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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **Public and Private Agencies Come Together to Honor and Support Foster Youth at Celebration I Ceremony on Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>**

Community partnership is the key to the success of the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Celebration I Independent Living Program (ILP) graduation event on **Tuesday, June 1, 2004, at 6 p.m.** inside the world-famous Kodak Theatre, at 6801 Hollywood Blvd., in Hollywood. Six public and private organizations come together to plan this event celebrating the academic achievements of foster youth throughout Los Angeles County.

"The Celebration I graduation would not happen without receiving the critical support from our community partners," said Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Director Dr. David Sanders.

Celebration I is a collaborative effort between DCFS, the County of Los Angeles Probation Department; United Friends of the Children (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; Community College Foundation; Teague Family Foundation; and Casey Family Programs.

As part of the Celebration I graduation, dozens of scholarships will be given out by a variety of corporations and non-profit organizations including The Teague Family Foundation, United Friends of the Children, Wells Fargo and the Heads Up Foundation.

"We believe in our youth and feel confident that they have beautiful futures ahead. We know that helping them reach their educational goals will help them achieve their lifelong dreams. We look forward to the future of our community filled with strong, inspirational foster youth," said Ian and Janet Teague of The Teague Family Foundation.

"United Friends of the Children is proud to be a partner in this incredible event and to celebrate the success of so many foster youth. Graduating from high school and attending college offers the best chance for foster youth to make the leap to adulthood. We are celebrating tonight, but there is much work left to be done to ensure that this opportunity is available to all," said Polly Williams, President of United Friends of the Children.

The 150 graduates receive new business suits for college and business interviews. On graduation day, the youth have 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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