

11 April 2005

Dear Friends,

Welcome to spring 2005! Adopt 2000 has a new name – Adoption – and we are looking forward to a year in which we stretch our arms wider to let others know about waiting children and the need for adoptive families.

2004 was a banner year for Adoption! We saw 676 waiting children become members of permanent adoptive families! That far surpasses our past four-year average of 500 placements per year!

Adoption has always been fortunate to have community partners that have given so much of themselves and their resources to ensure that the goals of the collaborative are met. VOLLMER Public Relations not only created the Adopt 2000 messages, but they also made certain that the messages were heard and that our community knew that children needed families to call their own. We are so grateful to Helen Vollmer and all of her staff who worked with Adoption for these past years. Thank you again for giving Adoption five years of leadership, guidance, creativity, and unfailing support – your commitment will be felt for many years!

We are so proud of the partnership that we have with each of our community partners! They include the Greater Houston Community Foundation, Houston's WB, that, through a public service campaign, has spotlighted over 500 waiting children; Easterly & Company, that created Adoption's brand and all materials and maintains our website; BrivicBriggs Media, that maximizes community media opportunities, A Brink & Co., our new Public Relations company, and Crisis Intervention of Houston, the point of entry for families interested in adoption. Since January 2000, the commitments and contributions that each of these organizations has made have contributed to the placement of over 2,600 waiting children with adoptive families.

Community awareness continued to grow throughout 2004. In January, Adoption, along with KSBJ 89.3 FM radio co-hosted, on a cold and rainy day, one of the most successful adoption festivals to date. The event was held at the KSBJ studio and over 250 people heard about waiting children and the adoption process. Throughout the year, Viacom continued to provide Adoption with highway boards throughout the city that introduce people to adoption opportunities. Through our Creating Adoption Neighborhoods (CRAN) federal project, we teamed with KMJQ MAJIC 102 and KRWP Power 97.5 to promote community events and highlight children who were waiting for families. Additionally, a public service announcement, produced by Time Warner Cable, spotlighted the need for families for African-American children. Many thanks, also, to Tracey Gee Community Center, Windsor Village United Methodist Church, Brookhollow Baptist Church, Higher Dimension

Church, Ft. Bend YMCA, Northshore YMCA, Central Market, San Jacinto College, Grace Community Church, Sagemont Baptist Church, and SHAPE Community Center for supporting adoption for waiting children!

In December, Houston's WB, Foleys, and Adoption hosted our annual "Season of Smiles" holiday party for over 300 foster and adoptive family members. This has become an event that families and children look forward to. As usual, the karaoke machine was the biggest hit – it was so fun to watch both the little and the "big kids"! Also, in December, Adoption and the Houston Texans teamed up for a special day – foster children and members of the Houston Texans spent the morning shopping together at downtown Foleys! This was an exciting opportunity for some very special children. At the end of the event, we really could not decide who had more fun – the Houston Texans or the children!

Program services to children and their families continued to grow. Inquiries were up by 11% over 2003 and 518 people received foster/adoption pre-service education, a 14% increase over 2003. In September, Adoption, through a grant with The Collaboration to AdoptUSKids and partnerships with Time Warner Cable and Child Welfare League of America, hosted a one-day seminar entitled, "Never Get Between the Kid and the Door – A Creative Approach to Looking at the Effects of Childhood Trauma, Neglect and Abuse." Families are still talking with their caseworkers about using the information they learned as they parent their children.

How quickly time has flown! 2004 saw Adoption complete its first five years and develop a model that has now been replicated in other regions of Texas. As we move towards a child welfare system that depends more on community-based organizations, the collaborative model becomes even more crucial. We are fortunate to live in a community that not only has many resources critical in the development of a new system, but also a community that has such strong commitment to health and human service issues that impact each and every one of us.

We thank you for all that you have done to support Adoption and the special children and families who we serve.

Laurie M. Glaze  
Managing Director