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Child Welfare News

7TH ANNUAL WEDNESDAY'S CHILD MATCH PARTY



Photo Credit: Linda Wang

COG's 7th Annual Wednesday's Child Match Party featured paint splatter, paint brushes, and artwork done by our very own Wednesday's Child young people. Each year, the Match Party is an occasion that previously featured Wednesday's Child youth, interested families, and dedicated volunteers look forward to. This annual event

allows invited families to meet our youth in a fun and more personal environment. Through games, dance, and more, the young people experience a safe place where they can present their personalities to families that have the potential of being their forever family.

To host this year's annual Match Party, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments partnered once again with The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City. The Ritz-Carlton continually provides us with a beautiful space to create an exciting environment that in turn may be life changing for a child and family. Kathleen Holt-Whyte served as the emcee again. She truly caters to the voices of our youth by making sure they are heard and feel comfortable at the same time. She leads the youth centered activity, *Everyone has a Voice*, with the purpose of giving any young person the opportunity to share their opinion on family, teenagers, school, etc. In light of this year's artsy theme, the young people painted a piece of pottery of their choice, courtesy of All Fired Up!, and assembled a dream board. With an art gallery ambiance, they described their pieces of pottery to each family as they visited their displayed works of art. The day was filled with great food, including Georgetown Cupcakes, an abundance of prizes from generous donors, and dancing to the latest and greatest tunes.

COG received at least one inquiry for nearly every young person. We hope that these inquiries turn into adoptions and families that are works of art: art from the heart.

Written by

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For more information on the Metropolitan Washington Child Welfare program, please visit us

www.mwkog.org/childwelfare

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7TH ANNUAL WEDNESDAY'S CHILD MATCH PARTY PHOTOS



Photo Credit: Linda Wang

RECENT WEDNESDAY'S CHILD FEATURES



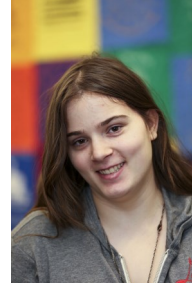
Gevonta is a polite young man that is determined to succeed. A sophomore in high school, he already knows that his calling in life is to work for a police force. To learn more about Gevonta, please call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photo credit: Aude Guerrucci



Hunter is charismatic, an honor roll student, and truly loves a good burrito. Like most tween-agers, he is silly and witty, and at the same time awkward and eccentric. To learn more about Hunter, please call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photo credit: Shelley Miller



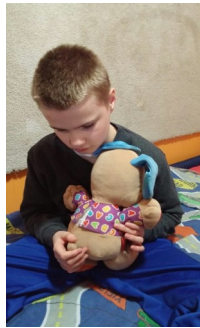
Lacie enjoys playing the guitar along to some of her favorite Taylor Swift songs. She is quite artsy, and uses her skills to draw the adoptive home she imagine herself being a part of one day. To learn more about Lacie, please call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photo credit: Aude Guerrucci



Although Kai has been diagnosed with Down Syndrome, and is mainly non-verbal, he is a one of a kind little bundle of joy who loves hugs, and is generous with his smile. When you are in Kai's presence, you can tell he is a happy child. To learn more about Kai, please call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photo credit: Aude Guerrucci



Jerimyah is on the autism spectrum and is visually-impaired, but has some language. He loves his school that is especially for blind children, and enjoys playing in the water and with toys that make sound. To learn more about Jerimyah, please call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).



Serena loves being in the kitchen and dreams of learning how to cook even better from her adoptive parents. In fact, one day Serena hopes to open her own restaurant. She also like swimming and taking care of animals. To learn more about Serena, please call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photo credit: Shelley Miller



Despite multiple placements in foster care, Nick has been on honor roll for the past two years. In his down time, Nick enjoys various outdoor activities, including hunting, fishing, and riding ATV's, and bowling. To learn more about Nick, please call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

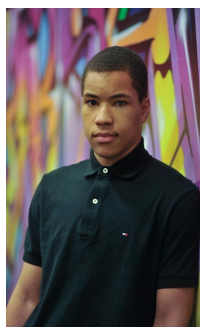
Photo credit: Aude Guerrucci



Due to his autism diagnosis, Zavier has some learning and language challenges. However, he enjoys using his teacher's smart board to follow along to several lessons and makes a lot of progress in his classroom. To learn more about Zavier, please call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).



Lashard has a great smile and is eager to share it with everyone he meets! Because Lashard is wheelchair-bound, and mainly non-verbal, he attends a school that can provide individualized support and therapy. To learn more about Lashard, please call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).



Ethan is a tremendous athlete! He has long-term dreams of attending UVA, and also joining the Marines or Air Force. With his good grades and study skills, we imagine Ethan will most definitely meet this goal. To learn more about Ethan, please call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photo credit: Shelley Miller

2015 FOSTER PARENTS OF THE YEAR

At the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board Meeting on May 13th, the 2015 Foster Parents of the Year were recognized and honored by regional elected officials, agency representatives, and COG staff, for all of their hard work and dedication to being a loving home for foster children within the region. Although these families come from different backgrounds and experiences, they have one thing in common for sure; they continually open their homes and hearts to youth who have experienced neglect and abuse but deserve a place to feel loved and safe. Without foster parents such as the ones being honored this month, foster youth become at further risk for turmoil as they await reunification with their birth families. We thank and congratulate the 2015 Foster Parents of the Year for all that they do for our communities' children. To see more pictures and to view the Foster Parent of the Year videos, [visit us on Facebook](#).



“We are not only raising children, we are raising the adults of the future. There is nothing more important to invest in than people.” -Rachel and Michael Hunsberger, Loudoun County Foster Parents of the Year



“Just to wake up every morning and I know that there’s a child upstairs in his bed, and it’s only me that’s going to take care of him, that’s what dad means to me.” -Issac Lambert, District of Columbia Foster Parent of the Year

Photo Credit: Shelley Miller

JURISDICTION SPOTLIGHT: LOUDOUN COUNTY

On Saturday, April 25th, Loudoun County partnered with Run Me Home for their 5th Annual Run Me Home 5k/10k Race and Fun Run. Run Me Home is a non-profit organization that plans annual races to help raise awareness and funding for Loudoun County Foster Care and Adoption. All proceeds go directly to helping Loudoun County children with support ranging from school tutoring to family placement. Christi Carmouze, Loudoun County Foster Parent Trainer and Recruiter says “The funds raised from the Run Me Home 10k/5k, allow children to access wants that might not otherwise have been available to them. The funds have been used for guitar lessons, sign language summer camp, helping a youth aging out with a vehicle repair and other non-essentials that increase a child’s sense of normalcy”. Participants were also encouraged to bring a donation for Comfort Cases.

This annual race took place in Leesburg, Virginia where just over 150 participants completed the 5k race and 58 people completed the 10k race. 1st place winners for both 5k and 10k races received a \$100 gift card to Potomac River Running, and 2nd place winners received a \$50 gift card to Potomac River Running as well.

Furthermore, live music by King Street Cats, post-race food from Chic-fil-A and Not Your Average Joe’s Lemonade, and lots of giveaways, contributed to a great day in Leesburg, Virginia.



Photo credit: Amy Lovelady



Follow us on Instagram at [families like yours!](#) In addition to our social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, COG’s Child Welfare program launched an Instagram page this month!

The Instagram was launched in time for Foster Parent Appreciation Month so our program, Families Like Yours, which recognizes outstanding foster parents annually, was the focus of the launch. On May 4-May 8, two 15-second clips of the Foster Parent of the Year videos premiered each day on Instagram leading up to the Foster Parent Appreciation Reception on May 13. These teasers encouraged our new followers to also follow us on Facebook to see the release of the full length Foster Parent of the Year videos after the reception.



Join COG for a day of online giving on Thursday, June 4th, powered by the United Way. Help youth who are aging-out of the foster care system in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia region, and entering their first year of college by clicking [here](#) to give your gift today.