



THE FUTURE IS IN GOOD HANDS THANKS TO A 12-YEAR-OLD AND HER COMPASSION

July 8, 2020

Our youth continue to inspire us in multiple ways. They bring out the best in us and show us.....the future is in good hands.



With creative minds and a slight pivot, as they adapted to the new restrictions, Empire All Star Cheerleading and Gymnastics Team found a virtual way to support foster parents. Thanks to one compassionate young lady named, Reilly Bard, the team's effort was led by a compassionate heart.

Reilly Bard, a 6th grade student at DePaolo Middle School and former Kid Governor Cabinet member, has a lifelong ambition to be a foster mom! Reilly chose foster care as her communities issue last year when she ran for Connecticut's Kid Governor.

She continues to find creative ways to support those in foster care, starting her own group called *Fostering Friendships*. This group was started in hopes to welcome any new foster child to her school community. Imagine the impact on the children Reilly has reached!

In early March, Reilly invited Jackie Ford to speak at the DePaolo Middle School's annual Career Day about a career in Social Work and share with the students and staff, how to become a foster or adoptive parent.

It was during this presentation, Jackie gave Reilly a bag of foster care awareness sneaker laces and immediately, Reilly's face lit up! Beginning to create an idea in her sweet mind, Reilly looked at her Mom and said, "I can ask my Cheerleading Coach if all the girls can wear these during our cheerleading competition and, the girls call all donate money!" Sadly, the pandemic changed those plans but it didn't stop Reilly from creating a virtual awareness video, supporting Foster Care Awareness Month which was previously provided to DCF staff.

What else has Reilly accomplished? By her diligence and kind hearted ways, she has raised over \$660.00 to support the Department's foster care and adoption programs!

Thank you, Reilly, for your beautiful spirit and for your ability to unite your teammates!

And.....we look forward to you being licensed someday.....

Our future is in good hands! Or, should we say.....great hands!