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Building a Bridge to a Brighter Future

SERVE - HEAL - INSPIRE - NURTURE - EMPOWER

Dear Friends,

A year of FIRSTS!

2023 was a year of growth and learning. It was a foundational year for us and we are so very thankful. There are hundreds of youth in our county who are not prepared to be on their own, but find themselves in that situation as their 18th birthday arrives.

Many of these young people desperately want to succeed, but don't have the support required to take the needed steps. We set our 2024 goals, partnering with the Oconee County Department of Social Services, to start two programs which will truly Build a Bridge to a Brighter Tomorrow! We couldn't do this without you and appreciate your support donations, time and prayers!

[Click Here to Join our Support Team](#)

Our Mission



SHINE exists to Serve, Heal, Inspire, Nurture and Empower vulnerable and at-risk young adults, both domestically and internationally, who are transitioning from foster and orphan care or impoverished environments.

SHINE's mission is to bring individuals together to support these youth by creating a bridge from their current environment to building a future that allows for access to the necessities of a productive life: food, shelter, employability/life skills and stable employment. With a focus on education, skills development and career development, **SHINE** endeavors to ensure that these young adults are given real-life skills to be contributing members of their local communities.

Why SHINE ?

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:5

- 23,000 Youth Age Out in the United States annually
- 50% of the Nations homeless population are former foster youth.
- There is a direct correlation between trauma experienced in child welfare to interaction in the juvenile justice system.
- Heightened risk of being trafficked
- 47% Unemployment
- 46% Experience homelessness by age 26
- 50% Substance use dependency
- 70% Girls pregnant by age 21
- 71% Earn < \$25,000/yr
- 70% Would like to go to college, only 4% will, compared to 36% of general population

SHINE is Moving Forward!

2023 was a year of learning, growth and trusting God!

In preparing for our 1st annual charity golf tournament, we made a huge step in the awareness of the statistics of youth who age out of foster care by talking to donors, sponsors and players.

The success of the tournament allowed us to build-up the foundational money needed to provide support starting in 2024, working with the Department of Social Services (DSS) in Oconee County. The SHINE program will strive to help them build credit required to lease an apartment, create a realistic budget, apply and interview for a job, and other life skills such as maintaining and repairing a car. Some of these young people have not even had enough guidance in basic life skills to know how to fill up a gas tank, prepare a healthy meal, communicate with confidence, or understand their strengths and skills needed to obtain a job that will ensure they have basic shelter, food and transportation. The list goes on and on.

In partnership with DSS, SHINE will work to give these youth a hand up and make a difference in those statistics, by:

1. Providing mentors who are committed to help set goals and celebrate when goals are met, and help with building life skills.
2. Hosting workshops to meet the above areas of learning and growth. These workshops will be open to Oconee County youth ages 18-21, as well as expanding to youth 22-25 as the program progresses.
3. Celebrating and encouraging Oconee County social workers to let them know that the SHINE organization is here to help and support them. With heavy workloads encountered by social workers, volunteer assistance can make a difference in how many youth become thrivers instead of just survivors.

If you would like to learn more about “**SHINE for Your Future**” or are interested in volunteering, there is a need for mentors as well as hosts for workshops that help teach life skills. Mentoring builds an ongoing relationship of support and guidance in

life skill that will enhance the future of these young people and make them feel more competent and confident. *For more information about volunteering, call Kelly Liston at [770-314-0875](tel:770-314-0875), or use the contact form on the SHINE website at <https://shineforyourfuture.org>.*

The founding and support for this organization rests primarily in our caring and generous community, with many who understand that the future rests in the hands of our youth. We want to be committed to them so they can move forward, have a future and be the best they can be.

SHINE currently operates on a 100% volunteer basis, with no employees and no overhead, meaning that all funds can be directed toward supporting the youth who age out of foster care.

Upcoming Events

- Charity 5K – Q2
- Appreciation luncheon for Oconee County Social Workers - February
- 2nd Annual Golf Tournament – **September 12th** at Cross Creek Country Club – *Mark your calendar!*
- Scavenger Hunt - TBD



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