



**Children's Law Center**  
of Los Angeles

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Foster Care Awareness Month 2009**

This May, foster youth and their caregivers, families, advocates and associated organizations will participate in events across the nation in celebration of Foster Care Awareness Month. This annual campaign is designed to increase awareness around issues that impact foster children, and to encourage individuals and communities to do more to support these amazing and deserving youth. This year, Foster Care Awareness Month will focus on issues highlighted by the recently enacted federal bill, the "Fostering Connections to Success Act," including the option of extending jurisdiction for foster youth to age 21 and increased funding support for foster youth placed with relative caregivers.

Sponsoring organizations currently collaborating to coordinate the month-long events include Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, DCFS, The Alliance for Children's Rights, the Harbor UCLA HUB, Children's Action Network, Free Arts for Abused Children, United Friends of the Children, Los Angeles CASA, ACHSA, Public Counsel, the Los Angeles Superior Court, and Los Angeles County.

Foster Care Awareness Month will be officially "kicked-off" on May 12<sup>th</sup> with a celebration in Sacramento on the Capitol lawn. A range of organizations will staff booths with information about services available for foster youth, their caregivers and families as well as opportunities for individuals to offer their time and support to foster youth through volunteering, mentoring, and becoming foster parents. Selected California legislators will address the audience and present awards to recipients who represent both the challenges and the possibilities connected to aging out of foster care and relative kinship.

Here in Los Angeles, each year the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors honors selected foster care "Heroes" in our community. The honorees are nominated by community members for their extraordinary contributions to the foster care system. On May 12<sup>th</sup>, simultaneous with the statewide kickoff, the Los Angeles "Heroes" will be honored at a private reception, and will then go on to receive proclamations at the Board of Supervisors Meeting.

As of the writing of this release, other Foster Care Awareness events scheduled for this year include:

- 1) Luggage Round Up: The collection of new and gently used luggage to be distributed to foster youth (ongoing throughout May). For more information, contact Jennifer Wolbransky at [JTWolbransky@lasuperiorcourt.org](mailto:JTWolbransky@lasuperiorcourt.org).
- 2) Big Sunday: foster youth and other community members gathering to lend a 'green thumb' at Kenneth Hahn State Park as part of the "Big Sunday" weekend of community services events going on across Los Angeles - May 3<sup>rd</sup>. For more information, see [www.bigsunday.org](http://www.bigsunday.org).
- 3) Statewide Kickoff in Sacramento on the lawn of the Capitol; local Foster Care Heroes Reception and Board of Supervisors recognition – May 12<sup>th</sup>.
- 4) Mentoring Dinner Cruise: coordinated by ICARE - May 18<sup>th</sup>. For more information, see [www.teamicare.org](http://www.teamicare.org).
- 5) Career Day: Individuals from various careers talking about what they do and how they got there, many of whom will be former foster youth - May 18th from 10am to 3pm at the Edelman Children's Court. For more information, contact Linda Jones at [jebonyessence@aol.com](mailto:jebonyessence@aol.com).
- 6) Job Shadow Opportunities: foster youth learning first-hand about what it is like to work at places such as the Mayor's office and law offices - May 22<sup>nd</sup>. For more information, contact Adam Dewey at [adewey@achsa.net](mailto:adewey@achsa.net) or Vincent D'Averso at [v.daverso@kids-alliance.org](mailto:v.daverso@kids-alliance.org).
- 7) Foster Care Awareness Event at Harbor UCLA Medical Hub – May 28<sup>th</sup>. For more information, contact Deborah Knox at [dknox@dhs.lacounty.gov](mailto:dknox@dhs.lacounty.gov).

For further information regarding Foster Care Awareness month activities across the country, visit [www.fostercaremonth.org](http://www.fostercaremonth.org).

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