



# County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Foster Youth Who Epitomize Success are Stars of the Day at the Celebration I Graduation Ceremony on June 1<sup>st</sup>

*'Society is wrong about teens; there is hope for our generation.'*  
*-- Foster youth and Celebration I graduate*

Their stories are compelling and inspiring. The 150 young adults taking center stage on June 1, 2004 during the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Celebration I Independent Living Program (ILP) graduation at the Kodak Theater have demonstrated strong character and perseverance in overcoming past obstacles to graduate from high school. Many are graduating with honors. All have strong grade point averages and have been accepted at prestigious universities, colleges and vocational schools. But in addition to their academic achievement, they all share one thing in common – they are all foster children.

“When I go to college, I will bring my passion for never giving up,” said 19-year-old Celebration I graduate Natasha G. of Lancaster. Natasha, who missed her first-grade year in school, is the daughter of a drug-addicted mother. Natasha has overcome her past and developed a passion for medicine. She plans to study medicine in college and become a pediatrician.

Another Celebration I graduate, 17-year-old Kambria C. of Gardena said, “I am steadfast and have chosen to go into the field of psychology with a goal of becoming a family counselor in order to hopefully rekindle the lost ties that tend to develop between parent and teens.” Kambria holds a 3.8 grade point average and is in the top 4 percent of her class.

Celebration I is in its 15<sup>th</sup> year of honoring graduating foster youth in Los Angeles County. The day is structured around the youth. Dozens of scholarships will be given out by a variety of corporations and non-profit organizations. Participating graduates also receive new business suits for college and business interviews. On graduation day, the youth are pampered by having their hair professionally styled and make-up done by volunteers who donate their time and skills to make all the graduates look their very best.

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