



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES RECOGNIZES 'KINSHIP CARE AWARENESS MONTH' BY SHINING A LIGHT ON THE RELATIVES & FRIENDS WHO HAVE STEPPED FORWARD TO CARE FOR NYC CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE**

*As the NYC Foster Care Population Continues to Decline, the Proportion of Those Being Cared For By Relatives & Friends Continues to Grow; Approximately 43 Percent of Youth in NYC Foster Care Are Being Cared for By People They Already Know*

**NEW YORK, NY** – The NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) today recognized "Kinship Care Awareness Month" by shining a light on the New York City grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other relatives and close friends who have stepped forward to become kinship caregivers to children in foster care. ACS has dramatically reduced the number of children in New York City's foster care system while increasing the proportion of youth in care placed with kinship caregivers. Research shows that, when placed with people they already know, children in foster care experience less trauma, have greater overall well-being, and are more likely to be reunified with their parents, become adopted, or achieve guardianship.

As a result of ACS's targeted strategies and initiatives, approximately 43% of children in New York City's foster care system are living with kinship caregivers – up from 31% in 2018. Moreover, during FY22, more than half of all the children who entered foster care as a result of a child protective investigation were placed with kinship caregivers.

"We know that children in foster care do best when they are being cared for by people they already know, like grandparents, aunts, uncles and even close friends, and that's why I am proud of all the work ACS is doing to make sure that more and more children in foster care are placed with kinship caregivers," **said Commissioner Jess Dannhauser**. "In recognition of Kinship Care Awareness Month, I would like to thank New York City's kinship caregivers for all they do to support our young people."

**When asked why they chose to become a kinship caregiver, one caregiver said,** "The benefit of kinship placement is that the youths are always happier being in a home of a family member or someone they are familiar with as opposed to being with non-kinship foster parents."

"Kinship Foster Care relieves some of the trauma for the children coming into care as they are placed with family that they are familiar with. This provides the children and natural parent(s) with relief as well, as they are able to feel secure and relaxed knowing that they are with people they are familiar with, **said Che Stokes, Director of Foster Parent Recruitment and Mariela Santiago Recruitment Specialist Supervisor (Agency Catholic Guardian Services)**.

Whenever possible, ACS looks to place children entering foster care with relatives or family friends, people who are known to the children. This work begins by exploring kinship options with the parents and the children, and when a kinship resource is identified, the foster care case planner works with the resource to certify their home as a foster home. Kin are held to the same safety standards and training expectations as non-kin foster parents and must meet all foster home requirements; and they receive the same financial resources and other supports that non-kinship foster parents receive. ACS and its community partners strive to support kin so that children can stay closely connected to their natural support networks.

Increasing kinship care is a top priority of the work happening at ACS to address equity across the child welfare system. ACS has successfully implemented multiple strategies in order to increase the proportion of children in care placed with kin, including by establishing new Kinship Specialist positions within the ACS Division of Child Protection (DCP) who focus full-time on finding and engaging kin caregivers for children entering foster care. It was through these and other strategic efforts by ACS's contracted foster care agencies, that we have continued to increase the proportion of children placed with family and friends.

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