

R25-2011
May 11, 2011

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002-4290**

PROPOSED RESOLUTION SUPPORTING NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

WHEREAS, May is National Foster Care Month, during which citizens and local governments are asked to renew a commitment to ensuring a brighter future for foster youth; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is committed to continuing our tradition of honoring our region's most selfless citizens, foster parents, while recruiting more resource parents for the region's children; and

WHEREAS, the need for loving foster parents continues to grow in the metropolitan Washington area; and

WHEREAS, as local governments continue to face extremely difficult fiscal constraints, we must be pragmatic about our work and consider ways to increase the number of resource homes available for foster children with the scarce resources that are available; and

WHEREAS, COG received a grant from the Freddie Mac Foundation to support a regional appreciation celebration at Nationals Park that recognized existing parents, including the production of a video to recruit other foster parents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

1. The COG Board gratefully acknowledges the ongoing financial support of the Freddie Mac Foundation to support foster care and other child welfare concerns in the region, and the Washington Nationals for their assistance in planning for and hosting the appreciation event.
2. The Board requests that local governments seek to ways to honor local foster parents and recruit additional foster homes, including the airing of COG's foster care video on local cable television stations.

2011 Foster Families of the Year, National Capitol Region

District of Columbia's Foster Parent of the Year:

The District of Columbia's Foster Parent of the Year is Lynette Monroe. Ms. Monroe has been a foster parent since 2001 and has foster parented more than 20 children. She is seen as a "mother" to many. Even after her foster children return to their birth families, they often stay in touch with her and ask for advice. As a parent of six children, three whom she adopted, and three biological children, Ms. Monroe is an experienced parent who obviously loves children. In fact, she is not done yet! This caring foster parent plans to add one more young man to her family who she has been fostering for 8 years. Lynette Monroe resides in Washington, DC (The District of Columbia.)

Frederick County Foster Family of the Year:

Frederick County's Foster Family of the Year is John and Lynn Taylor. The Taylor's are middle and high school educators with a knack for teens. They decided to become foster parents because they wanted to do more for their community. When Frederick County invited this couple to consider foster parenting a 17 year old boy who had been in the system for several years, the Taylor's not only enthusiastically agreed, but dove right in by visiting to make the young man's transition into their home as smooth as can be. After reporting just how well this young man fits in with their family, the Taylor's are now planning to adopt him, right before his 18th birthday. John and Lynn Taylor reside in Frederick, Maryland (Frederick County.)

Montgomery County's Foster Parent of the Year:

Montgomery County's Foster Parent of the Year is Rick Wright. Mr. Wright is often referred to as a "miracle maker." He literally transformed a young man's life who was originally placed in his home temporarily for respite care. This young man had many behavioral and emotional challenges, and yet the youngster blossomed with this single dad. Mr. Wright provided the youngster with the support he needed to let go of his aggression. The one day of respite has turned into a lifelong connection for this young man and adoption plans are underway! Rick Wright resides in Bethesda, Maryland (Montgomery County.)

Prince George's County Foster Parent of the Year:

Prince George's County's Foster Parent of the Year is Vernice Moody. Ms. Moody recently became a foster parent, but has taken to the role like a pro! She opened her home to a sibling group of two to keep the brother and sister together, and has gone above and beyond to create a loving environment for them. When plans were made for the siblings to transition back to their birth family around the holiday season, Ms. Moody and her extended family had an early Christmas for the children before they left Ms. Moody's home. The children have not forgotten their two Christmases, and the love Ms. Moody has for them. Vernice Moody resides in Fort Washington, Maryland (Prince George's County.)

Loudoun County Foster Family of the Year:

Loudoun County's foster family of the year is Vic and Ginnie Dively. They traveled the country as a military family before settling down in Northern Virginia. (Mr. Dively is a former Marine.) After retiring from the military, The Dively's decided to become foster parents, and have been doing so for more than a decade now. They specialize in teenage boys by providing a structured yet loving environment for each young man they foster. This couple's parenting style is adaptable, yet the Dively's consistently infuse the ideas of personal responsibility, value to your community and personal honor. These values have given their foster sons a sense of self-worth and increased self-esteem. The Dively family resides in Sterling, Virginia (Loudoun County.)

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Prince William County Foster Family of the Year:

Prince William County's Foster Family of the Year is Carlos Pasquel and Ada Feliciano. The Pasquel-Feliciano family began their journey to become foster parents in 2003. They called the county to share their interest in providing a safe and nurturing environment for all children, including those with special needs. Recently, the couple received a foster child with pretty extensive medical needs. The Pasquel-Feliciano's take excellent care of the child often helping the social worker by transporting the child to various medical appointments and evaluations. This couple puts their foster child's needs first at all times; their helpfulness and kindness has been a tremendous blessing to the county. The Pasquel-Feliciano family resides in Woodbridge, Virginia (Prince William County.)

Fairfax County Foster Family of the Year:

Fairfax County's Foster Family of the Year is Ray and Judi Mason. The Mason's are a kind, gentle, unassuming couple who foster children, including large sibling groups, to keep brothers and sisters together. They are able to recognize and understand how abuse and neglect impacts children and the scars that are left behind when abuse occurs. By keeping siblings together in their loving home, this couple has healed the children and helped them to feel safe again. During their 8 years of foster parenting, many county children, including sibling groups, teens, and tweens, have learned how to trust again thanks to the Mason family. The Mason family resides in Herndon, Virginia (Fairfax County.)

Arlington County Foster Family of the Year:

Arlington County's foster family of the year is Sanjay and Gita Altekar. The Altekar's work seamlessly with the county's social workers to "bridge the gap," i.e. to maintain healthy birth family connections, at whatever level is deemed appropriate, so that foster children grow up without divided loyalties. The concept of "loving, yet letting go" is obviously difficult to do, but this couple does it well. As a result, the children the Altekar's foster grow up feeling secure and well-adjusted. Their most recent foster child will be staying with the family, as they have happily decided to adopt her. The Altekar family resides in Alexandria, Virginia (Fairfax County.)

City of Alexandria Foster Family of the Year:

The City of Alexandria's foster family of the year is Ginger and Miquel Rodriguez. The Rodriguez's are outstanding advocates for foster children. Due to their unwavering commitment, they have been asked by the agency to serve as a mentor for another foster family. For the last several years, the Rodriguez's have been fostering a child who requires home nurse care, and must be fed through a feeding tube. With full-time work schedules, this couple made arrangements to study and become experts in how to care for the child. In the midst of this, they also received a teenager as a foster placement who was struggling academically. The Rodriguez's advocated and earned a scholarship for the teen to attend a local private school for children with his learning needs. Both of their foster children are thriving and doing well thanks to this couple's extra special care and advocacy. The Rodriguez family resides in Alexandria, Virginia (The City of Alexandria.)