

MAY 10, 2011



Presidential Proclamation National Foster Care Month

Progress in America can be measured by the opportunities we pass on to our children. For nearly half a million youth in foster care across our country, the best path to success we can give them is the chance to experience a loving home where they can feel secure and thrive. During National Foster Care Month, we renew our commitment to ensuring a brighter future for foster youth, and we celebrate the selfless individuals who make a meaningful difference in their lives.

Young people in foster care are in the system through no fault of their own, and each of our Nation's children deserves a stable home and a devoted family. Strong support structures provide children with the environment needed to learn, grow, and reach their greatest potential. Permanence is critical to the future success of foster youth and must be a key component of foster care initiatives.

My Administration is committed to achieving security for every child and supporting adolescents in foster care as they transition to adulthood. The Permanency Innovations Initiative, spearheaded by the Department of Health and Human Services, is providing support to public-private partnerships focused on decreasing the number of children in long-term foster care. Over the next 5 years, this program will invest \$100 million in new intervention strategies to help foster youth move into permanent homes, test new approaches to reducing time spent in foster care placements, and remove the most serious barriers to finding lasting, loving environments. Over 110,000 children in foster care today are waiting to be adopted. Across America, there are families who need these children as much as these children need families. I encourage those interested in adopting a child in need of a home to explore the life-changing resources available at www.AdoptUSKids.org.

We are also investing in the health and well-being of our young people in foster care. Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we have significantly increased funding for the Title IV-E adoption and foster care assistance program to provide safe and stable out-of-home care for children. As a result of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act I signed into law last year, all children enrolled in foster care automatically qualify for free meals in all Department of Agriculture child nutrition programs. Additionally, beginning in 2014, the Affordable Care Act will require States to extend Medicaid coverage up to age 26 for all youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

As a Nation, we all have a responsibility to remain persistent in the charge to provide the best care possible for children when they cannot remain in their own homes. During National Foster Care Month, we recognize the efforts of foster families, social workers, faith-based and community organizations, and others that are improving the lives of young people in foster care across our country, and I encourage all Americans to partake in efforts to serve these children in the year ahead.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2011 as National Foster Care Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by taking an active role in activities across our country that recognize not only these cherished children and youth, but also the commitment of so many that touch their lives at a most challenging time.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA



From Her Eyes

a poem from a former iowa foster youth

The beatings were tiring, the silence rare
The fighting painful, but the words...deadly

Like poison that flowed so freely and swiftly off the lips
Like sap that oozes off pine trees and sticks to your fingers
It had its way of sticking too...

Broken, forgotten, tired, lonely
These words describe the physical
But let's not forget the mental...the spiritual

The passion of every individual, every child that thirsts
Whose passion to conquer and survive...to stand and say no more
And lift their voice whether small and soft as a summer wind
Or loud as the ocean floor

Let us remember our youth in the system...our children...our world
Let us unite together and make a stand, allowing our voice to echo with no end
Let us remember those who once were forgotten

Let's make this month foster care awareness month
Changing views...lives...and making dreams come true TOGETHER!

Franceska Bennett, age 18
Foster Care Alumni/Elevate

Foster Care Month Proclamation Signing

On Monday, May 9th, Governor Branstad signed a proclamation honoring May as National Foster Care Month. Pictured (from left to right) are: Julie Allison (DHS), Lynhon Stout (IFAPA), Tracey Parker (DHS), Franceska Bennett (Foster Care Alumni / Elevate), Kelli Malone (Four Oaks/Iowa KidsNet).

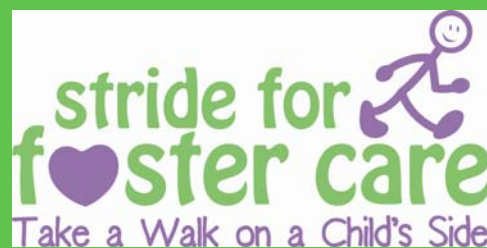
Visit the Iowa KidsNet website to find resources and tools to help raise awareness about the youth in foster care and the need for more foster and adoptive families in Iowa:

www.iowakidsnet.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.show&pageID=46



Notice from DHS

Your DHS workers are asking you to assist in successfully "closing the books" on FY11 budget year by submitting invoices/claims for any respite, day care, clothing allowance or other special issuances you are entitled payment for **no later than July 15, 2011**. DHS wants to avoid payments having to be made out of next year's budget for this year's services if at all possible. If you have questions, talk with your placement workers, IFAPA Peer Liaison or your IKN Support Staff.



THANK YOU!

IFAPA would like to thank all of the sponsors, walkers and those who made a donation on behalf of Iowa's children in foster care.

You helped IFAPA raise over:

\$22,000!!!

The money raised from the Stride for Foster Care Walk will provide funds for children in foster care to get those special "extras" in life which they would otherwise not receive, such as musical instruments, senior pictures, sports participation, summer camp, etc. Funds raised will also help with developing new trainings for Iowa's foster, adoptive and kinship parents.

ASIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

CelebrAsian showcases the cultural traditions and celebrates the rich diversity of the many distinctive Asian communities in Iowa. The event is organized around Asian "villages," representing distinct Asian communities that live in Iowa. The villages this year include:

Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Nepalese, Taidam, Vietnamese, and Thai. Each village showcases the food, culture, history, arts, and crafts indigenous to their culture. Other activities include martial arts performances and competition, cooking demonstrations, live music, traditional and contemporary performances, children's activities and inflatables area. This event will be held in Des Moines on Saturday, May 14 (10am-8pm) at the State Capitol Complex - East Campus. CelebrAsian is open to the public and admission is free. www.celebrAsian.org

