

Lakeview Center



BAPTIST HEALTH CARE

ATTENTION: MEDIA ADVISORY

'Forever Starts Today' Event Celebrates Adoption

Pensacola, Fla. (November 13, 2017) – In Florida, approximately 800 children are waiting in foster care for loving adoptive families to call their own. On November 17, the “Forever Starts Today” event will be held in honor of National Adoption Day, which occurs November 18, to celebrate the adoption finalizations of numerous local children and raise awareness of the need for more adoptive families for those still waiting.

FamiliesFirst Network (FFN), along with its partners, the Florida Coalition for Children, the First Judicial Circuit of Florida and the State of Florida Department of Children and Families will celebrate National Adoption Month and Florida Adoption Month, as proclaimed by Governor Rick Scott, with a reception to honor the adoptive families, the child protection workers who helped bring these cases to permanency, local leaders and special guest Kurt Kelly, CEO of the Florida Coalition for Children. In the past year, 251 adoptions from foster care were made in Circuit One. FFN, which serves Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties has created approximately 3,000 forever families over the past 16 years.

On November 17, a reception will be held at the Theodore F. Bruno Juvenile Justice Center starting at 12:30 p.m. where Kelly and other featured guests will speak with families who are participating in a finalization and recognition ceremony. The Honorable Michael G. Allen, and The Honorable Coleman L. Robinson both of the First Judicial Circuit Court of Florida, will finalize adoptions at 1:30 pm.

“Adoption finalization days like this one are a poignant reminder that every child deserves the safety and stability of a forever family,” said Shawn Salamida, President of FamiliesFirst Network. “As an adoptive father, I know how transformative this can be in the life of a child who has experienced abuse or neglect, and this inspires me and all of us at FFN to work tirelessly toward this goal for the 99 children who still need a forever family.”

FFN has a goal of finalizing 300 adoptions from foster care in FY17-18, many who are already placed with a family who wishes to adopt. Currently 99 children in Circuit One are available for adoption but do not yet have a family identified. To learn more about children who are still awaiting their forever home, contact Shannon Springs at 850.426.3847.

CONTACT BELOW IS FOR MEDIA USE ONLY

For more information about this press release or to schedule an interview, please contact Tish Pennewill at 850.469.3621 or TPennewill@bhcpns.org, or Lori Zavada at 850.469.3508 or Lori.Zavada@bhcpns.org.

About FamiliesFirst Network of Lakeview Center, Inc.

Under a contract with the state of Florida, FamiliesFirst Network is responsible for the safety, stability and well-being of abused and neglected children in northern Florida's four westernmost counties: Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton. Our Mission is to help people throughout life's journey. Our services include protective supervision, foster parent recruitment, adoptive parent recruitment, and specialized help for teens and young adults preparing to leave the foster care system. A program of Lakeview Center, FamiliesFirst Network served more than 11,289 children in 2015 alone. To learn more, go to FamiliesFirstNetwork.org.

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