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Letter to the Editor of the Richmond Times-Dispatch

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Letter to the Editor of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (2009)

This Letter to the Editor was published on March 30, 2009.

I am once again left without words after reading that a young person, with his entire future ahead of him, says, “A roof, a pillow, hot water,” when asked what he wants out of life. Sadly, this is an all-too-common response from our foster youth.

I appreciate Zachary Reid’s coverage of the Richmond housing summit in the *Times-Dispatch* on March 28 and the summit’s focus on the challenges of current and former foster care youth. I wonder though, how many heart-wrenching stories like this have to be told before we stop treating

foster youth like throw-away children.

By the age of 25, one out of five former foster youth will be homeless. Another quarter will be incarcerated. Less than three percent of those children will graduate college.

A future is a big price to pay for a child whose family is unable to care for him or her.



The stories and statistics have compelled us to act at Virginia’s Community Colleges. With the help of the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education and Anne Holton, Virginia’s First Lady, we are constructing a program called *Great Expectations*. The goals of the program are to work with high school-aged foster youth to keep them in school and then to help them attend and complete a community college program.

I am proud of the good people from within our colleges and the larger community who are working hard to make this effort a success. But we can always use more help. Please take a look at our website at www.GreatExpectations.vccs.edu to learn how you can join us to make a difference for children who are too often forgotten by our community.

Sincerely,

Glenn DuBois, Chancellor
Virginia’s Community Colleges