

MEDIA RELEASE

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YOUTH FOR CHANGE CONFERENCE 2015: A PLATFORM TO CREATE A BETTER CARE SYSTEM

Friday 2nd October, 2015, will see the opening of CREATE Foundation's second international conference, which is an international platform for young people with a care experience to learn and grow, build self-confidence, to have a voice and to connect with their peers and those working within the system.

The Youth for Change: creating a better future conference guest speakers include Professor of Childhood and Youth Research, *Professor Nigel Thomas*; Killam Professor of Social Work, *Dr Michael Ungar*; and writer, producer and host of 'Redesign My Brain' series on brain plasticity, Mr Todd Sampson MBA.

"This year's conference is a unique opportunity to hear insights about the care system from every aspect of the system itself, from young people to carers and workers, or government and guests and work on change to prevent the cycle of diminished life outcomes," said Ms Jacqui Reed, CREATE Foundation Chief Executive.

"We are working with all of the community to increase awareness, to reduce the stigma associated with children and young people with a care experience and to provide them with an avenue to feel empowered, informed, and to have a say and be heard by decision makers and the community at large."

Dylan and Cody are two young men who grew up in their separate foster care placements and today advocate to bring about positive change in the care system. At this year's conference, Cody will take part in the formal presentations and MC one the official events, and Dylan will be sharing his DJ'ing skills at the conference dinner.

When asked about CREATE's inaugural conference (2013) which Dylan attended, he said *"I felt it was such a powerful experience seeing all of these young people together and so did others. We made such strong friendships!"*

"When you are in care you feel like a small group of the population, but at this event you feel connected and no longer alone."

Cody said *"To connect with others to create action for change is what this conference means to me."*

To be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from Friday 2 to Sunday 4th October, 2015, [the conference](#) will be attended by 360 guests including children and young people with a care experience, carers (foster or kinship), child protection sector workers, and government officials. This year's theme of *Youth for Change: Creating a Better Future* flows from the inaugural 2013 conference theme – *From Strength to Strength: improving the care system for children and young people through participation*. To view the program visit www.youthforchange.create.org.au

CREATE Foundation is the peak consumer body representing the voices of children and young people in out-of-home care, providing programs and services to create a better life for children and young people in care.

CREATE Foundation regularly consults with young people and through this consultation in 2009 revealed a truthful yet somewhat bleak portrait of the reduced life outcomes experienced by children and young people growing up in the care system. The [Report Card](#) revealed that if you've been in out of home care, you are more likely to be undereducated, unemployed, to earn less, become a parent at a younger age, be involved in the juvenile justice system, become homeless and be dependent on social assistance. Data source: McDowall, J. J. (2009). *Transitioning from care (CREATE Report Card 2009)*. Sydney: CREATE Foundation. Click [here](#) to visit our website to download the full reports.

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