

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS LINDSEY P. HORVATH AND
KATHRYN BARGER

May 7, 2024

Celebrating Foster Youth and National Foster Care Month

National Foster Care Month is celebrated every May to uplift the needs of children and youth in foster care and to recognize the significant contribution of resource parents, family members, extended family, and other members of the community who help children and youth in foster care reunify with parents, find permanent homes and build lifelong connections. By proclaiming Foster Care Month, the County of Los Angeles (County) joins the child welfare community, including resource families and caregivers, in a renewed commitment to ensuring a safe, family focused, and hopeful future for the more than 15,000 Los Angeles County children and youth in out-of-home care.

This May 2024, we celebrate Foster Care Month with the theme of *Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities.* to raise awareness of our shared goal to help youth exit foster care with strengthened lifelong relationships, holistic supports, and opportunities for success with an emphasis on elevating youth voice to improve long-term outcomes. Current and former foster youth with lived experience possess invaluable insights and perspectives that are essential in shaping policies and practices within the child welfare system. To strengthen our system, we must learn from the young people we serve and ensure that their perspective is valued as a critical part of our reform and improvement efforts.

As the largest public child welfare agency in the country, Los Angeles County Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in partnership with the Los

MOTION

SOLIS _____

MITCHELL _____

HAHN _____

BARGER _____

HORVATH _____

Angeles County Probation Department's Probation Placement & Child Welfare Services Bureau (PCWSB), recruits, prepares and supports resource families to provide healthy, stable and loving homes to children until they can be safely returned to their birth parents or find an alternative permanent family. Both DCFS and PCWSB welcome individuals and families—regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, marital or domestic partnership status, medical or disability status—to open their doors to children in need of a home, particularly, sibling groups, teenagers, young adults and children with medical needs.

Additionally, the work that DCFS and PCWSB do on behalf of young people and families in Los Angeles County continues to be supported by and enhanced through collaborations and partnerships with many community- and faith-based organizations such as our local Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) who provide much needed placement homes and supportive services, our mental health agencies, and our many community service providers. DCFS' own faith-based collaborative supports and outreaches to faith communities. PCWSB's Forever Friend Program offers a permanency alternative through lifelong connections. Both departments' Upfront Family Finding initiatives and activities link youth with family and extended family in an expedited manner. Local community colleges render their support by opening their campuses for events and through Foster Care Kinship Education training. By working together with our community partners, we establish a powerful network of agents for change in support of home-based family care for children.

This year, in honor of Foster Care Month and to further elevate the youth voice, the Board of Supervisors is proud to partner with the National Foster Youth Initiative (NFYI) and the City of Los Angeles by participating in NFYI's Los Angeles Foster Youth Shadow Day, today, May 7, 2024, where foster youth shadow County leaders to get a behind-the-scenes look at County governance and pique their interest in pursuing a public sector career. We look forward to continuing to partner with NFYI on future Shadow Days to ensure that we are consistently engaging with, and learning from, young leaders.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors:

1. Proclaim May 2024 as "Foster Care Month" in Los Angeles County;

2. Encourage families and other members of the community to consider the benefits and rewards of becoming a resource or adoptive parent by visiting FosterLAKids.org and JuntosConLosNinos.org or becoming a forever friend by visiting ForeverFriendsLA.org;
3. Direct the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to promote and outreach to invite the public to the following events:
 - a. May 18, 2024 - Resource Parent Recruitment Expo at Glory Christian Fellowship, Torrance
 - b. May 21, 2024 – Resource Parent Appreciation Event at Shepherd Church, Woodland Hills.
4. Direct DCFS to report back to the Board in writing in 60 days on the feasibility and timing of adding three Career Development Intern (CDI) positions to support DCFS's Office of Equity work across its three focus areas—LGBTQ+ Program, Eliminating Racial Disproportionality and Disparity Program, and the Women and Girls Program. This report should include exploring existing positions and funding within DCFS that can be used for this purpose.
5. Request the Youth Commission work with the Board offices, the City of Los Angeles, and DCFS to ensure maximum County and youth participation in 2025's NFYI's Foster Youth Shadow Day.

#

LPH:es