

For Immediate Release  
May 5, 2020

Contact: Deborah Lopez  
Illinois DCFS  
312-937-0050

## Illinois DCFS thanks foster parents during Foster Parent Appreciation Month

CHICAGO – May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month in Illinois, a time to thank the thousands of foster families across the state that have opened their homes to provide a temporary safe haven to abused and neglected children who have been placed in the care of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services by local courts.

Each year, an average of 4,000 children from across the state, of all ages, backgrounds and abilities, are taken into temporary state care when their home life is unsafe. DCFS works with the family to make the positive changes necessary to reunite with their children while foster families step up and provide homes where the children are protected, nurtured and loved.

“I have deep admiration for foster parents who make the selfless decision to care for children whose lives have been turned upside-down through no fault of their own,” said Illinois DCFS Acting Director Marc D. Smith. “The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has everyone operating in uncharted waters; and I thank our foster parents for their unwavering commitment to the children in their care during this chaotic time. They truly embody the department’s core mission of keeping children safe.”

Making the decision to become a foster parent is a serious commitment to a child. Illinois DCFS and a network of private agency partners offers a range of supports to foster families, including a monthly stipend for the child’s basic needs, including food, clothing and housing costs; a medical card; therapeutic, educational, recreational and crisis support services; and access to caseworkers, training programs and support groups to meet the child’s and family’s needs.

There are currently over 17,000 youth in care waiting for their forever homes. To learn more about some of them, visit the Heart Gallery of Illinois at <https://greenlightfamilyservices.org/heartgalleryofil/>.

For more information or to become a licensed foster parent, call 1-800-572-2390 or fill out the online interest form on the DCFS website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs>. Click on Loving Homes then on Become a Foster or Adoptive Parent.

*About the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Founded in 1964, DCFS is responsible for protecting children from abuse or neglect by responding to calls received on the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). With the goal of keeping children safe, DCFS strengthens and supports families with a wide range of services. When keeping a child safe means removing them from the home, DCFS makes every effort to reunite them with their family. When the best interest of the child makes this impossible, DCFS is committed to pursuing adoption by loving families to provide children with a safe and permanent home. DCFS is also responsible for licensing and monitoring of all Illinois child welfare agencies.*

###