

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FAFS To ‘Raise’ Advocacy And Support For Children In Foster Care By Partnering With New Jersey’s Department of Children and Families and Casey Family Programs

‘Raise Me Up’ campaign has a simple message: “You don’t have to raise foster children to raise them up.”

Monmouth Junction, NJ – Foster and Adoptive Family Services (FAFS) today announced that it is partnering with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Casey Family Programs to advocate for children in foster care through the ‘Raise Me Up’ campaign.

The campaign was initiated by Casey Family Programs, which is the largest national foundation whose sole mission is to advocate for children in foster care. By bringing this exciting campaign to New Jersey, the hope is to inspire people to make a difference in the lives of children in foster care within their own communities.

“All of us have a role to play in raising up the nearly 500,000 children in foster care across our nation,” said Cari DeSantis, executive vice president of Casey Family Programs. “Raise Me Up is more than an awareness campaign, it is a call to action on behalf of children right here in New Jersey who just need the helping hands of caring adults and a committed community to reach their full potential.”

People will find various avenues to help children in foster care by accessing the ‘Raise Me Up’ Web site, www.RaiseMeUp.org, and clicking ‘community’ and selecting ‘New Jersey.’ This site also will be accessible through FAFS’ Web site, www.fafsonline.org.

Mary Jane Awrachow, FAFS’ executive director, said she is pleased to be associated with such an important campaign, which is geared towards helping some of New Jersey’s most neglected children.

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“Foster parents are the safety net for New Jersey’s abused and neglected children,” Awrachow said. “We are honored to be a community partner with ‘Raise Me Up,’ and we look forward to connecting volunteers to our programs that support foster families and the children they care for.”

The ‘Raise Me Up’ campaign first was piloted in Austin, Texas, before arriving in New Jersey. Casey Family Programs decided to take this campaign to New Jersey because of the immense work that is already being done to improve the state’s child-welfare system.

Kimberly Ricketts, DCF commissioner, said she is very appreciative to have this tremendous campaign in New Jersey.

“We are so grateful that Casey Family Programs wanted to bring this inspiring campaign to our state,” Ricketts said. “By partnering with community organizations like Foster and Adoptive Family Services, we truly believe there is something for everyone on the ‘Raise Me Up’ Web site - no matter how much time you have or where you are, you can make a difference.”

For more information on FAFS, and its involvement with ‘Raise Me Up,’ please visit www.fafsonline.org or call 1.800.222.0047.

For further information on ‘Raise Me Up,’ please visit <http://www.raisemeup.org/>.

For further information on Casey Family Programs, please visit <http://casey.org/>.

For further information on the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, please visit <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/index.shtml>.

FAFS is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to provide support, training and advocacy to meet the special needs of foster, adoptive, and kinship families, who provide safe, stable and nurturing homes for children in foster care. For more information on FAFS, including its programs and services, please contact Mary Jane Awrachow, FAFS’ executive director, at 1.800.222.0047 or visit www.fafsonline.org.

The FAFS Foundation is a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit that was formed in December 2008 to assist FAFS, the parent organization, in raising funds for its privately-funded programs and services. For more information on the FAFS Foundation please call 609.977.4880 or visit www.fafsfoundation.org.