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Embracing a life by fostering a child

Arapahoe County recognizes foster parents for their commitment to children

Aurora, Colo. --- Smiles from ear to ear, laughter and squeals of excitement filled the air during the 2008 Foster Parent Appreciation Event, July 18. It was a scene that confirmed that although many of the children in foster care have experienced tragedy, they still find joy in life.

Arapahoe County, Jefferson County and Maple Star joined forces to celebrate the love and commitment their foster parents give to the community's children in need. Thanks to the generous support of Convention Designs, the event provided a multitude of activities for the children from carnival games and face painting to jewelry making and arts and crafts. Event parents were invited to join the fun with free chair massages and facials.

Foster parents open their homes to strangers, children who have been let down by their biological parents or custodians. They accept the hard road these kids may be traveling and they love them unconditionally. These adults are the heroes who live next door, that you meet at school or in the grocery store. They may not look any different at first but if you peer a little closer you may see that twinkle in their eye that shows they are making a positive impact in a child's life.

"I have so much respect and admiration for foster parents," said Angela Lytle, Children, Youth and Family Services Manager. "Foster care is hard work and the rewards can be incredible."

The caring commitment of foster parents is critical for ending the cycles of neglect, abuse and other family crisis issues that often prevent a child from reaching his or her full potential. Like all young people, youth in foster care deserve and benefit from enduring, positive relationships with caring adults.

Now is the time to get involved. Arapahoe County hosts an information night for anyone interested in joining their foster or adoptive programs. To learn more, call 303-636-1KID.

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To download photos click on the following link: <http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CA/>

Captions: Staff enjoy the fun for all at the 2008 foster parent appreciation event in City Park.

Arne and Bev Holst are recognized for their 25 years of service to Jefferson County's Foster Care program.

PintheTail or Kid & FireTruck: Kids get a chance to be kids at the 2008 Foster Parent Appreciation Event hosted by Arapahoe County, Jefferson County and Maple Star.