



News from the Illinois General Assembly

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2nd Annual Foster Care Month Celebration Showcases Inspiring Approach to Increase Adoption Awareness

SPRINGFIELD – Today, State Representative Nick Sauer (R-Lake Barrington), Let it Be Us, and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) welcomed foster parents, family members, volunteers and other advocates to the Capitol for the 2nd annual celebration of Illinois Foster Care Month. The event showcased the Let it Be Us Heart Gallery, a unique resource which is helping caseworkers and adoption recruiters find forever families for Illinois' youth in care.

“This week, we will adopt House Resolution 972 to again recognize May as Foster Care Month in Illinois,” said Sauer. “When President Reagan issued the first Presidential Proclamation establishing National Foster Care Month in 1988, it read, ‘National Foster Care Month presents an appropriate opportunity for all of us... to reflect on the pressures facing families today and on the need for increased efforts to ensure that abandoned or abused children have the opportunity to live in healthy, loving homes.’ That message from President Reagan is as important today, as it was in 1988. The Heart Gallery is a unique resource dedicated to this mission and I am glad to support its work to inspire more people to consider adoption.”

The Heart Gallery is a unique approach to finding loving adoptive families created in partnership by DCFS and Let it Be Us, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) dedicated to the adoption and education of Illinois' youth in care. This beautiful resource is an ongoing endeavor created by professional photographers who volunteer their work to assist case workers and adoption recruiters with finding forever families for our youth in care.

"One of the crises in Illinois right now is the number of youth in care awaiting permanent homes," said Susan McConnell, Founder and Executive Director of Let it Be Us. “This is not a Republican or Democrat issue; it's a human rights issue. Every child has the right to the lifelong support of a family – the kind of support that allows our children to earn high school degrees, go to college, stay out of prison, and not get pregnant early. Adoption rescues those children who are destined to grow up in foster care, breaks the cycle of poverty and benefits generations to come. Thank you to Representative Sauer and DCFS for helping us raise awareness around this important mission.”

"Let it Be US has become a valuable source in filling in the gaps of foster care needs and have partnered with DCFS on many occasions," said George Vennikandam, DCFS Senior Deputy Director of Operations. "I hope everyone takes the time to look at the Heart Gallery to continue having conversations and generate awareness on finding forever homes for children in the Illinois foster care system."

For more information about Let it Be Us and the Heart Gallery, visit letitbeus.org.

Last year, House Resolution 250, the 2017 resolution Sauer filed to recognize Foster Care Month in Illinois, was unanimously adopted by the Illinois House of Representatives with every member of the House being added as a co-sponsor. Sauer said he looks forward to seeing House Resolution 972 receive the same unanimous level of support when called for passage this week.

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