

# Former foster care youths targeted in college campus plan

Copyright 2017 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

By: [Associated Press](#)

*Posted at 12:37 PM, Aug 19, 2019*

*and last updated 12:38 PM, Aug 19, 2019*

BLAIR, Neb. (AP) — A banker who leads a nonprofit wants to transform an old college campus in eastern Nebraska into a place where former foster care youths could live and learn trades.

The former Dana College campus in Blair would become a holistic site where foster youths who have aged out of state systems could live, learn and work.

Many of the buildings would retain their original uses: Dorms would remain dorms or become apartments, the library likely would remain a library and training would take place in former classrooms. The campus church would also reopen.

Ed Shada told the [Omaha World-Herald](#) that he came up with the idea while working on an annual event devoted to getting homeless people connected to the services they need. Shada is president of the nonprofit Angels Share, which is working to rehab the campus buildings. The group will work with other organizations, including Boys Town, to connect the young adults who would live on the campus with any other

services they need. Former foster youths are at a much higher risk of homelessness, studies have shown.

“Let’s bring the kids in,” he said. “Let’s get them what they need. Let’s help them.”

Shada said he’s been working with the Omaha Federation of Labor on the possibility of incorporating the AFL-CIO’s Labor Ready program onto the campus.

Michelle Tauber, Trade Life program manager at Boys Town in Omaha, said the organization has been involved in some of the planning.

“We see this as having benefits and opportunities for our kids that are part of our trades program with affordable living and on-the-job training in those fields,” she said.

Shada, a senior vice president at Great Western Bank in Omaha, is working with the man who owns the campus, Frank Krejci, who has said he’d be willing to donate it to the right cause. The campus has been vacant since the small Lutheran liberal arts college shut its doors in 2010.

Shada has already obtained \$500,000 in grant funding for the \$20 million project and identified \$17 million more that is available in grants. The remaining \$2.5 million would come from donations.

He wants to open it before high school graduation in May.