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Illinois DCFS kicks off Adoption Awareness Month in Illinois by asking “What’s your connection?”

CHICAGO – November is Adoption Awareness Month in Illinois, and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council are launching the *“What’s your connection”* statewide campaign to promote adoption awareness and celebrate the connection every Illinoisan has to adoption.

As part of the “What’s your connection?” campaign, 10,000 rubber bracelets are being distributed to individuals touched by adoption across the state; and 10,000 paper chain links including a template for making additional links is available to schools, adoption agencies, faith-based organizations and anyone who is interested to create a paper chain to display throughout November and beyond.

“Seeing the bracelet on someone’s wrist and asking the simple question ‘what’s your connection?’ starts the conversation about how common adoption is and leads to a deeper understanding of that person’s journey,” said Illinois DCFS Acting Director Marc D. Smith. “Over the last decade, more than 16,000 children were provided a permanent home thanks to the families across our state that chose to adopt through DCFS. The children in Illinois waiting for adoption are of all ages and backgrounds. Let us recommit to the goal of finding a safe permanent and loving home for every child in need.”

“Adopted families come in all different forms – and however they come together, whether it is through foster care or private, international or relative adoption, their commitment to each other is what matters,” said Illinois Adoption Advisory Council Co-Chair Elizabeth Richmond. “It’s important to celebrate adoptions every month, but during the month of November we hope everyone in Illinois will make a special effort to find their connections to adoption and celebrate

them. Every child deserves to have a loving, caring, connected family. Please join us in finding your connection to adoption!”

Last fiscal year 1,838 Illinois children were adopted into permanent, loving families. Today there are 1,772 Illinois youth in care who are legally available for adoption and waiting to find a family and place to call home. Information about some of these children is found in the online Heart Gallery of Illinois. To see their photos and read their biographies, visit www.clsw.org/heartgalleryofil. For more information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, call 1-800-572-2390.

To download the paper chain template, click [here](#). Take pictures of your paper chain link and share them on social media with these hashtags: #findyourconnection and #adoptionmonth.

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.

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