

Walmart gift will aid young adults

By Angelia Davis

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Pendleton Place for Children and Families has been awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation's State Giving Program.

The grant is for Pendleton Place's Smith Supportive Services program which provides a loving and safe residential home for teenage girls, as well as community case management for young adults who have aged out of the foster care system.

Laurie Rovin, Pendleton Place executive director, said the award from Walmart will "allow us to continue the work that we are doing in keeping children safe and supporting families in crisis in the Greenville community."

Through its Smith Supportive Services program, Pendleton Place provides a 10-bed group home for teen girls in foster care who have suffered trauma. The program serves between 50 and 70 girls each year.

In addition to providing basic needs like food and clothing, the Smith House program provides residents with counseling services, structured educational support, life skills training, financial

literacy classes, civic engagement, recreational outings, therapeutic recreation, and other hands-on opportunities designed to prepare youth for successful, independent living after foster care.

"The Smith Supportive Services program is doing vital work by serving this particularly vulnerable segment of the population in Greenville. With specialized support delivered in a safe residential setting, the program can play a vital role in helping teenage girls heal and navigate the transition from foster care to successful lives," said Brooke Mueller, Walmart's director of public affairs and community relations in South Carolina.

Youth who transition or age out of foster care often have difficulty completing their education, developing job skills, and becoming successfully independent. Last year, Pendleton Place began community-based case management services and after-care support for these youth through its Smith Supportive Services program.

In 2013, community giving in South Carolina from Walmart stores, Sam's Clubs and the Walmart Foundation totaled \$29.2 million.