**National Adoption Month**

November is National Adoption Month, a time to raise awareness about the need for thousands of children to be adopted from foster care. Considering that we celebrate Thanksgiving this month in which we give thanks for the love of our families, I can’t think of a more appropriate time to highlight the need for finding a loving, nurturing and permanent home for every child in foster care. Adoption is a celebration of selfless, simple love. It’s choosing your family and giving children without a family a home filled with love. “During National Adoption Month, we recognize birth families who make the difficult decision to place their children up for adoption, commend foster parents who care for children from different backgrounds, and celebrate adoptive parents who open their families to those children in need”, Presidential Proclamation.

Nationally, there are more than 117,000 children in foster care awaiting forever families, with about 50,000 adoptions occurring yearly. On average, children in the foster care system wait three years to be adopted. Quite concerning is the fact that over 20,000 foster care children age out of the system annually without a family of other permanent home. Locally, we have finalized 404 adoptions this year through the end of October. While we have fulfilled our responsibility to find forever homes for those 404 children, we have not fulfilled our responsibility to those children for whom we are actively seeking adoptive homes. As such, we need to raise community awareness as to the ongoing need for loving and forever families for **ALL** of **OUR** children in foster care waiting for permanent homes.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!