



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact:

HALEY MCKEAN

Arapahoe County Communication Services

Direct: 303-636-1945

Mobile: 303-726-6608

hmckean@co.arapahoe.co.us

Arapahoe County hosts portraits of Colorado's 'waiting children' in July *Public invited to view Heart Gallery and attend foster/adoption information session*

Littleton, Colo. – Visitors to the Arapahoe County Administration Building in July will find themselves staring into the eyes of a foster child who is hoping to find a "forever family."

That is because Arapahoe County is hosting the 2009-2010 Colorado Heart Gallery, a traveling exhibit produced by the Colorado Department of Human Services that features professionally-taken portraits and written profiles of 102 Colorado foster children who are waiting to be adopted. The children are legally-free and could not be reunified with their biological families due to unresolved concerns for their safety and well being. The exhibit is located in the lobby of the building at 5334 S. Prince St. in Littleton through July.

By sharing their stories across the state, CDHS and Colorado counties are hoping to find a loving family for each child. Of the 16 Arapahoe County children featured in this year's Heart Gallery, five have already found a forever family.

Arapahoe County joined forces last year with Jefferson County in a Collaborative Foster Care Program, which is always seeking individuals and couples to provide temporary homes for foster youth until they can return home, be adopted or live independently, as well as permanent homes for youth who are free for adoption.

On average, there are more than 1,000 children in out-of-home care and 60 children awaiting adoption combined in Arapahoe and Jefferson County at any given time. Most of the children in out-of-home care are over age 12, and the majority will return home to their parents or relatives once safety concerns have been resolved.

Interested members of the public can learn more about adoption and foster care through Arapahoe and Jefferson Counties by attending a free information session, 6 -7:30 p.m., Wednesday, July 14 in the East Hearing Room of the Administration Building. Attendees will be given the opportunity to ask questions of staff, and are welcome to walk through the Heart Gallery before or after the session.

To learn more, or to register to attend a monthly information session, please call 303-636-1KID or visit www.collaborativefostercare.com. To see the online profiles of waiting kids featured in the Heart Gallery, please visit www.heartgalleryco.org.

To download a photo, please click on the following link:

<ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/pub/cm/HeartGallery>

Heart Gallery 1.jpg: A visitor to the Arapahoe County Administration Building on July 5 views the portraits of children awaiting adoption in the Heart Gallery.

Heart Gallery 2.jpg: Members of the public are invited to visit Arapahoe County's Littleton Building in July to see the photos and profiles of 102 Colorado foster children awaiting adoption.