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## **November is National Adoption Month**

### **Family Resource Center of South Florida, Inc. Launches Public Awareness Campaign About Public Adoptions**

Miami, FL – November 1, 2011 – In anticipation of National Adoption Month this November, **Family Resource Center of South Florida, Inc.** (“FRC”), one of the state’s leading child welfare organizations, is spreading awareness about the benefits of public adoption. Throughout November, FRC will be offering its top tips for navigating the public adoption process, along with accounts from families who have successfully adopted in this manner.

As communities continue to struggle amid a long-lasting recession, Florida has seen a significant rise in reports of child abuse and neglect. According to the Department of Children and Families, monthly child abuse investigations in Miami-Dade during 2011 have gone up 22.2% over the 2010 numbers. As a result, more children and families are being referred for services, resulting in some of these children ultimately becoming available for public adoption. Throughout November, FRC will continue its important work in protecting the welfare of neglected and abused children and helping to facilitate public adoptions in South Florida. They are also working hard to “demystify” the public adoption process by offering top tips for families seeking to adopt children.

On any given day there are approximately 800 children available for adoption in the state of Florida. Public adoption offers many benefits to those wishing to adopt children and helps provide a safe haven to the most vulnerable children in the foster care system. In addition to offering individuals and couples facing infertility or other roadblocks a path to creating a family, some of the benefits to public adoption include: state covered court costs, 100% paid tuition for children who attend an in-state college or university, financial subsidies, and medical benefits for children who have special needs.

FRC’s core mission is to rehabilitate and keep families together. However, of the approximately 1,000 children served annually, one-third will become free for adoption. A forever home is one the most important and rewarding gifts a person can give. Studies consistently show that the success rate of children who have been adopted increases dramatically compared to those who remain in foster care. Reports continue to surface nationwide about the impact of the weak economy and the rise in child abuse and neglect cases. Florida is no exception to this trend. With one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, Florida’s children are suffering. In the last year, FRC saw a 35% increase in the number of children being referred for services because of documented abuse or neglect.

FRC Executive Director, Dr. Oren Wunderman recently opined, “There is a definite correlation between the state of the economy and the welfare of our children. As parents are faced with joblessness, loss of income, and extended periods of stress, children are sometimes left to bear the brunt of these pressure cooker-like situations. Unfortunately for some of these children, reunification with their biological parents will not be possible.”

This year FRC completed 48 adoptions, exceeding their goal of 40 set forth by Our Kids. On Friday, November 18 (10am-3pm) at the Miami Children's Museum, FRC, Our Kids, and other area child welfare agencies will celebrate National Adoption Day by completing several youth adoptions and bringing families together to mark this special day.

If you would like to learn more about public adoptions, request an interview with Dr. Wunderman of Family Resource Center, or spotlight some of the recent inspiring adoption stories please contact Amber Haeckel at 917-805-0471.

### **About Family Resource Center**

Family Resource Center of South Florida (FRC) is a non-profit organization founded in 1978 by a group of concerned community leaders. Its mission is the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect by strengthening families. The agency provides integrated care for children in the foster care system, parent education classes, mental health services, substance abuse counseling, adoptions, and aid in the licensing and oversight of foster homes. In the last year, FRC provided services to more than 2,500 children, adolescents, and adults.

FRC has been recognized by *Florida Trend* magazine as one of the top 100 BEST PLACES TO WORK in the state in both 2010 and 2011. Business Leader Magazine also recognized the agency as one of the Top 20 Small Businesses in South Florida for both 2010 and 2011.

FRC Executive Director Dr. Oren Wunderman has worked in non-profit child welfare or mental health centers for most of the last thirty years. He is licensed as a Psychologist, Marriage and Family Therapist, and Mental Health Counselor. He earned his Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees from the University of Miami. He has taken continuing education coursework in non-profit management from Harvard Business School and the Florida International University School of Business. For the past 15 years, he has been a yearly guest lecturer in the subjects of Child Abuse and Forensic Psychology at the University of Miami, Departments of Counseling and Clinical Psychology, Miami Children's Hospital and several local Community Mental Health Centers.