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**Hamilton County Launches New Adoption Recruitment Campaign**

**Cincinnati (June 3, 2010)** Dreams Come True Through Adoption is the theme of a recruitment campaign launched this week by Hamilton County in an effort to find adoptive homes for more than 200 waiting children.

The campaign will feature a television commercial, billboards, brochures and more that introduce older children with dreams of being adopted so they can have their own room, own home and own community. About half are age 13 or older. More than half of those children have been waiting for longer than a year.

“Children who turn 18 and ‘age out’ of the system with no family will have an extremely difficult time making it on their own,” said Moira Weir, director of the county’s Job and Family Services Department. “Even children who have strong family support struggle when they go out on their own at a young age. Just because a child is older does not mean this agency or this community should think they will be ok. They want and need the same things as younger children: a loving, supportive family and a place in life to call their own.”

At any given time, Hamilton County has about 850 foster children in care, with about 200 awaiting adoption. The cards are stacked against those children and others who age out of the nation’s child welfare system. According to a 2004 Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care report:

- 25 percent are incarcerated within first two years
- 20 percent become homeless
- 58 percent complete high school; compared to 87 percent of general population
- 3 percent earn college degrees; compared to 28 percent of general population

Even if a child manages to overcome these great odds, not having a family support structure makes life heartbreakingly difficult, Weir said.

“Let’s say a young man or woman is smart enough and lucky enough to get the financial aid necessary for higher education,” she said. “When holiday and summer breaks roll around, where do they go? They don’t have a family they can turn to.”

Weir pointed out that many adults have the misconception that older children in the child welfare system have behavior problems. The truth is, most are involved in the system because they were abused or neglected and through no fault of their own.

Another myth is that older children do not want to be adopted. While some choose this path, many do so out of fear of rejection, she said. Few adults have shown them the commitment they desire, so, rather than be let down, they choose to go it alone. Still, the overwhelming number want a the love and security of a family.

The advertising campaign, which will run through the rest of the year, points out that children dream of simple things in life: a bedroom of their own, family cookouts, the chance to stay in their hometown. In many cases, adoption makes all of these possible.

The campaign will also consist of community outreach through social groups and places of worship.

Those interested in adoption can visit [www.hckids.org](http://www.hckids.org) or call 513-946-1000 for more information.

### **About Hamilton County's Department of Job and Family Services**

The Department of Job and Family Services administers federal, state and local programs for those in need. The Department helps with local child protection, elderly protection, child care, child support enforcement, workforce development, cash assistance, food assistance and Medicaid disbursement. Servicing Hamilton County since 1947, the Department helps hundreds of thousands each year and is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, an international, independent, not-for-profit child and family service accrediting organization.