

# Devereux

COMMUNITY BASED CARE OF OKEECHOBEE & THE TREASURE COAST

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## News & Media

### Graduation rate continues to climb among YA

**Port St. Lucie** – The number of young adults served by the local foster care system who graduate high school or receive their GEDs continued its upward climb during the last academic year.

The 2016-2017 school year saw an increase in the overall number of students graduating high school from five traditional diplomas and five GEDs the previous year to 13 diplomas and four GEDs. That's a 70 percent increase from the year before, which was itself a 43 percent increase from 2014-2015.

"I believe the biggest contributing factor this year was placement stability," said Chris Martinez, supervisor for the Devereux CBC Road to Success program, which prepares teens and young adults for life outside of foster care. "Of the 17 graduates, 11 of them were in Extended Foster Care."

Extended Foster Care is a program enacted into law two years ago that gives young adults the option to stay in foster care beyond their 18th birthday.

"They were able to stay in the high school or GED programs they were enrolled in prior to turning 18," Martinez said.

The six graduates who were not in Extended Foster Care received their diplomas before turning 18 and had a high degree of placement stability already, he said. Other factors contributing to the graduation increase, Martinez said, include the hard work and ongoing support of case management and Road to Success staff.

"They did an excellent job of engaging students and encouraging them to reach their educational goals, as well as working collaboratively with the schools to ensure graduation requirements were being met."

Of the 17 students who graduated high school, 14 are enrolled in college.

Furthermore, two students in the Road to Success program graduated with an associate's degree from Indian River State College this year. They are both currently enrolled in bachelor's programs.

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