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AS PART OF 'NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH,' ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES URGES NEW YORKERS TO CONSIDER BECOMING A FOSTER PARENT TO A CHILD IN NEED

With the COVID Pandemic, Many Foster Care Agencies Are Offering Virtual Foster Parent Orientations to Those Interested in Learning More; For More Info, Contact 311 or Call the WISH Line (877-676-WISH)

NEW YORK, NY – At the start of National Foster Care Month, NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell today urged New Yorkers to consider becoming a foster parent to a child in need. Foster parents provide a safe, nurturing, loving home for children in need, and work with parents and families to help children return home safely. Some foster parents also become adoptive parents.

ACS is always looking for qualified and committed people interested in becoming a foster parent, and it's especially important now, as the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting children and families across NYC. New Yorkers interested in learning more about foster parenting can do so even now while staying home, via virtual foster parent orientations.

"My deepest gratitude goes to our foster parents from all walks of life who have opened their hearts and their doors to providing a loving, safe and healthy home for our most vulnerable children in New York City. As we recognize National Foster Care Month, I encourage New Yorkers who have the capacity to help a child to consider becoming a foster parent," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "ACS is dedicated to working hand-in-hand with New York City's foster parents, provider agencies, community leaders, local and state agencies, faith-based organizations and others to recruit, support and train foster parents."

During the month of May, National Foster Care Month is recognized by child welfare agencies, and others, across the country as a way to renew our commitment to ensuring a bright future for children and youth in foster care. It is also a time to acknowledge and celebrate foster parents, family members, child welfare professionals and other members of the community who help children and youth in foster care find permanent homes and connections.

When children must be separated from their families because of safety concerns, ACS works with a network of non-profit organizations, known as foster care providers, to place them in temporary homes. Whenever possible, ACS works to place children with a relative or family friend, which reduces trauma.

Children in foster care come from varied backgrounds and family situations, and range in age from infants to youth to 21 years of age. Most children in foster care return home to their parents

once safety issues are resolved. For those who cannot return home safely, ACS pursues adoption or kinship guardianship.

Today, the number of children in New York City's foster care system is under 8,000, a historic low. Comparatively, 25 years ago, there were nearly 50,000 children in New York City's foster care system, and nearly 17,000 just a decade ago. Additionally, under Commissioner Hansell's leadership, ACS has redesigned the way foster parents are recruited and supported, and strengthened all aspects of the foster care continuum to promote children's wellbeing. ACS increased the number of new foster homes by 50 percent from FY17 to FY19, turning around a previous six-year decline in the number of new foster homes recruited.

Additionally, foster parents are provided with support and opportunities to attend special training sessions. Just last year, ACS launched a new website, "ACS ConnectME," that provides foster parents and youth in foster care with greater access to information about services and resources across ACS, like parenting support and upcoming training sessions.

New Yorkers interested in becoming a foster parent can call 311 for more information. For those who live outside New York City, contact the ACS WISH line at 877-676-WISH (9474) or visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/child-welfare/become-foster-adoptive-parent.page>

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