



National Foster Care Month 2006 Campaign Core Messages

There are 518,000 Reasons to Get Involved

- All children deserve and benefit from the love of a family. No child should ever leave foster care without a permanent connection to a nurturing adult.
- In the U.S., there are 518,000 children and youth in foster care because their own families are in crisis and unable to provide for their essential needs.
- Foster care promotes the healing process by offering a stable and secure environment until the child can either return home or establish an alternative lifelong relationship with a caring adult (such as through adoption).
- We must address the pressing needs of the foster care population now or face the consequences for generations to come. Nearly 20,000 youth will age out of foster care this year -- many are only 18 years old and still need support and services. These young people are often left vulnerable to a host of adverse situations such as: homelessness, unemployment, compromised mental health, poor educational status, poverty, substance abuse, and incarceration.

You Can Change a Lifetime

- It is our responsibility to ensure the safety, permanency, and well being of America's children.
- Nearly every community across the country is urgently seeking more foster parents to meet the needs of children and youth of all ages. Foster homes allow displaced youth to live together with their siblings, remain in their own neighborhoods, and stay in their same schools.
- Foster parenting is a significant and rewarding opportunity that helps shape brighter futures. There also are a variety of other meaningful ways for individuals, organizations and communities to get involved and make a lasting difference in the lives of young people in foster care.
 - **Change a Lifetime:** *Share Your Heart, Open Your Home and Offer Help* to a youth in foster care.

The Faces of Foster Care

- Nearly half of the U.S. foster care population is over the age of 10.
- Youth in foster care often have special emotional, educational, and health needs related to their experiences of abuse and neglect.
- With guidance and support from a caring adult, children and youth in foster care are resilient and capable of realizing their fullest human potential.
- America's foster care population reflects every background, culture, and age. However, because children of color comprise a disproportionate percentage of youth in care, the child welfare system must respond with more assistance and new resources that better address this disparity
- Everyday, people *in your community* are making a difference in the lives of children *from your community*. Foster parents, relative caregivers, mentors, advocates, social workers and other supporters are the unsung heroes of our society.
 - **There are hundreds of ways you can help.** Visit www.fostercaremonth.org to find out how.

May is National Foster Care Month

- Now is the time for you to come forward for a child in any way you can.
- What you choose to do today will make a lasting difference in the life of a child.
- Help honor and recognize the many caring individuals and organizations that work year-round on behalf of our nation's most vulnerable children.
- Visit www.fostercaremonth.org or call **1-888-200-4005** for more information on how to get involved.

Change a Lifetime



Share Your
Heart



Open Your
Home



Offer Your
Help

www.fostercaremonth.org