



For Immediate Release

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**May, 2007 Foster Care Awareness Campaign
Focuses Community Attention on Foster Care Issues**

Foster Care Heroes, Foster Youth Job Shadow Day Highlight Activities in Los Angeles

(Los Angeles, CA) – Every child deserves a permanent, loving, supportive family. With more than 20,000 youth living in foster care, Los Angeles is home to one of the largest foster care systems in the country. Too many of these children, who have suffered abuse and neglect at a young age, will ‘age out’ of the foster care system without a permanent attachment to a family or a committed, caring adult who will champion them beyond foster care and into adulthood.

During the May, 2007 Los Angeles Foster Care Awareness Campaign, a roundtable of governmental, judicial, and public interest organizations is sponsoring events to raise public awareness of the need for increased attention and support for foster children and to engage the entire community in creating a better future for these vulnerable youth.

“Each year 1,500 foster youth in Los Angeles County will age out of foster care with no family to rely upon and ill-prepared for the challenges of being on their own for the first time,” said Leslie Starr Heimov, Interim Co-Executive Director of the Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles. “The entire community needs to support these youth and help them build a successful future.”

Highlights of the Foster Care Awareness Campaign include recognition of “foster care heroes,” who will be honored by the Board of Supervisors at a reception at the Hall of Administration, room 830 at 9:00 AM on Tuesday, May 15 prior to the regular Board meeting. These heroes exemplify the best of the foster care system. Individuals being recognized provide direct assistance to youth in need, work for systemic reform, and attain and preserve success even in the face of difficult odds.

“Individuals and organizations throughout the county can make an enormous difference in the lives of foster children by becoming foster and adoptive parents, mentoring or tutoring foster youth, training and employing them for future success, or even by helping remember their birthdays,” noted Patricia Ploehn, Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services.”

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