



NEWS RELEASE

For release: May 16, 2011

Media Contact:

HALEY MCKEAN

Arapahoe County Communication Services

Direct: 303-636-1945

Mobile: 303-726-6608

hmckean@co.arapahoe.co.us

May is National Foster Care Month

Foster families provide loving homes to Arapahoe and Jefferson County children

Littleton, Colo. – [National Foster Care Month](#) is a time to honor foster families who open their homes to provide temporary care for children who have been victims of child abuse or neglect. Foster parents embrace children, value their family connections and provide a safe home until they can return home, be adopted or live independently. May also is a time to raise awareness of the need for foster families — particularly those who are willing to open their hearts and homes to older children and sibling groups.

Children are placed in out-of-home care when a court rules that they cannot safely stay at home. During that time, the Arapahoe County Division of Children, Youth and Families works to strengthen the family and resolve any safety concerns with community services and supports. The County seeks kin or appropriate caretakers known to the child before seeking a foster family to care for them.

Arapahoe County works closely with Jefferson County to recruit, train and support foster families in a Collaborative Foster Care Program. By streamlining resources, together these two counties are better equipped to place children in the best possible out-of-home experience. At any given time, there are approximately 1,000 children in out-of-home care in both counties. The children come from diverse backgrounds and the majority are ages 12 to 18. Many are part of sibling groups who desire to stay together. Children in out-of-home care often face emotional, behavioral, medical or developmental challenges that may result from abuse or neglect.

Currently, 205 licensed foster families provide approximately half of the homes needed for children of both counties. That means all remaining youth stay in homes licensed through private child placement agencies, or in group homes or residential treatment facilities. Most return home to their parents or relatives after safety concerns have been resolved, so foster families are needed who are willing to care for a child for a day or a year, and can handle challenging parenting situations.

“We are forever grateful to the foster families who open their homes to care for children unconditionally and for any timeframe. They are helping to prevent future cycles of abuse or neglect and giving children hope,” said Arapahoe County Commissioner Nancy Jackson. “Yet we need many more families who can provide temporary homes for children in need.”

Throughout May, the Collaborative Foster Care Program will be sending thank-you letters and taking steps to recognize its foster families. Governor John Hickenlooper will honor and recognize six outstanding foster parents during a luncheon. All of these efforts will highlight some of the best and most dedicated foster parents and draw attention to the hard work foster parents perform on a daily basis.

If you would like to learn more about foster care or adoption through Arapahoe or Jefferson Counties, please attend a monthly informational session. The next session will be held from 6-7:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 7 at Waterstone Community Church, 5890 S. Alkire St, Littleton.

If you're not ready to foster or adopt, there are many other ways you can make a difference in the life of a child. Community members are needed to volunteer for short-term child care, mentoring, support at events or community outreach. Citizens and businesses can help by donating recreational or childcare equipment, duffel bags, personal care items, stuffed animals, gift certificates or funds to support a camp or educational scholarship. The Collaborative Foster Care Program also welcomes free or reduced-rate services for foster children, such as child care, haircuts or recreational services.

For more information, please visit www.collaborativefostercare.com or call 303-636-1KID.

###