



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 22, 2018
Contact: mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov

ALONGSIDE DEVOTED FOSTER PARENTS FROM QUEENS, ACS HIGHLIGHTS THE CRITICAL WORK BEING DONE TO RECRUIT, SUPPORT & TRAIN HIGHLY-QUALIFIED FOSTER PARENTS THROUGH NYC'S 'HOME AWAY FROM HOME' INITIATIVE

As Part of "City Hall in Your Borough," Families Working With Forestdale in Queens Share Their Personal Experiences As Foster Parents

Queens, NY – Today, the NYC Administration for Children's Services joined leaders from Forestdale Inc., along with foster parents from Queens, to highlight the work being done to recruit, support and train highly-qualified foster parents through the "Home Away From Home" Initiative. The initiative is part the city's ongoing effort to improve foster care placements by strengthening foster parent recruitment and increasing the use of kinship care to enhance children's well-being.

"My deepest gratitude goes to our foster parents from all walks of life who have opened their hearts and their doors to providing loving homes for our most vulnerable children," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "We are committed to ensuring that our foster care system protects and nurtures all children, and ACS initiatives like Home Away From Home and partners like Forestdale are making a difference for New York City children in foster care. ACS is dedicated to working hand-in-hand with NYC's parents, foster parents, provider agencies, community leaders, local and state agencies, faith-based organizations and others to improve outcomes for kids and families."

Foster parents provide temporary homes for children until they can be permanently reunited with their families via reunification or kinship guardianship or, if that is not possible, adopted. A foster parent works with the child, the child's family, the foster care agency and other community supports. Some foster parents become adoptive parents.

ACS has made enormous strides in the NYC child welfare system in keeping children safe, while keeping families intact. The foster care population is at a historic low, dropping from 50,000 children in 1992 to under 17,000 in 2007 to under 9,000 in 2018. And new initiatives are utilizing research, best practices, data analytics and structured

business process improvement strategies to streamline and improve services to children and families.

Home Away from Home (HAFH) is focused on increasing the number of children placed with relatives or close friends, redesigning the way foster parents are recruited and supported, and enhancing all aspects of foster care to ensure children's wellbeing and help them find permanent homes. In FY 2018, ACS and its foster care agencies increased the number of new foster homes by 28% as compared to FY 2017.

"Foster parents play a critical role in helping children heal from trauma," said **Julie Farber, ACS Deputy Commissioner of Family Permanency Services**. "Our Home Away from Home initiative is producing results. Working with Forestdale and other agencies, we're successfully increasing the pool of foster parents and helping children thrive in safe, supportive, loving homes."

"We are very grateful for the continuous support we have received from ACS to recruit more foster parents and find more relatives or close friends to temporarily care for children. The typical foster parent today works full-time, and needs help with childcare, escorting children to appointments, or transporting them to school," said **William Weisberg, Forestdale Inc. Executive Director**. "With new resources from ACS, we were able to recruit 81% more foster parents last year. And, 40% of our children are now with kin, which minimizes the disruption of family, community and cultural ties while recognizing the positive role that the extended family can play in raising children."

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, please contact ACS' WISH line: 977-676-WISH (9474) or request an application online [here](#).

###