

Promote

Each year thousands of families are affected by child welfare issues. In fact, there are 513,000 American children in foster care because their own families are in crisis and unable to provide for their essential wellbeing. They live in our neighborhoods, attend local schools and worship in our congregations.

Unfortunately, few citizens understand the magnitude of the issue or what foster care is all about. Promotional support at the local level is a key step in the education process. The more frequently people see positive messages about foster care in their community, the more likely they will be to come forward and do something to *Change a Lifetime* for a child in need. There are a variety of easy ways to spread the word about foster care in your community during May and throughout the year.

Five Ideas to Get You Started:

- > **Feature the National Foster Care Month logo and web site URL (www.fostercaremonth.org) on your printed materials and web site.** Logo graphics and instructions for setting up a web site link are available in the Toolkit and online. Don't forget to include a Foster Care Month message in your email signature during May.
- > **Submit information about Foster Care Month for inclusion in the bulletins, newsletters and web sites of community-based organizations** such as: faith-based institutions, municipal agencies, civic and membership groups, block associations, PTAs and the chamber of commerce. Request time on meeting agendas to make an in-person presentation as a way of educating community leaders about why they should care about youth in foster care. Be sure to include local contact information so interested people know where to call or email to find out more about rewarding opportunities that make a lasting difference in a child's life.
- > **Promote your local events to a wider audience.** Submit information about your local foster care related activities to the National Foster Care Month online events calendar. Visitors to the national campaign site (including media) can easily view all of the happenings taking place in your state.
- > **Distribute National Foster Care Month materials in your community.** Help raise awareness about foster care by displaying promotional posters and flyers in places that are often frequented by parents such as: malls, libraries, schools, medical practices, book stores, supermarkets, offices and daycare centers. Hand out lapel pins and blue ribbons to friends and colleagues (and wear your own pin/ribbon throughout the month of May!). Keep a supply of materials with you at all times, and don't pass a bulletin board without posting something about foster care. Ask your current foster parents, workers and volunteers to help you with materials distribution. Visit the National Foster Care Month Online Store at www.fostercaremonth.org to order free materials (while supplies last).
- > **Advertise!** Ask your local newspaper if they will run a Foster Care Month advertisement as a public service during May. Remember to reach out to the weeklies and supplements distributed for free in your community. Warm up the "ask" by reminding them that many community residents are also people involved in this issue. Approach supermarkets to see if they will print a Foster Care Month message on their bags. Contact local billboard/outdoor advertising companies to see if they will consider a foster care placement whenever inventory goes unused. In some cases, you may have to pay for the cost of production, but the visibility is well worth it!

Promote *(continued)*

Tools:

- > Web site “Link to Us” Instructions and Sample Copy
- > Sample Calendar Listing
- > Sample Email Signatures
- > Sample Newsletter Article
- > Sample Church Bulletin
- > National Foster Care Month Advertisements (See *The National Campaign* Folder)
- > National Foster Care Month Public Service Announcements (PSA copy)