



## Media Release

---

Contact:

Scotty Adams, DCFS Communications  
(501) 683-7250

**For Immediate Release**

May 13, 2011

**DHS TAKES A CALL TO ACTION ON THE NEED FOR MORE FOSTER CARE HOMES  
AND HONORS CHILDREN DURING NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH**

**NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark.** – The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) kicked off National Foster Care Month on Friday to raise awareness of the critical need for more foster homes in the state. Last year in Arkansas more than 7,200 children were in foster care. In a given day up to 4,000 children are in DHS’s care, however only 1,300 open foster homes exist.

“Nothing is more precious than a child,” said Cecile Blucker, Director of the DHS Division of Children and Family Services. “But unfortunately in the state of Arkansas we have more kids in the foster care system than we have foster homes open. We want to help create the awareness to the citizens of Arkansas that are willing to open their homes to these wonderful kids on a temporary basis that we need your help to make a difference in these children and families lives.”

Qualified foster homes are needed for children of all ethnicities, sibling groups and children with special needs to include children with emotional, mental or medical conditions are the highest need.

“We realize not everyone can open their house to a child in foster care,” said Amanda Hogan, Resource Worker in Garland County. “However others can get involved by becoming a volunteer or a sponsor of a foster child.”

Volunteers and mentors are always needed for children in foster care. Mentors are needed to assist older youth who are in the most need of attention. More than 50% of the young people in foster care in Arkansas are over the age of 10 years old. Sometimes these young people age out of the foster care system without the appropriate family connections, resources, mentorship, employment, skills, and/or options they need to live independently.

Arkansas’ Transitional Youth Services team is working towards closing this gap by helping these older kids come out of the foster care system with the skills they need to succeed in life.

“The community can play a significant role in assisting youth make successful transitions to adulthood,” said Jonathan Dunkley, Director of Transitional Youth Services. “From being a mentor, or

-more-

advocate, to offering a young adult an internship or job, members of the community can and must be involved if we are going to see these youth succeed!”

We are asking for a “Call to Action in Arkansas” as we are seeking more everyday people to come forward to help these young people realize their full potential no matter what obstacles they have had to overcome in their short lives.

For more information about become a foster parent or sponsor please visit us on the web at [https://dhs.arkansas.gov/dcfs/fcadopting/FCA\\_Inquiry.aspx](https://dhs.arkansas.gov/dcfs/fcadopting/FCA_Inquiry.aspx)