

*** ACTION ALERT FOR CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES, LEGISLATORS, COMMUNITY LEADERS ***

MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

CHAMPS Campaign Applauds Congressional Resolution to Designate National Foster Parent Appreciation Day and Releases Ideas for Celebrating Foster Parents, Families

Nationwide, governors, state and federal legislators, children's advocates and community leaders are celebrating May as National Foster Care Month. The designation occurs every year via a Congressional Resolution. This year [the resolution](#) includes a heightened focus on the role of foster parents by designating May 31 National Foster Parent Appreciation Day.

Children Need Amazing Parents, or CHAMPS, a national policy campaign promoting bright futures for kids in foster care through the highest quality parenting, released more than a [dozen ideas](#) communities can use to celebrate foster families in May, and throughout the year.

Local leaders are able to choose which ideas work best in their communities. The ideas include:

- issuing a proclamation recognizing foster parents for their many contributions (a sample proclamation is [available here](#));
- holding a news conference for the proclamation signing by governors or mayors;
- involving the business community in supporting foster parents and families by donating awards, door prizes, discounts, complimentary services (manicures, gift cards, lawn mowing);
- and more.

“Communities are always willing to celebrate children and families,” said CHAMPS co-chair Jeremy Kohomban. “CHAMPS is offering ideas and urging leaders to lift up the life-saving contributions of foster parents by encouraging local celebrations.” Jennifer Rodriguez, CHAMPS co-chair says, “National Foster Parent Appreciation Day gives us the opportunity to honor the foster families who selflessly strengthen our communities every day by opening their hearts and lives to children in foster care and their families. For children, families, and communities, nothing is more important and transformational.”

A key CHAMPS focus is on improving foster parenting policies and support. This requires a new partnership between foster parents and the public agencies responsible for foster care. Increasingly, agencies and the community are recognizing the critical role foster families play, not just in ensuring the well-being of

children in foster care, but also in teaming with and working to unify and support children's birth families. Acknowledging and appreciating this important role reflects a national shift in approach that local communities may want to emphasize in their National Foster Care Month and National Foster Parent Appreciation Day celebrations this year.

CHAMPS has [data](#) for each state that may be helpful in preparing local proclamations and other celebratory materials.

More about CHAMPS: Its work builds on research and best practice that shows that loving, supportive families – whether birth, kin, foster or adoptive – are critical to the healthy development of all children. CHAMPS elevates and builds on the leadership of a number of state and local child welfare leaders, families, and youth in pioneering system change efforts such as the Quality Parenting Initiative to implement a new approach to foster care that prioritizes new partnerships between foster parents and the public agencies responsible for foster care with the goal of better outcomes for children.

See the CHAMPS website for information on National Foster Parent Appreciation Day:
<http://fosteringchamps.org/campaign/foster-parent-appreciation/>

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