



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 18, 2008

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## **COMPLETE YOUR FAMILY PUZZLE**

*Many Children Wait for Adoptive or Foster Homes*

There are nearly 5,800 children in out-of-home care in San Diego County. Although many are fortunate enough to be placed with relatives and family friends, there is always a need for more foster families and families willing to adopt children.

“We have many families in our community that are willing to step up and help parent these children,” said Greg Cox, Chairman, San Diego County Board of Supervisors. “But we still need families to open up their hearts and homes to these children, especially now as the holidays approach.”

There are 1,500 licensed foster care families in the County and 80 to 100 foster children waiting to be adopted from foster care into a “forever family.”

“As a County and as the Health and Human Services Agency, we are committed to helping these children find a loving, stable and supportive family environment for them to grow and thrive,” said County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Director Nick Macchione.

“We have a need right now for foster parents to care for children ages 0 to 5, sibling groups, teenagers and medically-fragile children,” he said.

The County offers many support services for foster families and adoptive parents. For adoptive parents, County Adoptions offers assistance with the application process, counseling, post-adoption services including support groups for both the children and parents and an Adoptions Assistance Program that provides financial assistance and educational classes on parenting, child development and other adoption topics.

For foster families, there are five foster parent associations that offer unconditional support and encouragement. There are also over 1,000 classes for parents and a toll-free number for prospective and existing foster parents to ask questions (1-877-792-KIDS). Foster families can also take part in several special events throughout the year including picnics, banquets, and fun nights with several community partners such as the San Diego Zoo, Sea World, the Chargers and the Padres.

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The County also unveiled a new program called “Kinnections,” designed to help maintain family connections for siblings placed apart in foster care. The program is anchored by Camp Connect West, a successful foster sibling camp HHSA launched earlier this year. The County will make the camp an annual event and the program will also include additional activities for foster siblings including a trip to SeaWorld, a night at Boomers and an outing to an area water park.

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, you can call 1-877-792-5437. For information on adopting, you may call 1-877-423-6788 or visit [www.iadoptu.org](http://www.iadoptu.org).

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