

SAFELY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF OREGON CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

36862

The Department of Human Services, Commission on Children, Families & Community and Casey Family Programs are working together to safely and equitably reduce the number of children in foster care. Casey Family Programs is the leading organization in the nation whose primary goal is to reduce foster care and increase safety of children.

Safely reducing foster care means that children are not re-abused or neglected. Equitably reducing foster care means reducing the disproportionate number of children of color who enter foster care. It is quite possible to safely reduce the number of children in foster care in Oregon by 20%, and yet have a HIGHER rate of disproportionality, if we don't figure out how to involve communities of color more intentionally. That is why we often refer to this project as safe AND EQUITABLE reduction.

Engage with us in this planning process and become partners in this very important work. Make this a priority project in your community.

For more information in Multnomah County, contact:

Mary Geelan
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503-988-3982 (office)
503-793-4699 (cell)

www.fosterchange.com



This is an initiative of *Safely Reducing the Number of Oregon Children in Foster Care*, a statewide partnership of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, Department of Human Services, and Casey Family Programs.

www.oregonfosterchange.wordpress.com

OREGON'S MOST VALUABLE NATURAL RESOURCE IS OUR CHILDREN



In 2008 in Multnomah County, 2,329 children were in foster care. Foster care is intended to be a short term solution for children, to remove them from unsafe environments. However, only 35% of children in foster care were in care less than 12 months in Multnomah County in 2008.

Learn what we're doing, with your help, to safely reduce the number of Multnomah County children in foster care



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“Too many children of color, particularly Native American and African American children, are in foster care. The time has come for us to move beyond good intentions to intentional action so we can ensure that children with the same needs are treated equitably, no matter the color of their skin.”

—Governor Ted Kulongoski,
January, 2009

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SIX GOALS HAVE BEEN SET TO ACHIEVE THE REDUCTION OF THE NUMBER THE CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE:

1. Safely reduce children in foster care by 20%
2. Increase relative placements by 50%
3. Reduce children entering care by 10%
4. Increase foster care exits by 20%
5. Reduce the disproportionality index for Native and African American children (numerical goal to be set at the end of 2009)
6. Maintain or reduce current child abuse/neglect recurrence rate of 7.5%

This newsletter
 funded in part
 by a grant from:



Dates to Remember

FREE Adoption Orientation

Tuesday - May 10th, 6 p.m.
 Tuesday - June 14th, 6 p.m.

FREE Adoption Training

Weekend - August 5-7

For a complete list of upcoming orientations and trainings, visit:

boysandgirlsaid.org/events/calendar

To Register for trainings, call **503-542-2301** or email adoption@boysandgirlsaid.org

All trainings held at Boys & Girls Aid

To receive our e-newsletter, please email us at adoption@boysandgirlsaid.org

Wendy's Wonderful Kids – LIVE

Out of Portland

Kimberly Hayes, WWK Recruiter

We wrapped up 2010 with a great ending; 10 children's adoptions were finalized, 13 children were matched at committee and five children moved into their pre-adoptive homes. Continuing on the success of last year, 2011 is moving right along with eight children already moving into their pre-adoptive homes, three children being matched at committee and adding five new children to the caseload. We'd like to thank everyone who attended the National Adoption Day event in November and give a big thank you to Jantzen Beach Shopping Center for donating the space, tables and chairs to have the event, as well as all of our other great sponsors. Thank you to every one of you!

503-542-2330 | khayes@boysandgirlsaid.org

Out of Southern Oregon

Rachel Howard, WWK Recruiter

The Southern Oregon program just celebrated its fourth finalized adoption in February, and has several children being recruited for. Matches are expected for five children and the program is going strong and steady.

541-291-3376 | rhoward@boysandgirlsaid.org



Open Your Heart To Jerimiah's Sunshine

Jeremiah is a darling six-year-old with curly brown hair, big sparkling eyes and a dimpled smile that's a showstopper. Happy, busy and affectionate only start to paint a picture of Jeremiah. This cute, quirky little guy has his own unique, assertive way of approaching life with an energy and zest that are plentiful and contagious.

As active as his beloved action figures, Jeremiah is on the move from the moment he wakes up until the moment he falls asleep. He eagerly engages in the environment around him every day and keeps his caregivers on their toes. A high level of structure, predictability and familiarity are essential to his daily routine. Jeremiah loves any activity that involves physical movement or tactile stimulation. Sensory experience such as textured toys like rubber balls with nubs on the outside or toys that vibrate are his favorites. He functions best when just a few toys or activities are available to him. He loves movement songs, singing, tumbling and running activities. He also enjoys digging in the garden, riding his bike, swimming and being read to.

A very affectionate child, Jeremiah loves to cuddle and snuggle with others. He thrives on the one-on-one attention he receives from the adults in his life and needs a good amount of physical guidance and reassurance from those adults. These adults can also easily calm Jeremiah by rubbing the top of his head. During this one-on-one time, he will happily chat with you for long periods of time and is known for being quite the conversationalist.

Jeremiah loves school and enjoys attending kindergarten. Even though Jeremiah faces numerous developmental delays, since starting kindergarten and getting eye glasses, he has made great improvement with knowing the alphabet, numbers, colors and shapes. He has excellent receptive language skills and a large vocabulary, but still struggles with pronunciation. He needs a lot of stimulation in

order to not become distracted or be impulsive, but with the help of his teachers and extra help outside of the classroom he has also seen great improvements in his attention span and being able to stay focused.

Jeremiah needs a structured, understanding and committed forever family with an endless and creative supply of love, commitment and patience. He would do best with a family who will understand and address the underlying biological reasons for his developmental delays. This special family needs to be ready to put forth every effort to help Jeremiah learn to manage his challenges. His forever family must also be able to demonstrate their love for Jeremiah through physical affection since these kinds of connections are the most reassuring for him. A family that is able to give in this way to Jeremiah will be greatly rewarded by having such a wonderful little boy be a part of their family.



*"When this child smiles with all of his dimples it's a show-stopper."
 —DHS Caseworker*

Are you the family Jerimiah is waiting for?

Jeremiah is just one of more than 100 Oregon children currently waiting to be adopted. Learn more about adoption and other waiting children by calling Wendy's Wonderful Kids at Boys and Girls Aid.

Portland:
503-542-2330

Southern Oregon:
541-291-3376

Find us on 

Follow us on **Twitter** for regular updates, adoption information and the latest on children available for adoption in Oregon.

twitter.com/**AdoptOregonKids**



Gold Star Partners!
Voodoo Doughnut

Thanks to the generous donation from Voodoo Doughnut for providing us with many dozens of doughnuts for our National Adoption Day event held in November. Voodoo Doughnut provided us with all different kinds of doughnuts that we were able to give out to all of the families that attended the National Adoption Day event. Everyone from adults to children were very excited over receiving these great doughnuts. Thank you Voodoo Doughnut! Visit them at voodoodoughnut.com to learn more.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids Need You!

Do Something Wonderful...Adopt a Wendy's Wonderful Kid!

Izaiah, age 5

"This is a very loving child who is thriving as a result of being in a nurturing and patient foster home."

—DHS Caseworker



Christopher, age 11

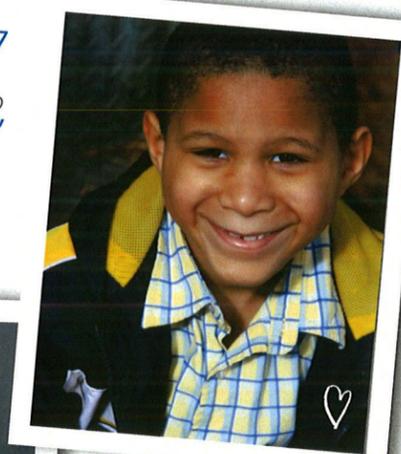
"People should know that I like long sleeve shirts, cheeseburgers, and mint chocolate chip ice cream. I want a family that is nice to me, a mom or a dad that is kind, kids I can play with and a puppy."



DeaQuan, age 7

"This is a very sweet boy, who has come a long way."

—DHS Caseworker



Ashley, Brett and Kiara, Ages 10, 9 & 5

"These children need an experienced, two-parent family who has the time, energy and willingness to give each child the attention they deserve."

—DHS Caseworker



Jasmine, age 2

"Even with all that Jasmine has been through, she is a very happy and content little girl."

—Caseworker



Jerry, age 10

"With a desire to be engaged with others and an adorable smile, Jerry is sure to bring many adventures to his new family."

—Caseworker



Mason, age 3

"In my work with medically fragile kids, Mason is one of the most wonderful children I have ever met."

—Foster Parent/Nurse



A Signature Program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

 facebook.com/AdoptOregonKids

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“Too many children of color, particularly Native American and African American children, are in foster care. The time has come for us to move beyond good intentions to intentional action so we can ensure that children with the same needs are treated equitably, no matter the color of their skin.”

*—Governor Ted Kulongoski,
January, 2009*



For more information in Multnomah County, contact:

Angela G. Cause, MSW
angela.cause@state.or.us
(503) 872-5574 (Office)
(503) 780-7674 (Cell)

www.fosterchange.com

Family holds special meaning to African Americans that typically goes far beyond one's immediate relatives. For many African Americans, the extended family includes a host of kin who have no blood ties, but are every bit as significant. Rooted in the traumatic experiences of slavery where families were separated, the African American community has collectively embraced the broader role of family.

This broader sense of family extends to the African American church and community who traditionally have wrapped love, support, and caring guidance around families in need.

Caring for our children remains a community responsibility. No longer do we have the threat of our families being separated as in slavery times, yet today many children are abruptly removed from their homes. Societal ills such as drug and alcohol abuse, violence and crime have wreaked havoc on our families. When parents become overwhelmed by addictions and/or domestic violence, our children are at risk of being abused and/or neglected.

It is the collective responsibility of the African American family to ensure that all of our children have the opportunity to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment.



This is an initiative of *Safely Reducing the Number of Oregon Children in Foster Care*, a statewide partnership of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, Department of Human Services, and Casey Family Programs.

KEY DECISION POINTS

There are nine key points in time when major decisions are made that impact outcomes for our children when they become victims of abuse and/or neglect. It is critical that considerations of their cultural/ethnic needs are acknowledged when ensuring their safety and well-being. This ensures a holistic and strength-based approach is used when serving our children.

The key decision points are:

1. Child Protective Service Intakes/Reports

all reports (mostly phone calls) received by child welfare and initially determined to be an issue of possible child abuse/neglect.

2. Screening Decision

whether to assign the report for a full assessment or complete it at screening.

3. Disposition

the results of the assessment indicating whether or not abuse/neglect occurred.

4. Removal/Hold

an indication of whether or not a child was removed from family or held apart from their family based on the immediate safety concerns arising from assessment of the report.

5. Foster Care

all children in foster care sometime during the period.

6. Type of Placement

all foster children based on their most recent type of foster care placement.

7. Length of Stay in Foster Care

all foster children based on the length of time that they had been in care during this current foster care experience.

8. Plan for Permanence

the most current permanency plan for children in foster care.

9. Exit Pathways

the actual permanency resolution (or other kind of exit) for those children who exited foster care during this time period.

DID YOU KNOW...

- In 2006, the census reported that African American children make up 2.3 percent of Oregon's child population?
- The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) reported that in 2008, African American children make up approximately 7.3 percent of the children in Oregon's foster care system?
- In 2006, the census reported that African American children made up 9.5 percent of Multnomah's child population?
- The Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) reported that in 2008, African American children made up approximately 19.7 percent of the children in foster care system in Multnomah County?

This means that within Multnomah County, a disproportionate number of African American children are in foster care. Disproportionality means that children of a particular population are represented in higher numbers in the foster care system than their numbers are represented in the general population.

Our children are overrepresented in the foster care system.

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The history for Native Americans in this nation is powerful and enriching. However, our Native American communities and our children are still suffering from the effects of historical trauma and grief – boarding schools, tribal termination and forced relocation, assimilation and other devastating policies. These historical events and others have had a dramatic impact on our Native children and their families, resulting in disproportionality within the foster care system. We need your help in turning these statistics around. Until now, our children who are in foster care have only the culture of foster care to help them understand who they are and are lost.

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WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR CHILDREN TODAY?

We are beyond the days of the Boarding Schools and the Adoptions Act and it has been over thirty years since the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The purpose of ICWA is to “protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families” (25 U.S.C. § 1902). ICWA is intended to ensure the voice of Tribal nations when our children become involved with the public child welfare system.

Our voices still need to be heard. Today, too many of our children continue to be removed from their families, separated from tribal ways and customs. Our children are disproportionately represented in Oregon’s foster care system. Disproportionality happens when a specific ethnic/racial group of children are represented in the foster care system in greater numbers than they are represented in the general population.

Today, Native American children make up 1.3 percent of children in the general population here in Oregon. However, our children make up 10 percent of the children in the State’s foster care system. In Multnomah County our children make up 1.7 percent of children in the general population, but represent 9 percent of the children who are in foster care. Our children are overrepresented in the foster care system.

Although this is a society not of our own making, we can have voice in correcting the concerns for our children. It is time to call upon our traditional values, and honor our ancestry by caring for our children and their families.

KEY DECISION POINTS

There are nine key points in time when major decisions are made that impact outcomes for our children when they become victims of abuse and/or neglect. It is critical that considerations of their cultural/ethnic needs are acknowledged when ensuring their safety and well-being. This ensures a holistic and strength-based approach is used when serving our children.

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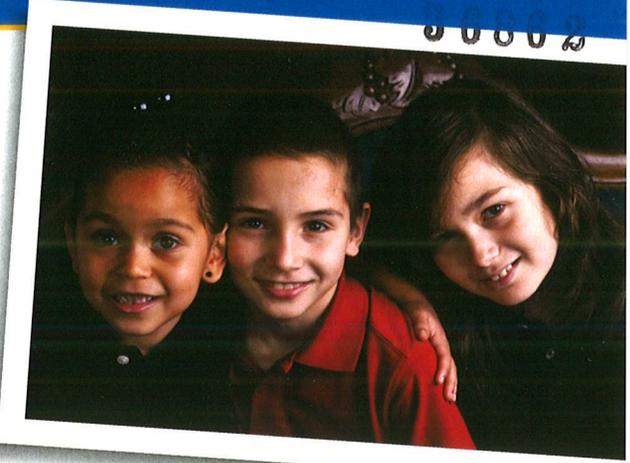
the actual permanency resolution (or other kind of exit) for those children who exited foster care during this time period.

SAFELY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF OREGON CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Six goals have been set to achieve the reduction of the number of children in foster care.

1. Safely reduce children in foster care by 20%
2. Increase relative placements by 50%
3. Reduce children entering care by 10%
4. Increase foster care exits by 20%
5. Reduce the disproportionality index for Native and African American children
6. Maintain or reduce current child abuse/neglect recurrence rate of 7.5%

Are you the family they're waiting for?



Ashley, Brett and Kiara, ages 10, 9 & 5

Siblings, Ashley, Brett and Kiara, long for a family of their own who will love them unconditionally and accept them for who they are. Ashley loves to help out around the house, listening to Justin Beiber. She does best with older children and adults. Brett is a pleasant, bright, outdoorsy guy who loves to explore and discover how things work. Easygoing Kiara is a happy little girl who goes with the flow, loves going to school, coloring and playing with her friends. A physically healthy handful, this troop of three will be a happy addition to any adoptive family.

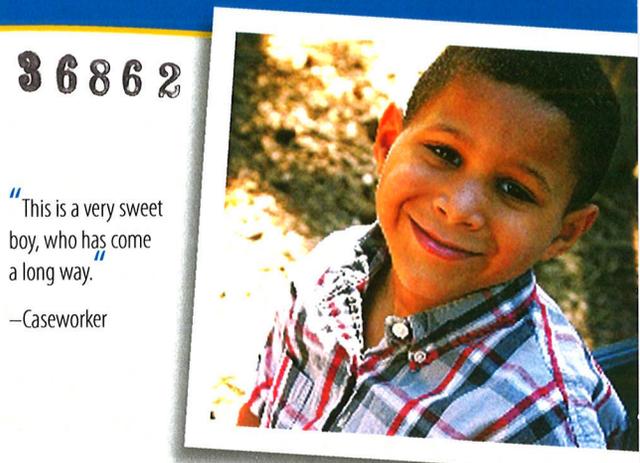
Learn more about Ashley, Brett and Kiara or other Wendy's Wonderful Kids. Call Kimberly at 503-542-2330 or visit boysandgirlsaid.org



A Signature Program of The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption



Are you the family he's waiting for?



DeaQuan, age 6

A child that everyone really likes, DeaQuan loves school buses and is an avid collector who is constantly adding to his school bus collection. He also loves music and to dance and sing. Despite the odds against him, he has an ongoing zest for life, is warm and affectionate towards others and loves to give hugs goodbye. He needs a family who will provide him with patience, consistency and trust while challenging DeaQuan to continue to learn to do things for himself and accept him for exactly who he is.

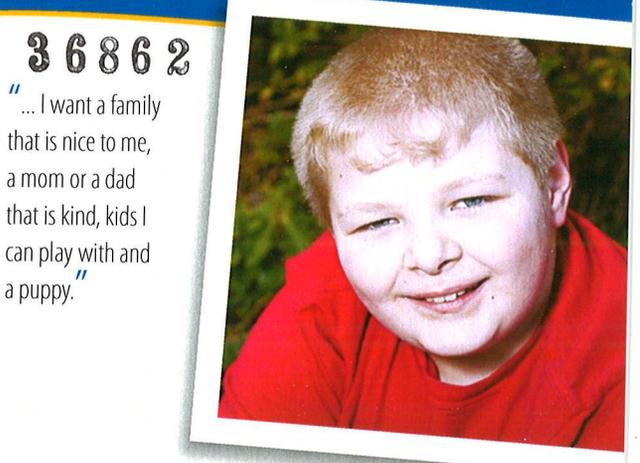
Learn more about DeaQuan and other Wendy's Wonderful kids. Call Kimberly at 503-542-2330 or visit us online boysandgirlsaid.org



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Are you the family he's waiting for?



Christopher, age 11

Christopher's exuberance about being adopted is hard to beat! Whether extolling the merits of esteemed Pokémon characters or of basketball superstar Kobe Bryant, Christopher's crisp, ten-year-old-boy energy is a breath of fresh air. With extraordinary resilience, this plucky, hard-working child has transformed rough circumstances into a hopeful opportunity. Christopher's sweetness, his concern for others, his inquisitive spirit, and his lion-hearted courage has grabbed all of our hearts. He will grab yours as well.

Learn more about Christopher and other Wendy's Wonderful kids. Call Kimberly at 503-542-2330 or visit boysandgirlsaid.org



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photo courtesy of Oregon Heart Gallery

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Are you the family he's waiting for?

3 6 8 6 2

"This is a very loving child who is thriving as a result of being in a nurturing and patient home."

—Caseworker



Izaiah, age 5

Izaiah's energetic, engaging and fun-loving personality will warm any family's heart. He enjoys outdoor activities, Dora the Explorer, counting numbers and saying the ABCs. This adorable little guy has his own unique way of communicating and engaging with others. Izaiah needs a family who will provide him with patience, consistency, structure and a lot of attention. While challenging him to continue to learn to do things for himself, he needs a family to accept him for who he is. Please consider adopting Izaiah.

Learn more about Izaiah and other Wendy's Wonderful Kids. Call Kimberly at 503-542-2330 or visit boysandgirlsaid.org



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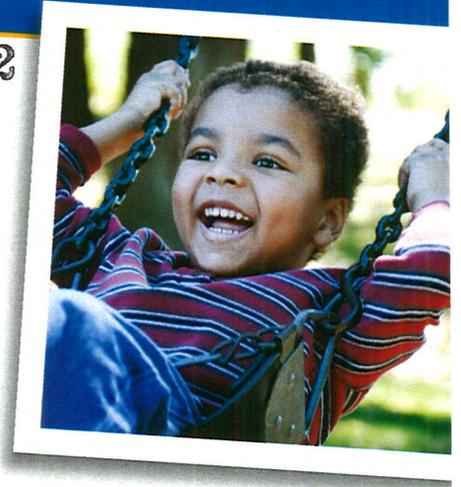


Are you the family he's waiting for?

3 6 8 6 2

"... When this child smiles with all of his dimples it's a showstopper!"

—Caseworker



Jeremiah, age 5

Happy, busy and affectionate start to paint a picture of Jeremiah. This cute, quirky little guy has his own unique, assertive way of approaching life. Jeremiah enjoys digging in the garden, riding his bike and swimming. As active as his action figures, he keeps caregivers on their toes! Sensory experiences such as textured toys and interactive books are soothing for Jeremiah who faces numerous developmental delays. He needs a structured, understanding family with an endless and creative supply of patience.

Learn more about Jeremiah and other Wendy's Wonderful kids. Call Kimberly at 503-542-2330 or visit boysandgirlsaid.org



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