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Foster Youth Hit the Streets to Raise Awareness

Cincinnati (May 27, 2010) Hamilton County foster youth will take to the streets of downtown Cincinnati Friday in an effort to raise awareness around foster care and child abuse during National Foster Care Month.

The May 28 event will feature a walk from the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services, 222 E. Central Parkway, to Fountain Square. The walk starts at 11:30 a.m. and the foster youth invite anyone who supports the cause to walk along. The event is supported by the Hamilton County Foster Care Youth Advisory Board and the Higher Education Mentoring Initiative.

“We want to raise awareness so people will understand there are real people behind the words ‘foster care,’ ” said Laquita Howell, 18, a member of the Youth Advisory Board who has been a foster child for the past five years. “Every time a decision is made regarding foster care legislation or how tax dollars are spent in child welfare, we want people to think about the faces of our youth.”

Howell said she expects several dozen youth to participate in the walk. She hopes others who have a stake in the foster care system or simply have caring hearts will join in.

The county has about 850 children in foster care each day. Foster care is necessary when children are abused, neglected or abandoned and a child protection agency must take temporary custody to keep them safe. Hamilton County receives more than 5,000 verifiable reports of abuse and neglect every year. These cases involve sexual abuse, bruises, burns, fractures, children not being fed, parents refusing to give their children medical attention, hazardous living conditions and more.

Those interested in foster care or adoption can call 946-1000 or visit www.hckids.org 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 stamp disbursement 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.