



Foster Care Awareness Campaign

Make A Difference...One Child at a Time

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Foster Youth Education Program Recognized During Foster Care Awareness Month Kick-Off in Sacramento on May 12, 2009

In the spring of 2008, Los Angeles County First District Supervisor Gloria Molina along with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) spearheaded a pilot project to improve educational outcomes for foster and probation youth in collaboration with the Pomona Unified School District, the Montebello Unified School District, the Los Angeles County's Chief Executive Office, Casey Family Programs, and the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council. The ultimate goal for First Supervisory District Education Pilot Program has been to demonstrate that when County government, DCFS, and the school districts collaborate to prioritize education for all foster youth, these youth will have better educational outcomes. The Program's success will be celebrated with a presentation at **11 a.m. on May 12, 2009**, during the kick-off ceremonies for National Foster Care Awareness Month on **the North steps of the State Capitol in Sacramento.**

Three foster youth who are successfully participating in the program will be among the Los Angeles delegation to the event. In less than 12 months, these students have made major turnarounds in their grades after years of failures. One student has been able to get back on track towards graduating high school graduation and is now planning to apply to community college. Another participant is now doing well in school for the first time and is passing more than half her subjects. After many years, the third youth has finally had the proper support to get her the learning accommodations she has needed. This advocacy has resulted in her school career making a dramatic turnaround.

"The future of every child in our foster care system depends on the quality of care we provide. And, it is our duty and responsibility to ensure our kids receive the best educational opportunities available to succeed in school," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina. "As part of my First District Education Pilot, DCFS Social Workers work hand-in-hand with our kids to help create positive outcomes through this comprehensive school-based effort, and I am pleased to celebrate our milestones during National Foster Care Awareness Month."

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Each of the 37 participating youth has a team of people led by DCFS to focus on their educational needs and to ensure that they graduate high school and reach their full career potential. Preliminary data suggests that the program is yielding positive results. Sixty-two percent of pilot students surveyed improved their grades after only one semester in the program. The average overall improvement went from a D+ grade point average (GPA) to a C/C+ GPA. Most importantly, five high school seniors who were in jeopardy of not meeting graduation requirements are now on-track for graduating this year. Ultimately, the goal is to expand the program and incorporate it into all DCFS offices countywide.

“Collaboration and commitment throughout the community is necessary to ensure the best possible education for our children. Supervisor Gloria Molina’s First District innovative Education Pilot Project has brought focus, leadership commitment, cooperation and collaboration on behalf of Los Angeles County foster children,” said DCFS Deputy Director Maryam Fatemi.

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