



For Immediate Release

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Awareness Campaign Calls Public Attention to Foster Care Issues

*Foster Care Hero Awards; Conferences on Health Services, Housing, Mentoring;
and Foster Youth Art and Writing Contests Highlight May, 2005 Activities in Los Angeles*

(Los Angeles, CA) – With over 26, 000 youth living in foster care, Los Angeles is home to one of the largest foster care systems in the country and accounts for an astounding nearly one in ten foster children nationwide. Yet these children, who have suffered abuse and neglect at a young age, are too often overlooked in our community.

The **May, 2005 Los Angeles Foster Care Awareness Campaign** brings together leaders from governmental, judicial, and public interest organizations to raise public awareness of the need for increased attention and support for foster children and to engage the entire community in how we can promote a better future for these youth at risk. The theme of the Campaign, “***Make a Difference...One Child at a Time,***” emphasizes that individuals throughout Los Angeles can create change, and positively impact a child’s life, through their actions.

“We are all the communal ‘parents’ for these children, and in this critical role, we need to provide foster youth with the stability, care, education, and nurturing that we would want to see afforded to every child we parent. It is our collective responsibility to help put these youth on the path to stable and productive adult lives,” said Miriam Aroni Krinsky, Executive Director of the Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles, counsel to over 20,000 abused and neglected children in Los Angeles.

Highlights of the 2005 Awareness Campaign include nomination and recognition of “foster care heroes,” who will be honored by the Board of Supervisors at a **press conference at the Hall of Administration, room 864 at 9:00 AM on Tuesday, May 10**. These heroes exemplify the best of the foster care system. Individuals being recognized have provided direct assistance to youth in need, worked for systemic reform, or attained and preserved success even in the face of difficult odds.

“These wonderful examples of achievement from within the foster care system demonstrate that caring individuals can change the lives of youth in need,” noted Dr. David Sanders, Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. “These heroes show the

difference even one individual can make in leaving an indelible positive imprint on the life of a foster child.”

Other key events of this year’s month-long campaign include:

- Recognition of the California Chief Justice and the role of the court in achieving better outcomes for children in foster care;
- An art and essay contest in which foster youth provide a window into their experiences in our child welfare system;
- A Healthcare Summit that will seek to find new solutions to address the health needs and concerns of foster youth;
- A Mentoring Summit that will look for ways to ensure that no child leaves foster care without having made a personal connection with a stable adult to call upon for help;
- A Housing Expo to assist advocates and emancipating youth in finding appropriate housing;
- Outreach to the faith-based community to involve congregations across Los Angeles County in better supporting the foster care system;
- A briefing on foster care issues for Congressional staff members; and
- Distribution of posters and flyers showing how individuals can get involved in a variety of activities to “change the life” of a foster child.

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