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## **November is National Adoption Month**

### **Family Resource Center of South Florida, Inc. Helps Build Loving Families Through Public Adoptions**

#### **\*\*\*Extraordinary Foster Mother Adopts “Faith” – A Blind Child with Cerebral Palsy\*\*\***

Miami, Florida – November, 2013 – National Adoption Month is being celebrated throughout November, a critical time to reflect on children in need of loving, permanent homes and adoptive parents who help make the dream of a “forever home” a reality for countless youth. Family Resource Center of South Florida, Inc. (“FRC”) is one of the state’s leading child welfare organizations and is well-known for its exceptional work with foster care and adoptive children. This month FRC is gearing up to help families navigate the public adoption system, finalize adoptions, and build loving families.

#### ***Foster Mother Adopts a Precious Blind Child Named “Faith” – Helping Her Overcome the Challenges of Cerebral Palsy***

In an inspiring story of love and devotion, FRC is helping an extraordinary Miami foster mother, Pricilla Walker, adopt her special needs foster child, Faith, 1 year of age, who was born drug exposed. Faith has Cerebral Palsy and is developmentally delayed. She is non-verbal and non-mobile and has to be fed through a feeding tube to survive. Pricilla has been caring for Faith since she was one month old and has grown to love her as her own daughter. She is licensed as a medical foster home and is trained to care for all of Faith’s special needs. Pricilla is eagerly awaiting November 22nd, 2013 when she will officially adopt Faith in a ceremony held at the Miami Children’s Museum, starting at 9:00 a.m.

#### ***The Benefits of Public Adoption***

In Florida, on any given day, there are approximately 750 children available for adoption from foster care without an identified family. Public adoption offers many benefits to those wishing to adopt 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.

#### ***Why Public Adoption is Important***

FRC’s core mission is to rehabilitate and keep families together. However, of the approximately 1,100 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.

“With the number of children available for public adoption on the rise in South Florida, the need for loving, permanent homes has never been more important,” explained **FRC’s Executive Director, Dr. Oren Wunderman**. “We are proud to help empower families with the tools to navigate licensing, foster care, and/or public adoption as a way to make a profound difference in the lives of children in need.”

## ***How Family Resource Center is Making an Impact***

Throughout the month of November, FRC will be spearheading a public awareness campaign to shed light on the public adoption process, as well as highlighting some inspiring local families who recently turned to public adoption to build a loving family.

FRC completed 83 adoptions last year, and is on track to meet or exceed its goal of 77 adoptions set forth by Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe this year. On November 22<sup>nd</sup> (9:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m.) at the Miami Children's Museum, FRC, Our Kids, and other area child welfare agencies will celebrate National Adoption Day by completing over 50 youth adoptions and celebrating with the families, caseworkers, and the community.

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 Christina Daigneault at 917-207-4686.

## **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 through the strengthening of 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 FRC as one of the Top 20 Small Businesses in South Florida for both 2010 and 2011 and the agency was a finalist for Switchboard's MOST VALUABLE ALL-STAR and MIAMI ALL-STAR awards in 2013.

**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.

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