measurable: 20 young adults received urgent needs support, and nearly half of the attendees participated in workshops specifically geared towards their financial and career wellbeing.

Seven of our 13 tabling partners focused on workforce development and apprenticeships, ranging from welding and fabrication to mechanical and television industry opportunities. The remaining tabling partners provided housing support, banking and credit guidance, wellness resources, and education assistance.

Economic mobility was woven throughout the event, creating multiple opportunities for attendees to Level-Up their summer plans and invest in their future. Notably, 30% of participating youth signed up for internships and workforce apprenticeship opportunities during the event!



The Event, By The Numbers

100+ Total participants - youth, partners and community members	**30%** Of the youth applied for internships or workforce apprenticeships	**13** Tabling partners providing on-site resources
$10,000 Distributed in urgent needs to youth in attendance, with an average award of $500. The top areas of need were transportation and education-related expenses	**$4,500+** In gift cards given to attendees assisting with immediate needs, such as gas, groceries and technology that afternoon	**30+** Headshots delivered to level- up, resumes, education opportunities, and social media

Beyond the Event: What Youth Told Us They Need

We gathered urgent needs requests directly from youth participants - a window into the real, daily challenges they navigate. These requests reflect the very gaps your sponsorship is helping to close.

*Voices from the Room

TRANSPORTATION — A MOTHER KEEPING HER DAUGHTER SAFE

"I am a young mom, and I have my baby with me at all times. My support system is zero outside of foster programs. It is extremely heartbreaking and hard to have my baby go through places like that."

This Stepping Forward youth has been riding public transit daily with her one-year-old daughter after her car broke down. She has witnessed assaults and a fatal stabbing on her bus route and has missed job interviews as a result. She is navigating all of this without any personal support system.

$500 requested, Total amount funded | Needed within 30 days

BASIC NEEDS — NO POWER, NO FOOD

"I haven't been able to go grocery shopping in fear that the food would just spoil and go to waste. I don't have the funds to buy a new refrigerator."

This working youth's apartment has had intermittent power for weeks, causing her refrigerator to fail and food to go to waste repeatedly. She and her family have been unable to keep or prepare food at home.

$900 requested, $500 funded | Needed within 2 weeks

EDUCATION — ONE STEP FROM THE FINISH LINE

"I have worked full time while receiving my master's degree in nursing and it has been hard to balance both. I have done my best to pay off my schooling with no loans or debt but as I reach the end of my term it has been hard... This would mean a lot to me and would relieve financial stress."

This First Star youth is graduating from UCLA's nursing program in June 2026. An outstanding $4,000 tuition balance is the only thing standing between her and her diploma — and the pediatric nursing position at UCLA already waiting for her. She has never taken on student debt.

$4,000 requested, $500 funded | Needed within 2 weeks

CAREER — DRESSED FOR THE JOB AHEAD

"A summer job and job interview clothing."

This First Star youth is ready to work, they just need the tools to walk in the door. Interview-appropriate clothing is often an invisible barrier for foster youth who lack the family networks most young people take for granted. A small investment here opens the door to income, confidence, and independence.

$200 requested, Total amount funded | Needed within 30 days

*A donor provided Urgent Needs Funds for attendees in distress. 20 youth submitted requests, and all 20 have received full or partial support.



First Star was proud to serve as the lead partner and organizer of this event, working alongside these incredible organizations to bring it to life.

Primary Partners

Tabling Partners

And a few thanks from our attendees!

THE HIGHEST HUMAN ACT IS TO INSPIRE

Thank you for keeping the foster youth in your heart. It is so heartwarming to have people care for us & support us the way even our family never did- whether because they couldn't or didn't have the mental capacity to do so. I am so grateful and inspired by people like you- who show us how beautifully we can bloom even after faced with so much struggle & pain that can sometimes come to the foster youth. And I am so inspired and grateful, thank you for keeping the foster youth in your heart! The highest act is to inspire - Nipsey Hussel

THIS PROGRAM IS AMAZING

I really appreciate you guys for all you do, this program is amazing. It has helped and supported me in many ways, this funding is very important to me because I'm a first generation college student, and I was placed in foster care the beginning of my junior year in high school. Everything was very different and scary for me because of the new environment. But thankfully I met really good foster parents who supported me in every way possible and made me a better person. I tried harder in school, although my grades were a little down in the spring semesters of freshman and sophomore year before I entered foster care, I was able to got into CSULB majoring in Pre-Political Science after I entered foster care. When I move out of my foster home in August this year, I'll be financially independent and trying to support myself through college, I am living off of the financial aid and scholarships that I'm getting from the government and other organizations. This funding would be very helpful to me, to help secure housing for the first year of college. I am very thankful for people like you guys, you care about people like us. Thank you all so very much!!!

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

Thank you so much. I truly appreciate your generosity and support during this time. This assistance will help me address transportation challenges by helping me repair my car, which is very important for getting to school, work, and managing my daily responsibilities. Having reliable transportation will relieve a lot of stress and help me continue focusing on my goals and education. Your kindness and support truly mean a lot to me, and I am very grateful for this opportunity. Thank you again for making a positive impact in my life.

Thank you for your trust, partnership and belief in the work we do. We are strengthening our postsecondary and workforce mobility infrastructure. **Given that the lives of young people with lived experience are inextricably linked to multiple agencies, systems, and organizations, we intentionally take a similar approach to uplifting the incredible teenagers and young adults we serve.** Collaboration is central to First Star's ethos and deeply embedded in how we approach improving outcomes for the youth we serve.

Your Support Strengthens First Star and our Youth, Thank You!

Lyndsey C. Wilson

CEO, First Star Inc.

We look forward to remaining in touch. www.firststar.org