

Presentation: 'Fierce Against the Odds' with Theresa Collins

Presentation Description, prepared for the Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region Annual Luncheon

Fierce Against the Odds: Her Story, Her Power, Her Future

Theresa Collins knows what it means for a girl to start life with the odds stacked against her. At just 7 years old she entered her first foster home, and she grew up navigating the instability that came with it until she aged out on her own. Today she is an author, a former foster parent and board leader, and the founder of Beacon Organizational Consulting, which since 2014 has helped leaders of programs serving children and families plan strategically and lead with purpose.

In this keynote, Theresa shares the fierce mindset that carried her from a childhood of uncertainty to a life of leadership, and what her journey reveals about the girls in our own community who face steep odds of their own, whether that is poverty, instability at home, trauma, or simply not having someone who believes in them. She will speak to the barriers that so often narrow a girl's options, the moments when one caring adult or one open door changed her path, and why owning your whole story, rather than hiding from it, is where real strength begins.

Guests will leave with:

- A first-hand look at how stigma and limited options shape a girl's future, and how those barriers can be broken
- Practical ways donors, volunteers, and advocates can show up for the girls and women they support
- A renewed belief that investing in women and girls creates ripples that reach families and entire communities

Honest, warm, and fiercely hopeful, this talk is a powerful reminder of why the work of the Women's Fund matters, and of what becomes possible when a girl is given the chance to choose her own future.

Brief Description

Theresa Collins knows what it is like to be a girl with the odds stacked against her. Placed in foster care at 7, she aged out of the system on her own and went on to become an author, business founder, and community leader. In this inspiring luncheon keynote, she shares the fierce mindset that helped her rewrite her story, and shows how each of us can help the girls and women of the Fox Valley break through barriers and step into their full potential.

About the Book

Theresa's memoir, *Foster Kid Fierce: Road Trip to Freedom* (October 2026), tells the full story behind the #FosterKidFierce mindset at the heart of this keynote. She is glad to sign copies before and after the luncheon, and book sales can be coordinated with event organizers.

Duration

20 to 40 minutes, tailored to fit the luncheon program (a full hour is available if desired)

Other Considerations

- Accompanying PowerPoint presentation that requires sound
- Wearable microphone preferred, to allow movement on stage
- A small table for book sales and signing near registration or the exit, if possible

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