



NATIONAL HEART GALLERY EXHIBIT KICKS OFF NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH WITH 10TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION AND RECEPTION

***RENOWNED PHOTOGRAPHERS CREATE PORTRAITS OF CHILDREN AVAILABLE
FOR ADOPTION;
EXHIBITS HELP FOSTER CHILDREN FIND LOVING, FOREVER FAMILIES***

WASHINGTON – The National Heart Gallery Exhibit will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Heart Gallery project aimed at helping foster children find permanent, loving homes with a new national exhibit and Capitol Hill reception November 1 kicking off National Adoption Month.

The National Heart Gallery Exhibit, a campaign comprised of 50 chapters nationwide, works with professional photographers to develop photo exhibits promoting the need for permanent adoptive homes for foster children across America. The new national exhibit, made possible in part by **Casey Family Programs** and the **Freddie Mac Foundation**, features photographs of children contributed by Heart Gallery chapters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Heart Gallery representatives from multiple state chapters, including Arizona, Florida, New York and Pennsylvania will join leaders of the bipartisan congressional caucuses on foster youth to unveil the traveling exhibit. The exhibit can also be viewed online at nationalheartgalleryexhibit.org.

WHAT: The National Heart Gallery Exhibit Opening & Reception
Kicking off 2011 National Adoption Month
50 Portraits by Renowned Photographers of Children Available for Adoption

WHO: **Sen. Mary Landrieu**, Co-Chair, Senate Caucus on Foster Youth
Sen. Chuck Grassley, Co-Chair, Senate Caucus on Foster Youth
Rep. Karen Bass, Co-Chair, House Caucus on Foster Youth Care
Rep. Tom Marino, Co-Chair, House Caucus on Foster Youth Care
George Sheldon, Acting Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Christine Calpin, Managing Director of Public Policy, Casey Family Programs
Renette Oklewicz, Director of Foundation Programs, Freddie Mac Foundation
Chauncey Strong, Foster Care Alumni of America Board of Directors
Kathleen Conti, Founder, Arizona Heart Gallery
Barbara Harrison, Emcee

WHERE: Hart Senate Office Building, Room 902, Washington, DC

WHEN: Tuesday, November 1, 2011
5-8 p.m.

Exhibit travels to:

Tyson's Corner Center, Fairfax, VA, November 2-6;
Capitol Hill, Senate Russell Rotunda, November 7-11;
New York City Penn Station, November 14-18;
Heart Galleries in all 50 states to have exhibits in November.

WHY: About 408,000 children live in foster care in the United States. More than 100,000 are legally freed for adoption, and in need of adoptive families. Many of these children are considered "hard to place" because they are older, in sibling groups that want to be adopted together, or have special needs. Each year, over 20,000 youth "age out" of foster care without ever finding permanent homes.

The Heart Gallery project is dedicated to raising awareness about children living in foster care by connecting the artistic talents of renowned photographers in all 50 states with children in who are in need of permanent adoptive families.

ABOUT THE HEART GALLERY

The Heart Gallery is a traveling photographic and audio exhibit created to find forever families for children in foster care. The National Heart Gallery Exhibit is a collaborative project of more than 120 Heart Galleries across the United States designed to increase the number of adoptive families for children needing homes. Now celebrating the 10th Anniversary since the first Heart Gallery was founded in New Mexico in 2001, Heart Gallery exhibits have resulted in 5,000 children around the country finding adoptive families. To view the children: nationalheartgalleryexhibit.org

ABOUT CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS

Casey Family Programs is the nation's largest operating foundation focused entirely on foster care and improving the child welfare system. Founded in 1966, Casey Family Programs works to provide and improve – and ultimately prevent the need for – foster care in the United States. As champions for change, Casey Family Programs is committed to its 2020 Strategy for America's Children – a goal to safely reduce the number of children in foster care and improve the lives of those who remain in care.

ABOUT FREDDIE MAC FOUNDATION

The Freddie Mac Foundation, created in 1991, is at the heart of Freddie Mac's philanthropy. The Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation that is sustained through its own charitable endowment. Its mission is to make home a place where children and their families thrive. Since its creation, the Foundation has improved the lives of tens of thousands of children and their families.

ABOUT NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

November is National Adoption Month, a month set aside each year to raise awareness about the adoption of children and youth from foster care. This year's National Adoption Month initiative targets adoption professionals by focusing on ways to recruit and retain parents for the 107,000 children and youth in foster care waiting for adoptive families. The first major effort to promote awareness of the need for adoptive families for children in foster care occurred in Massachusetts in 1976, when Governor Michael Dukakis announced an Adoption Week. The idea grew in popularity and spread nationwide. In 1984, President Reagan proclaimed the first National Adoption Week, and in 1995, under President Clinton, the week was expanded to the entire month of November.

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