

Young mothers @ the margin

Believe
Achieve
Empower



Motherhood is a profoundly transformative experience, one that permanently alters the way in which you see and interact with the world. Exciting, frightening, overwhelming and somewhat mystical, through the ages motherhood has been revered and honored across the globe. That is, as long as you fit society's expectations about being a "good" mother. **If you're a young single mother rather than being valued, you are invisible.**

Even today, young mothers are judged as troubled, irresponsible, lost and even immoral. We know that young parenthood is not the problem—it's a symptom of deep social, economic and political issues that often leave young people feeling isolated and disconnected; powerless and directionless; and often searching for a sense of belonging.

Each year thousands of young women become pregnant or are parenting young children. It's true that some come from stable middle class families, some are celebrities and some do have the support they need to succeed.

But they are the exception not the rule.

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Who?



Young mothers @ the margin are pregnant and parenting young women ages 14-24 who are in foster care, involved with juvenile justice or are homeless. The majority are victims of child abuse or grew up in homes marked by persistent domestic violence. As a result they bear the life long burden of alienation and healing from the trauma. Most have multiple acute issues such as substance abuse, mental health, interpersonal violence, and unhealthy relationships, to name a few. They tend to live in rural or urban poverty; to be young women of color; and many are the children of young mothers.

We'd like to tell you how many young mothers and children are @ the margin, but sadly, no one is counting. Ask anyone associated with child welfare, juvenile justice or the homeless and they'll tell you that they don't know exactly. They think there are quite a few—yet they remain invisible.

Supporting **young mothers @ the margin** is the right thing to do and it's a good value proposition. By providing services and supports that encourage health, stability and economic self-sufficiency we can reduce and eliminate dependence on social welfare systems. In short, it saves taxpayers untold sums of money. This is multiplied ten-fold if we empower **young mothers @ the margin** to break generational legacies of system reliance.

Being a mother can mean giving and receiving unconditional love and intimacy; proving one's maturity and high moral stature by being a good parent; and gaining control over the direction of one's life. It can be a struggle, but placed against the backdrop of their lives, for many **young mothers@the margin**, it's a new beginning, a time to change, to build a better life. While not all of their stories have happy endings, many do.

The National Crittenton Foundation and the Crittenton family of agencies believe enough is enough. **We hope you'll join us in this campaign to stand up for young mothers and their children who live every day @ the margins of the American dream.**

If you'd like updates on how you can get involved, email us at inbox@TheNationalCrittentonFoundation.org