



Nov. 19, 2009

General questions: Gene Evans, 503-947-5286

Forever Families

Oregon DHS celebrates National Adoption Month by recognizing partners

Oregon's Department of Human Services celebrated the joys of adoption and encouraged more people to give children permanent families through adoption at an open house at the Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center (ORPARC) on Thursday, November 19, at their new location at 2950 SE Stark Street, Portland.

At the event, DHS presented special awards to members of the Special Needs Adoption Coalition (SNAC) and Coalition of Oregon Adoption Agencies (COAA) for their work in helping to increase the adoption opportunities for children and adoptive families in the state.

An adoption is usually considered "special needs" if the child is over 8 years old, part of a sibling group, has some physical, mental or emotional disabilities, or is part of an ethnic minority. SNAC comprises 15 private adoption agencies that work with DHS to locate potential adoptive families for foster children in state custody. The coalition publishes "Family Matters," Oregon's free bi-monthly special needs adoption newsletter featuring profiles of "waiting children."

The Coalition of Oregon Adoption Agencies (COAA) is made up of over 20 adoption agencies that are licensed in Oregon. COAA member agencies meet monthly to share information on our practices, discuss legislation regarding adoptions, work to accurately portray adoption in the media, and educate communities about adoption. By working cooperatively, each member agency becomes more effective in helping children and families with adoption. COAA values the diversity of its member agencies and the types of adoptions they offer -- domestic, international, in-state.

(more)

Governor Kulongoski has proclaimed November as National Adoption Month in Oregon (see attachment), and the local celebration is part of a nationwide effort to call attention to foster children waiting to be adopted in the United States and to celebrate the families that adopt. In the United States, there are approximately 510,000 foster care children, and 129,000 of them are waiting to be adopted. More than 8,700 children in Oregon currently are in foster care, and the state estimates that about 500 of these children are available for adoption. For more information, visit the new DHS adoption recruitment Web site at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/children/fosteradopt/index.shtml>

Seven important Oregon adoption facts:

1. Last year, more than 1,000 children had adoptions finalized through DHS -- 77 percent were adopted by relatives or non-relative foster parents.
2. Another 1,200 children were adopted in Oregon through private adoption agencies.
3. More than half of the children who were adopted had siblings who were also adopted during the year, most often by the same family.
4. Oregon continues to need adoptive homes for older children, children of color and sibling groups. Finalized adoptions were about evenly split between boys and girls.
5. Children who are adopted come from all areas of the state, and each DHS district has specialized staff members who assist with the adoption process.
6. Adoption is a way to give children the kind of security and love they need, and adoptive parents have permanent, legal parental rights and responsibilities to the children they adopt.
7. You can be single, married, or domestic partners; you can live in a house or apartment, but must have room to house a child. You can work inside or outside the home, and you must be at least 21 years of age or older. You must have sufficient income to support your family, and you must be able to physically care for a child. You must pass a child abuse and criminal background check.

###

STATE OF OREGON
PROCLAMATION
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

- WHEREAS:** Oregon's children are precious and represent our greatest hope for the future, and all children deserve a loving, safe and stable home in which they can grow, learn and enjoy the benefits of a healthy and productive life; and
- WHEREAS:** Adoption is the permanency plan for approximately one thousand children each year in Oregon; and
- WHEREAS:** There are children today who are in foster care waiting to be adopted as part of a loving and caring family; and
- WHEREAS:** Many of these children have special needs because of physical, mental or emotional disabilities, because they must be placed as a sibling group, because they are minorities, or because they are school aged; and
- WHEREAS:** There are loving and caring families who are able and willing to adopt children; and
- WHEREAS:** Individuals and public and private organizations work to increase awareness of the need for adoptive families and the valuable contribution adoptive parents make to children in need.
- NOW,**
THEREFORE: I, Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor of the State of Oregon, hereby proclaim **November 2009** to be

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

In Oregon and encourage all Oregonians to join in this observance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand and cause the Great Seal of the State of Oregon to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Salem in the State of Oregon on this day, November 3, 2009.



Theodore R. Kulongoski
Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Kate Brown
Kate Brown, Secretary of State