



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

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November 1, 2009 donna.tommelleo@ct.gov

Governor Rell: November Time to Celebrate Joys of Adoption for Parents and Children

*Public Awareness Efforts Feature Partnerships
With Radio Stations, Churches and Probate Courts*

Governor M. Jodi Rell today announced that November is National Adoption Month, calling it an important time to celebrate the joys of adoption – both for the adopted children and for the adults who adopt.

“Over and over again, parents who adopt say that adopting their child is the most wonderful thing they have ever done,” Governor Rell said. “Many Connecticut families experience this joy in their lives. Anyone who is considering adding to their family should think about adopting a child from foster care.

“I am proud to say that our state has made great strides in encouraging adoption – advances that have been recognized by the federal government,” the Governor said. “Every child deserves a loving and nurturing home. Adoption is a wonderful way to share something that offers tremendous rewards for everyone involved.”

Governor Rell has long made adoption one of her top priorities and has led efforts to improve the state's support for adoptions. In 2005, Governor Rell established a program to help finance college education for children adopted from foster care and another to offer families counseling assistance when needed. These and other efforts have had an impact, and last month the federal government announced a \$511,354 grant to Connecticut for improving the number of foster care adoptions.

During State Fiscal Years 1997 to 2005, an average of 615 permanent homes (through adoptions and subsidized guardianships) were found annually for children in foster care. In every year since, more than 800 permanent homes were found. In 2009, there were 863 homes found, including 643 adoptions and 220 subsidized guardianships. In addition, the timeliness of adoptions also has improved dramatically.

Since the first quarter of 2004, the percentage of children adopted within two years has more than tripled.

“Improvements have clearly been made – not just in the number of adoptions but also in the timeliness of adoptions and the support for families who adopt,” Department of Children and Families Commissioner Susan I. Hamilton said. “If someone is weighing an international adoption, they should consider the advantages of adopting a child from foster care.”

There are no legal fees involved in foster adoptions and most families who adopt a child from foster care receive a subsidy to pay for costs of raising the child and medical insurance as well as receive significant financial support for secondary education.

National Adoption Month is one important part of Connecticut's effort to create public awareness about foster adoption. A number of initiatives are underway, including:

- Bells of Hope: On November 1 at 6 p.m., at least 30 churches from across Connecticut will ring their bells to bring attention to the children still waiting to be adopted;
- Heart Gallery: On November 4 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Housatonic Museum of Art at the Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, the Department will host an opening reception of the Heart Gallery featuring photos of Connecticut children waiting to be adopted;
- Radio coverage: At least 18 radio stations and networks across Connecticut will be airing interviews with adoptive parents and Department staff to educate the public about the joys and benefits of adoption; and
- Adoption Day: On November 20, Probate Courts in several parts of the state will be partnering with the Department to finalize adoptions in open court so that the news media can tell the stories about children becoming legally permanent members of their new families.

Anyone interested in learning more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent should call 1-888-KID-HERO.