

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Pathways Launches Teen Adoption Program**

***Teen Family Expert Hired to Focus on Permanency for Older Youth***

San Antonio, TX - April 15, 2008 – Pathways Youth and Family Services Inc., a Texas based private social services provider, today announced the establishment of an adoption program focusing on older teenagers in foster care.

Led by Jennifer Talley, LMSW, a well-known teen advocate in Texas, the purpose of Pathways' Teen Adoption Program is to help older children in foster care become permanent members of a family willing to parent them into adulthood. "The success of young adults depends heavily on permanent relationships with committed families. Teenagers need to know that they have support from adults who are dedicated to their future," explains Ms. Talley, who has worked with teens in foster care for the last 15 years.

The issue of children 'aging out' of foster care is gaining more awareness in the public arena, but for those who work in the system it's been the single biggest problem for many years. It is estimated that up to 36% of youth who age out of the system experience homelessness. "This outcome is simply unacceptable." says Dan Johnson, Pathways President. He continues, "We know enough about the problem and have the skills to take action. Pathways will be very aggressive in moving teenagers out of foster care and into permanent families by solving the problem one child at a time. We aren't just hoping for a good result, I am expecting it."

This program will focus on awareness, recruitment and support for families ready to make older children a permanent part of their family. This type of adoption offers an opportunity for adults to make a significant contribution that can often have life changing effects for a teenage child. "It's really about mentoring," says Ms. Talley, "and I tell parents that they don't have to wait years to go camping or pick out a prom dress. Teenagers are ready for those experiences right now."

With the help of a permanent family, many of the youth will finish high school, head off to college or trade school, (which is often paid for by the State) and start a career. Ms. Talley concludes, "The permanent connection to their adoptive family and a real home is what enables their success through that process and beyond. Each teen adoption is a tremendous victory."

Ms. Talley's efforts are already underway and Pathways is expecting to see measurable results from this program by year's end.

### About Pathways

Pathways Youth and Family Services is a private non-profit social service agency founded in 1992. The organization currently serves 600 children in 300 foster families and has facilitated the adoption of over 400 children since 2004. Over 400 more children are served in 150 families through family preservation services. Pathways was named Agency of the Year by the Texas Foster Family Association in 2001 and 2006.

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