

## Preparing Teens in Foster Care to Enter the "Real World"

An Interview with John Queen for Fostering Families Magazine

Young African Americans in foster care in the US travel on a difficult road. They have most likely already lived at least some of their lives in a chaotic – often violent – environment, or else they would not be in foster care to begin with.

And while foster care is a wonderful program, helping to keep young people safe and supporting them in living a stable, healthy life, it is not the same as living with a birth family that is strong, loving, and developmentally appropriate.

Non-relative foster family placements have a unique purpose in our society. Their job is to be a part of the team that supports youngsters and teens in care, while birth families "get their act together" or otherwise fulfill the requirements set by the court and states' departments of social services to