



New York State

Office of Children & Family Services

Contact: Susan Steele, Acting Director of Communications 518-402-3130

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News

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**EXHIBIT AT RENSSELAER RAIL STATION
FEATURES CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION**

RENSSELAER ---More than 1,000 children across New York State are waiting to be matched with an adoptive family, and some of them are featured in a special Heart Gallery photo exhibit on display at the Rensselaer Rail Station through April 8.

Anyone interested in learning more about adopting a waiting child in New York State is invited to a program and reception to be held at the train station from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 31. Others are encouraged to view the portraits and help themselves to literature as they pass through the train station in the next week, and to consider welcoming a child into their home.

The Heart Gallery's traveling photo exhibit features professional portraits of children and youth in need of adoptive families. The Rensselaer Rail Station display is a cooperative effort of the New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS), which oversees adoption; the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA), rail station operator; Capital Region Heart Gallery; and professional photographers who donated their time.

"We invite the public to take time to learn about the hopes, dreams and interests of children still waiting to be placed with families or individuals who have love to share and are willing to guide them to their fullest potential," said OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrión, Esq.

The train station display features larger-than-life-size single portraits and collages of youth from across the state who have been awaiting their "forever families." The gallery reflects some of the many success stories facilitated by Heart Gallery displays – signs on several of the portraits indicate youths who recently found their "forever family." In addition to statewide Heart Gallery portraits, the display includes a number of capital region portraits.

Inspired by the original Heart Gallery held in New Mexico in 2001, New York State's Heart Gallery exhibits – with their professional portraits – introduce some of the children and teenagers awaiting adoption across the state. The exhibits are made possible through the generous contributions of professional photographers and local businesses, working with OCFS, local social services districts and voluntary agencies, and foster families.

Program participants Thursday will include Rensselaer County Executive Director Kathy Jimino, Albany County Executive Michael Breslin, OCFS Executive Deputy Director William Gettman, Capital Region Heart Gallery Director Carol Van Valkenburg, and CDTA officials.

For additional information on adopting from foster care, adoption subsidies and the adoption tax credit, and to view photos and videos of New York State children awaiting adoption, visit the OCFS website at www.ocfs.state.ny.us/adopt . The website has information in English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and Arabic, and an Adoption Album with photos and summaries of children. Also, people

considering becoming a foster or adoptive parent may call 1-800-345-KIDS (5437) or contact their local social services district for information.

OCFS is also collaborating with three agencies across the state on a five-year grant project offered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Entitled "A Parent for Every Child," the project is working to find permanent families for older youth with specific needs. For more information on this grant project, visit www.parentforeverychild.org/.

For more information about Heart Galleries in New York State, visit the OCFS website or the Heart Gallery of America website, www.heartgalleryofamerica.org.

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