

LEADING SPORTSWEAR COMPANY TEAMS UP WITH LOCAL CHARITIES AND FORMER FOSTER YOUTH TO HELP OTHERS

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(PASADENA, CA)--A leading sportswear company, with the help of former foster care youth from Pasadena, is spreading holiday cheer early, bringing a positive impact to the economy and smiles to individuals who are experiencing financial hardships.

A4, the leading manufacturer for high quality, high performance athletic sportswear, recently launched a job training program with Hillsides Youth Moving On, a transitional living and housing program for former foster youth in Pasadena, whose task was to process and pack thousands of new garments to be distributed to local charities.

These local charities were Violence Intervention Program in Los Angeles, Union Station in Pasadena, Hillsides in Pasadena, and Walden House in Los Angeles.

With 500,000 youth in foster care nationwide, 20,000 emancipate or “age out” of foster care each year. Less than half of former foster youth are employed 2 ½ to 4 years after leaving foster care, and only 38% have maintained employment for at least one year.

“The hardest challenge that any young person faces is getting their first job,” said Mark Mertens, CEO of A4. “We have teamed up with Hillsides Youth Moving On to provide on-the-job training at our manufacturing and distribution facility in Vernon. The mornings are devoted to classroom work and the afternoons are spent on the shop floor and in the office getting practical experience.”

Many former foster youth emancipate into adulthood with little to no job skills or work ethic, according to Thomas Lee, Hillsides Youth Moving On program director. The program at A4 is designed to teach job skills and give former foster youth hands-on experience in a work setting.

The Youth Moving On interns spent the summer sorting and packing thousands of garments which were delivered to the charities. As a summer project, Briana Zaragosa, the college-bound daughter of A4’s production manager, researched various charities in Los Angeles. She selected several that had needs that match A4’s products.

“A4 has opened its doors to us and it has provided us with the opportunity to get former foster youth some real-life job experience,” said Lee.

While A4’s goal is to get former foster youth in the Pasadena transitional living program ready to apply for an entry level job in what has become a very competitive market, the company is also doing its part to bring cheer this holiday season.

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ABOUT A4

The 42-year old Los Angeles based company has become a pioneer in the active wear and athletic sportswear industry. They offer football, basketball, soccer, baseball, and softball uniforms for schools, clubs, and universities. Their expertise has resulted in perfecting the company’s manufacturing process to deliver quality goods to the professional athlete, team and

recreational sports enthusiast. The company has built a reputation for their “A4 Express” customer service — fast, quick and affordable. No customer or retailer is too small. Every size, every color is in stock everyday and can be shipped out the same day to customers. For more information on A4, please visit www.a4.com.

About Hillsides: As a Pasadena foster care charity founded in 1913, Hillsides creates safe places for children at risk and their families by providing residential care, mental health services to break the cycle of domestic violence, special education, and advocacy. To learn more about Hillsides, visit www.Hillsides.org.

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