



# Beyond Emancipation News

## b2b Offers Students A First Step To College

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**b2b students and faculty celebrate the completion of August's two-week bridge course.**

Do you remember starting college? For most of us it was an exciting, confusing, fun, and often very overwhelming time. Many of us got through that first year knowing that we could rely on our families back home to provide us with advice, a little money, an occasional care package. Now imagine how much harder it would have been without that support. That's what college is like for most former foster youth, who face

tremendous challenges in post-secondary education. As few as 10% enroll in college (compared to 60% of other youth), and just 1-3% actually finish school. Without adequate education, their chances of finding personally rewarding employment that provides financial stability are very limited.

Beyond Emancipation's new collaboration with Laney College is a unique approach to this issue. Launched this summer in conjunction with Laney's Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) Office and the Career Ladders Project, b2b provides intensive academic and other support services to former foster youth to help them succeed in school, stay enrolled, and access employment opportunities. Stephanie McLemore, B:E's b2b Case Manager Coordinator, is stationed on-site at the Laney campus. The program began in August with a two-week bridge course. b2b's 17 students have focused on core courses for the fall semester, and will begin on- and off-campus internships in the spring.

Nineteen year old Brittney Williams finds b2b invaluable. "My favorite quote is 'don't cry over spilled milk,' meaning you can't change what happened yesterday. b2b gives you another chance. I was not going to ... **continued p. 3**

Beyond Emancipation's mission is to help Alameda County's current and former foster youth make successful transitions to adulthood and living independently.

## Profile of Success: Mariana Gamez

In January 2010, Beyond Emancipation joined First Place for Youth, Youth Uprising and Bay Area Youth Centers in the Steps to Success Collaborative. Administered by the Alameda County Social Services Agency's AC HIRE program and funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009, Steps to Success was an employment program that provided intensive employment support to former foster youth. Youth received job search and training skills, career counseling, individual case management and job placement services.

One of the recipients of this invaluable program is 24 year old Mariana Gamez: emancipated foster youth, single mother and until recently, a night security guard. Mariana was searching for something better for herself and her son; our AC HIRE specialist worked with Mariana to update her resume, and find a safer, more fulfilling job.

Mariana had this to say of B:E's services: "I took advantage of every single thing [B:E] offered me... it was a key for the door to open." And the door swung wide: before long, ... **continued p. 2**





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## Local Congregation Houses Former Foster Youth

Since forging a relationship with Beyond Emancipation in 2008, Oakland’s Regeneration Church has helped B:E in many ways. But this summer, they went the extra mile by providing temporary housing for B:E clients who otherwise would have had nowhere to live while their college dorms were closed.

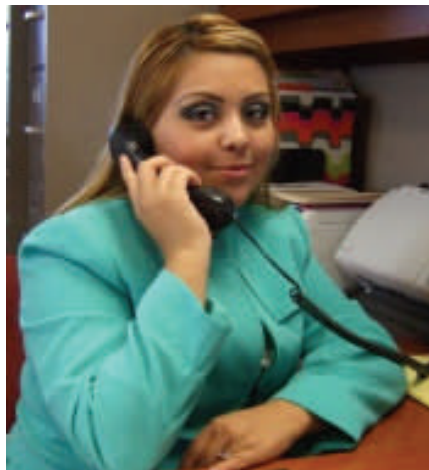
In exchange for a place to stay, the students signed a contract, collaborated with the church on community service projects, and in the process, forged meaningful relationships with several members of the congregation. Reflecting on the support from the church, Pam Mack,

B:E’s Director of Housing said, “We feel like we made a good connection and we can go back next year if we need to.”

Dave Kim of Regeneration agreed, saying, “We really grew to love and build a lasting bond with the girls. Some women from our congregation built a real close relationship with them and continue to be in touch.”

It seems this congregation knows no limit when it comes to outreach and giving, and we are consistently grateful for their generosity. You can learn more about Regen’s community outreach at <http://www.regenerationweb.com>.

## Mariana Gamez: Emancipated Youth, Mentor, Volunteer



**Mariana works for State Farm Insurance.**

With cooperation from her employer, Mariana is studying for the California Insurance License Exam, and has remained with her company despite AC HIRE ending.

Along with working full time, Mariana is studying Criminal Justice at Merritt and Laney Colleges and raising her young son Isaac. She also volunteers as a mentor to high school students in need of academic help. She is dedicated to being a role model for young people, and plans to work with youth within the system to help others like her. Mariana tells the kids she works with, “The choices you make today may or may not affect you in the future, but they are definitely going to affect you today.”

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she was hired as an office assistant with an insurance agent, working 32 hours a week.

For more information about B:E’s Employment Programs, visit <http://www.beyondemancipation.org>

## Beyond Emancipation Welcomes AmeriCorps Members

We are excited to welcome AmeriCorps members Delexes Woods and Vanessa Warri to the B:E team for 2010-2011. Delexes and Vanessa are Peer Advocates, working with staff to assist former foster youth.

Thanks to Casey Family Programs and Bay Area Youth Agency Consortium (BAYAC) for working with us to host AmeriCorps members for the first time, and bring these two talented youth on board.





# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

Beyond Emancipation's work is only possible because of our generous donors. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to us in 2009-10. We are grateful for each of you. Thank you!

(Donations received after September 30, 2010 will be acknowledged in our next newsletter.)

## Foundation, Corporate, Government and Community Support

Alameda County Social Services Agency  
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Suzie Weschler

## b2b Program

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start going to Laney, but then I heard about b2b through Miss Stephanie. I love it."

Stephanie commented, "The kids are just amazing. What impresses me most is [their] resiliency and fortitude." She also offered special kudos to the Laney EOPS staff, who have been "invaluable" to the program.

We hope to be able to offer b2b to many more young men and women like Brittney: we are working to establish this program as a replicable model that can be implemented at other community colleges. In the meantime, b2b

## Connect With B:E Online

Logged on? There are many ways you can connect with us from your computer:

- ⇒ Follow us on Twitter. <http://www.twitter.com/beyondemanciptn>
- ⇒ Visit us on Facebook. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Beyond-Emancipation/135900183091457>
- ⇒ Search and shop on Goodsearch. Visit <http://www.goodsearch.com>. At the prompt: *Who do you Goodsearch for?* enter "Beyond Emancipation." Then enter your terms and hit "search." We get a penny for every search performed. Or shop from hundreds of stores and a portion of every purchase will be donated to B:E.
- ⇒ Use your credit card to make a donation with Visa, Mastercard or Discover at <https://co.clickandpledge.com/sp/d1/default.aspx?wid=18179>

students at Laney need your support. Students need tutors to help them in math and English, and more employers

to host interns for spring semester. If you can help in either of these ways, call Kate Durham at (510) 667-7692.





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## Executive Director's Corner

Change is in the air at Beyond Emancipation. In fact, since I became Executive Director in January, it has seemed that the only constant has been change. The best part is that it's all positive: we are expanding programs, forming new collaborations, adding staff and are engaged in a strategic planning process that will provide us with an organizational road map for the next two years. It's an exciting time to be at B:E.

Our most significant new initiative is a partnership with Laney College. The b2b program provides intensive, on-campus case management for former foster youth in community college. b2b helps students to stay enrolled in school and access career track employment opportunities. Piloted in 2009, b2b launched this fall with a cohort of 17 youth. Learn more in this issue.

In September, Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB12 into law. This bill extends education and employment support for California's foster youth until age 21 if they choose. We don't yet know the full details of how AB12 will be implemented, but we do know that it presents us with opportunities to look at new and creative ways to serve emancipated youth in Alameda County.

Please join us and be a part of this change. The youth we serve can use your support in many ways: financial gifts, tutoring for b2b students, and many other opportunities. I look forward to talking and working with many of you in the months ahead as we move forward in providing needed change in the lives of the youth we serve.

**Rick McCracken**  
Executive Director

