

Communication Services  
5334 South Prince Street  
Littleton, Colorado 80166-0001  
Phone: 303-795-5467  
Fax: 303-734-5470  
[www.co.arapahoe.co.us](http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us)

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Contact:

**HALEY MCKEAN**

*Communication Services Specialist II*

Direct: 303-636-1945

Mobile: 303-726-6608

E-mail: [hmckean@co.arapahoe.co.us](mailto:hmckean@co.arapahoe.co.us)

## **Arapahoe County seeks 'forever families' for 22 waiting children** *National Adoption Month highlights need for homes for foster youth*

**Aurora, Colo.** – Darryl G. is a charmer, a poet and an aspiring chef. He likes to draw anime cartoons and hopes to own a restaurant someday. Darryl was diagnosed with Spina Bfida, a genetic disorder affecting the spinal cord, but he doesn't let it slow him down. The engaging teen draws people to him with a generous, outgoing and upbeat nature. Darryl also is waiting for a family to call his own.

At age 17, Darryl has been in the foster care system for more than half of his short life. He is one of 22 foster youth in Arapahoe County and 350 in Colorado who are awaiting a 'forever family.' Also among them are Josh, 15, an athletic outdoorsman with a good sense of humor; Jessica, 13, a sweet, fun-loving gymnast who loves animals and crafts; and Deron, 13, Dre, 9, and Coy, 7, active and healthy brothers with diverse interests who yearn to stay together. Profiles and videos of the children awaiting adoption in Arapahoe County are available online at [www.collaborativefostercare.com](http://www.collaborativefostercare.com).

"As we mark National Adoption Month in November, we want to raise awareness for the many local children who need a loving, supportive adoptive family," said Arapahoe County Commissioner Nancy Jackson. "Arapahoe County is seeking adoptive parents who can give unconditional love, lifelong commitment and hope to youth who have experienced trauma and loss."

When children come to the attention of Arapahoe County for abuse and neglect, the Division of Children, Youth and Family Services makes every effort to help strengthen their families and resolve concerns for their safety. The vast majority of youth in out-of-home care are reunified with parents or relatives. However, sometimes safety concerns go unresolved and a court determines the child should become legally free. The waiting children reside in foster homes, group homes or residential treatment facilities until they find a permanent family.

Adoptive families are needed who are willing to embrace older children, since the majority of the children awaiting adoption are over ten years old. Families are also needed who can handle challenging parenting situations, since the waiting children may cope with behavioral or emotional needs as a result of the trauma and loss they have experienced.

Arapahoe County encourages interested individuals to also consider its foster care program, since certified foster families will be seriously considered for adoption if a child in their care becomes legally free. Of the 150 children who were adopted last year, 54 were adopted by foster families.

Individuals who do not wish to adopt any of the children currently awaiting adoption, who are not interested in foster care, or who only desire to adopt toddlers or infants may want to consider working with a private adoption agency.

To adopt or foster through the County, you must be at least 21 years of age, lawfully present in the U.S, in good health and have a stable income to support a family. You can be single, married or living with a partner. Applicants must complete training, a background check and a home study before being matched with a child.

For more information on foster care and adoption through Arapahoe County, please visit [www.collaborativefostercare.com](http://www.collaborativefostercare.com), call 303-636-1KID or attend a free information session. The next information session will be held at 6 p.m., Feb. 8, 2012 at Arapahoe County CentrePoint Plaza, 14980 E. Alameda Dr. Aurora.

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**To download photos, please click the link:** <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/Adoption>

**Darryl.jpg:** Darryl G., age 17, is one of 22 foster youth in Arapahoe County who are awaiting a ‘forever family.’