

Florida Presents ‘30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!’ in November
By Secretary George Sheldon, Florida Department of Children and Families

In celebration of National Adoption Month, Florida is presenting “30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!” A different “Amazing Child” available for adoption will be featured every day during November on the Explore Adoption Web site: www.adoptflorida.org.

These beautiful children in foster care are in need of forever families and many of them will tell their stories on this site in their own words on videos. Floridians are encouraged to visit the Web site daily and become acquainted with the children and their dreams of belonging to a family.

We hope “30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!” will spread the word about the many children in foster care in need of a permanent family. On any given day in Florida, 850 children in foster care are available for adoption. These are Florida’s children. Their futures depend on actions that all of us can take today. By sharing “30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!” with family, friends and colleagues, we can raise awareness and recruit loving adoptive families willing to open their hearts and homes. Adopting a child from foster care costs little or nothing and includes health benefits and free college tuition for the child, a monthly adoption subsidy for the family and a federal tax credit.

Oscar and Dee Medina of Miami were thinking of adopting one child. Instead, they and their three biological children decided to adopt three siblings last March after meeting two little boys and their sister. “Definitely, it was a family decision to adopt,” said Dee, explaining they wanted to keep the siblings together. When one of the boys asked, “How come you’re my mom?” she told him, “Some babies are born in tummies. You were born in your mommy and daddy’s hearts.”

Florida has made tremendous strides in educating citizens about the joys of creating or expanding their families through adoption. More than 12,000 children were adopted from foster care between January 2007 and June 2010. Florida has become a national model for adoption, receiving a total of \$15.5 million in federal bonuses in 2009 and 2010 for increasing adoptions of children in foster care. The credit belongs to many committed people and partners, including the *Explore Adoption* initiative, Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Department of Children and Families employees, community based care agencies, local adoption providers, Forever Family, Heart Galleries, One Church One Child and many others.

“30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!” highlights the children who typically wait the longest to be adopted – teenagers, sibling groups and children with medical needs. There are so many deserving children in foster care waiting for a permanent family and a place to call home. If you have ever considered adopting a child or believe you have enough love in your heart to share with a youth in need, we encourage you to visit www.adoptflorida.org or call 1-800-96-ADOPT. Let’s make their November a month to remember.

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