

Proclamation

All children deserve to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment where they can benefit from lasting, positive relationships with caring adults. This includes the estimated 496,000 American youth currently living in foster care. Child welfare issues do not discriminate, and can occur in families among any ethnic, cultural or social background. Foster care plays a critical role in the lives of such young people whose families are often unable to provide for their essential needs.

Foster care promotes the healing process for many children from broken homes by offering a stable and secure environment until they can either return home or establish an alternative long-term relationship with compassionate adopted parents. Foster and adoptive families open their hearts and homes to such children, and these arrangements often allow displaced youth to live together with their siblings, remain in their own neighborhoods and stay in their same schools.

As a result of committed leadership from the Hawai'i state Department of Human Resources, the number of children in foster care in Hawai'i has decreased by 43 percent, from about 3,000 children in 2003 to 1,700 children in 2008 – the lowest number since 1993.

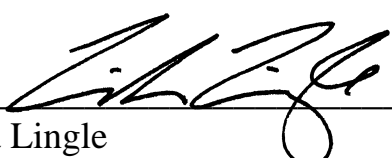
Each May, communities across the nation observe *National Foster Care Month* in order to raise awareness and encourage citizens to become involved in the lives of these youth – as foster parents, volunteers, mentors, employers or in other ways. National Foster Care Month will be observed through a host of local events. On May 3, a Foster Youth Talent Show and Family Appreciation Dinner will be held at Planet Hollywood; on May 8, a rally will be held at the State Capitol; and on May 9, the Windward Mall will host entertainment and activity booths. In addition, neighbor island events include sign-waving gatherings on May 1 on Maui, May 8 in West Hawai'i and May 15 in East Hawai'i; as well as events for foster families on May 15 in East Hawai'i, May 16 in West Hawai'i and May 25 on Maui.

THEREFORE, I, LINDA LINGLE, Governor, and I, JAMES R. "DUKE" AIONA, JR., Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai'i, do hereby proclaim **May 2009** as

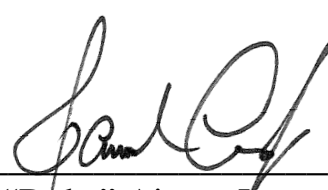
FOSTER CARE MONTH

in Hawai'i, and encourage our citizens to support the needs of our state's children in foster care, as well as the families and professional social workers who compassionately care for them.

DONE at the State Capitol, in the Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai'i, this eighth day of May 2009.



Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawai'i



James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i