



Nikki Grimes

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Children's Literature Legacy medal winner

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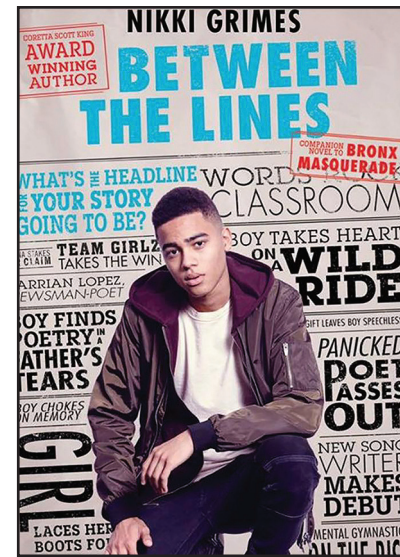
Foster Kids Resource List

I hope you enjoyed *Between the Lines*. As in *Bronx Masquerade*, this novel explores the lives of many different characters. Right now, I want to focus on just one of them: Jenesis Whyte.

I spent several years in the foster care system when I was young, and as a result, I am especially sensitive to the incredible challenges experienced by teens who age out of the foster care system after their eighteenth birthday.



On the streets of New York City, looking as lost as I felt.



"I finished high school in a foster home and the day after graduation, I had to get an apartment and move out."

—Christine Kohler

"I spent my childhood often feeling like an unwelcome guest in someone else's home. Once I aged out of foster care, I knew it was up to me to make the choices that would result in the kind of life I would have. I didn't feel ready, and I often felt alone."

—Nikki Barthelmess

DETAILS

What kind of services are out there? Here's information about two of the organizations dedicated to serving young men and women transitioning out of foster care:

Inspire Life Skills Training, Inc.

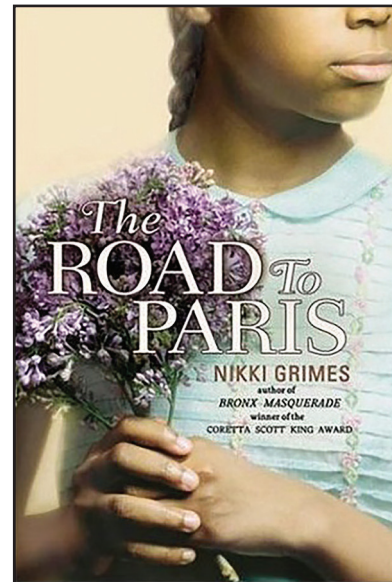
This is one of the organizations that offers critical assistance to former foster youth in need. That's why I mentioned them, briefly, at the end of the novel, as a ray of hope for the Jenesis Whyte character. Jenesis may be a work of fiction, but thankfully, Inspire is not. With six single-family homes scattered throughout Southern California's Inland Empire, Inspire's services include:

- Providing Affordable Housing for low/moderate income
- Full-Time Education/Job Training
- Life Skills Training
- Part-time Employment
- Mentoring
- Access to Profession Counseling & Medical Care

Those who successfully complete the program go on to attend, and graduate from college or vocational school, enter the job market, and establish their own financial independence. All it takes is a deep desire, hard work, and a little help from some friends. Inspire Life Skills Training, Inc., is based in Southern California, but there are other organizations across the nation focused on meeting the needs of former foster youth.

Alternatives for Girls

Alternatives for Girls helps homeless and high-risk girls and young women avoid violence, teen pregnancy, and exploitation, and helps them to explore and access the support, resources, and opportunities necessary to be safe, to grow strong, and to make positive choices in their lives.



This is me, age 16. In just two years, I would be out on my own. Ready or not.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Are you a teen about to age out of the foster care system? When that happens, what will you do? The time to start asking questions is now, before it happens. One way to prepare for the challenges ahead is to learn about what resources are available to you, and to plan how best to use them. Consider reaching out to one of these organizations for help. Offering you help is the reason they exist.

- [Inspire Life Skills Training](#)
- [Aging Out Institute](#)
- [Alternatives for Girls](#)
- [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#)
- [Aspiranet.org](#)
- [Beacon Interfaith](#)
- [Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation](#)
- [Children's Cabinet](#)
- [Community Youth Services](#)
- [Covenant House](#)
- [Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption](#)
- [Foster Care to Success](#)
- [Foster Club](#)
- [Olive Crest](#)
- [Rowell's Foster Children's Positive Plan](#)
- [Teen Project](#)
- [US Dept of Health and Human Services](#)
- [Y2Y Harvard Square](#)

These are just a few of the organizations waiting to give you a hand up.

Asking for help to transition can be difficult, I know. But if you get that help, you'll be doing us all a favor because, frankly, the world needs the gifts you have to offer.

By the way, Nikki Barthelmess is now a successful freelance writer and Christine Kohler is a popular author of books for children and young adults. I'm doing okay, too.

Stay strong.



With my foster brothers, Kendall and Brad.



Years later, Kendall helped me celebrate when I received the Children's Literature Legacy Award in 2017.