



**County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Foster Youth Who Exemplify Success are Stars of the Night at the  
'Celebration 2008' Graduation Ceremony on Wednesday, June 4<sup>th</sup>  
*Actor and Comedian Michael Epps to Serve as Master of Ceremonies***

More than 130 young adults will take center stage to celebrate their success on Wednesday, June 4, 2008, as part of the 19<sup>th</sup> annual "Celebration 2008: Honoring the Academic Achievements of Foster Youth." The event will begin at 7 p.m. at Walt Disney Concert Hall, located at 111 South Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles. Actor and comedian Michael Epps, best known as host of HBO's "Def Comedy Jam" and for his roles in movies such as "Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins" and "Resident Evil: Extinction," will serve as the master of ceremonies for the night.

Hundred of friends, foster parents and family members will watch as the youth proudly march across the stage to honor this milestone in their lives -- an occasion marked by academic accomplishment and triumph over adversity. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Director Patricia S. Ploehn and the Los Angeles County Chief Probation Officer Robert Taylor are among the invited guests. As part of the "Celebration 2008" graduation ceremony, \$577,500 in scholarships will be presented to the youth by a variety of corporations and non-profit organizations. Donors include United Friends of the Children (UFC), The Teague Family Foundation, DCFS, the County of Los Angeles Probation Department, KLOS, Rising Stars, Wells Fargo, the Ralph Hauser III Foundation, Accenture, The Heads Up Youth Foundation and the Rotary Club of L.A. Every graduate receives a new business suit for college and business interviews, and the girls have their make-up done by top celebrity stylists who donate their time and skills for the event.

"Celebration 2008," is a collaborative effort involving DCFS; the County of Los Angeles Probation Department; UFC, a non-profit organization that provides the direct and in-depth services that make it possible for foster youth to become self-sustaining adults; The Teague Family Foundation; the Community College Foundation; and Casey Family Programs.

All of the young adults taking center stage on June 4<sup>th</sup> have demonstrated strong character and perseverance in overcoming past obstacles to graduate from high school with honors, strong grade point averages and acceptance at prestigious universities, colleges and vocational schools.

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*Established in 1984, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services is the public agency charged with ensuring that children grow up safe, physically and emotionally healthy, educated and in permanent*  
*["To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"](#)*

*homes. DCFS works to ensure that all children have a connection to family, friends, schools and neighborhoods and provides services to children and their families when they are at-risk due to actual and potential child abuse, abandonment, neglect or exploitation. With an annual budget of over \$1.6 billion and a diverse staff of more than 7,000 employees, DCFS serves children and families through 18 offices located throughout Los Angeles County including Los Angeles, Lancaster, San Gabriel Valley, San Fernando Valley and the South Bay area.*