



Office of the Child Advocate

3312 Northside Drive, Suite D-250
Macon, GA 31210

478-757-2661 or 1-800-254-2064
www.gachildadvocate.org



November is National Adoption Month

By Tom C. Rawlings

State Child Advocate for the Protection of Children

Happy Adoption Month! By proclamation of President Bush, November is the month in which “we recognize the adoptive and foster families who have shared their homes and hearts with children in need, and we encourage more Americans to consider adopting young people of all ages.”

Research – and, I might add, common experience – show that children thrive best in a nurturing, caring family to which they belong. When a family adopts a child, they make that child their own; they offer a permanent and irrevocable commitment to that child; and they give that child the assurance that, no matter what happens, he or she will have a home. The family bond created by adoption is so significant that even in the Bible’s New Testament, the apostle Paul uses the term as a perfect analogy for the bond between God and us, his “adopted” children. “When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God,” Paul writes in the book of Romans.

Now, think about a child who has no parents or whose parents and family are unable to care for him or her. And think about what it means for that child’s spirit to be taken into a loving family. Consider the selflessness of those families who make that commitment to a child. It is that act of devotion, that joy of finding a “forever family” that we celebrate this month.

Across the country throughout November, there will be events celebrating adoption. Here in Georgia, those events range from adoption fairs and celebratory luncheons to special events designed to show appreciation for adoptive and foster families. A list of some of those events has been compiled by the Department of Human Resources and is posted on the Office of the Child Advocate’s website at www.gachildadvocate.org.

One of those celebratory events deserves special attention. Saturday, November 17 is officially “National Adoption Day,” and courts across the country will finalize thousands of adoptions for children in foster care. For the sixth year in a row, the Fulton County Juvenile Court will join in the celebration by finalizing the adoptions of thirty foster children and hosting entertainment and a luncheon for adoptive children and families.

Take the time this month to participate in some of these events and show your support to adoptive families. If your local court or community is not hosting an event or celebrating National Adoption Day, talk to the judges, attorneys, and child advocates in your community about what you can do to encourage and celebrate adoption. If you are able, consider adopting. Right now, there are over 1,500 children in Georgia’s foster care system who need a permanent adoptive home. Some of these children are older, some have special needs, but all deserve to have someone they can call “Mama” or “Daddy.”

To learn more about National Adoption Month and to learn what you can do to support adoptive and foster families in your community, visit some of the following websites:

- The National Adoption Day website: www.nationaladoptionday.org
- The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption: www.davethomasfoundationforadoption.org
- My Turn Now (highlights children with special needs who are available for adoption): www.myturnnow.com
- The Adoption Unit of the State Division of Family and Children Services: www.adoptions.dhr.state.ga.us

The Office of the Child Advocate wishes you a Happy Adoption Month! As you give thanks this month for all the blessings of life, remember to give thanks for the many caring parents – biological, foster, and adoptive -- who give their lives and their love to the children in their care. And if you have questions about adoption or the needs of our state’s at-risk and foster children, please contact us and allow us to help you and your community.

Tom Rawlings, Georgia’s Child Advocate for the Protection of Children, was appointed by Governor Sonny Perdue to assure quality and efficiency in Georgia’s child protective systems. The Office of Child Advocate is a resource for those interested in the welfare of our state’s neglected and abused children. Tom can be reached at tom@gachildadvocate.org