



Media Contact:

Brian Gregg
Chief Communications Officer
E-mail: greggb@jfs.hamilton-co.org
Phone: 513-946-1728
Fax: 513-946-2248

Family Adopts Five, Two More Adoptions in Mass Ceremony to Celebrate Adoption Month

Cincinnati (Nov. 17, 2009) Seven children – including five from one family – will join permanent, loving families Friday in a mass adoption ceremony scheduled to celebrate National Adoption Month.

The full ceremony will be live-streamed over the Internet for all of Hamilton County to see. Visit www.hcjfs.org for details.

The county's Job and Family Services Department is teaming with the county's Probate Court to organize the mass ceremony. The children, all victims of abuse and neglect, will join new families in a touching ceremony and celebrate afterwards with their caseworkers, court-appointed advocates, extended families, and other people special to their lives. While adoption finalizations are normally confidential, the three families have agreed to publicize the Nov. 19 ceremony.

"This is an incredibly exciting time and we are very happy these families have chosen to share this experience with our community," said Moira Weir, director of the Job and Family Services department. "Often, this is the culmination of a tremendous amount of work to find the right family for a child who has experienced a tough life. Seeing that work result in an emotional, touching ceremony is an uplifting moment for our staff and for the people of this community."

Hamilton County investigates more than 6,000 reports of child abuse and neglect a year. When intensive services fail and a child can no longer remain safe in a parent's care, the county will seek custody of the child and attempt to find a safe and loving adoptive home. That sometimes takes months or years.

The agency currently has more than 200 children available for adoption. The Nov. 19 ceremony stands as a symbol for all of the adoptions the agency does – more than 75 so far in 2010. It also includes one of the larger adoptions to take place in agency history.

Five children, ranging in age from 3 to 12, will be adopted by the foster family that has cared for them since 2008. The loving family has provided a structured, nurturing environment for the five, but was unsure they were capable of making a lifetime commitment to so many. However, as they grew attached to the children and saw the bonding that was taking place between themselves and the kids, the foster parents consulted their older biological children about the decision. The biological children agreed to help, and, together, they will care for the children, whom they have grown to love.

The five siblings have two older siblings who were placed with another foster family and now have been adopted by that family. The two adoptive families plan to keep the children involved in each other's lives so the biological bonds are not broken.

Two other foster families will adopt Friday:

- A family that took in a girl shortly after her birth in March 2009. This family maintained a good relationship with the biological mother, making sure she stayed involved in her daughter's life. Eventually the biological mother surrendered her birth rights, expressing a desire that her daughter be adopted by the foster family. She joins three older brothers – ages 16, 14 and 10 – who plan to look out for her. She's the daughter her new parents have longed for, and she lights up whenever they enter the room.
- A family that has cared for a now 11-year-old boy for the past year. Throughout that time, they've developed an incredible bond and neither the parents nor the boy can imagine life without each other.

The children available for adoption come from a variety of backgrounds, neighborhoods, economic circumstances and living situations. They may have varying levels of medical, emotional or behavioral problems. They all bring their own personalities, strengths, interests and gifts.

But they all have one thing in common: the desire for a loving family and sense of permanency.

Any Ohio resident over 18 years old is eligible. Adoptive parents must:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Pass a physical to show they are in good physical health and capable of caring for children
- Pass a local, state and federal (if not a resident of Ohio for the past five years) background check
- Pass a home study process (includes fire inspection as well as other rules and regulations)
- Pass more than 30 hours of specialized training

Those interested in adopting or becoming foster parents can learn more at www.hckids.org or by calling (513) 632-6366 or e-mailing adoption@jfs.hamilton-co.org.

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.