

11 April 2006

Dear Friends,

Welcome to spring 2006! What an exciting time this is for all of us in the child welfare profession! There are so many changes on the horizon and so many exciting challenges and opportunities.

2005 saw Adoption place 720 children with permanent adoptive families, a seven percent increase over 2004 placements. Additionally, placements through our foster/adopt programs continued to increase. In 2005, an average of 138 children per month were living with foster parents, who if adoption became the plan, would become their adoptive families. This was a thirteen percent increase over the 2004 monthly average.

Many thanks continue to go to our community partners who have supported this collaborative since its creation! They include the Greater Houston Community Foundation, Easterly & Company, Brivic Media, and A Brink & Co. Congratulations to Houston's WB, that, through a public service campaign, has spotlighted over 560 waiting children. In 2005, they were presented the Outstanding Media Award by the Association of Fundraising Professionals!

In early 2006, we made a decision to move the 1-800 number to our offices. This was not an easy decision because of the strong and very positive partnership that we had with Crisis Intervention of Houston. Thank you again, CIH, for giving Adoption six years of unfailing support – your commitment will be felt for many years!

Community awareness continued to flourish throughout 2005. Through our Creating Adoption Neighborhoods (CRAN) federal project, we teamed with KMJQ MAJIC 102 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. The collaborative partnered with Grace Community Church for a year long awareness campaign and also hosted festivals or presented information at churches and events throughout the community. We were honored to work with KSBJ 89.3 Radio and have twenty children join Steven Curtis Chapman on stage at the Toyota Center when he unveiled "All I Want for Christmas," a song spotlighting children living in foster care, waiting for families to call their own.

Another highlight of the year was the "Heart Gallery Houston," a breathtaking portrait exhibit of waiting children created by thirty-nine fine arts photographers. The entire exhibit of fifty plus children was hosted by Watermark Fine Art Photographs and Books for two weeks in November, and since then has traveled throughout the city. Pictures capture so much that simply cannot be expressed in words and these portraits truly captured the spirits of each of these children!

Program services to children and their families continued to grow. 550 people received foster/adoption pre-service education, a 6% increase over 2004. Since January 2000, over 3,300 chil-

dren have moved from foster care to adoption. In July, Adoption, through a federally funded grant and in partnership with Child Welfare League of America, hosted a one-day seminar entitled, “Gifts to Our Children: Effectively Parenting the Traumatized Child.”

We want to welcome to the Adoption collaborative two new child placement agencies – The Arrow Project, Inc. and Homes4Good. Both of these agencies have years of foster care and adoption experience and we are proud to have them join us.

This past year saw Adoption began to prepare for a new delivery system for foster care and adoption services. The 79th Texas Legislature passed legislation that mandated foster care and adoption services move from the public sector to the private sector. The total move of mandated services to community-based organizations will take several years and will be accomplished through a statewide staged roll-out. In preparation for this new system, Adoption’s Executive Council determined that it was necessary for the collaborative to become a 501(c)(3) organization and, therefore, we are currently in the process of securing this status. We will continue our relationship with the Greater Houston Community Foundation as a supporting organization.

Additionally, Adoption is developing a community training institute that can train and support all foster parents and adoptive parents and prepare staff for their new roles and responsibilities. It is estimated that this thirteen county region will need to provide training to an estimated 1,800 individuals per year in locations throughout the region and at times that will enable optimal participation of families and staff. Agencies will need to focus their resources on direct service delivery to their clients and Adoption will need to develop services that are common to all. We are fortunate to live in a community that not only has many resources critical in the development of this new system, but also in a community that has such strong commitment to health and human service issues.

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