

# Voice for Adoption

SPEAKING OUT FOR OUR NATION'S WAITING CHILDREN



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Voice for Adoption Celebrates Adoptive Families and Honors Lawmakers and Advocates, for Child Welfare Contributions During National Adoption Month**

**Washington, DC** – Voice for Adoption (VFA), a special needs adoption advocacy organization, will present their 2011 awards recognizing important contributions to the child welfare field. The awards will be presented at a reception to launch VFA's 7<sup>th</sup> annual Adoptive Family Portrait Project on Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 2pm in the Russell Senate Office Building, Room 325. The primary goal of the Adoptive Family Portrait Project is to raise awareness among members of Congress about the children in foster care who are waiting to be adopted, and share the real experiences and needs of families that have adopted from foster care. Last year more than 52,000 children were adopted from foster care, however there are currently 107,000 children and youth in the U.S. foster care system who are still waiting to be adopted. During November, National Adoption Month, participating members of Congress will display the photos and stories of constituent adoptive families in their Washington, D.C. offices.

VFA selected U.S. Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE) and Representatives Geoff Davis (R-KY) and Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) as the recipients of its 2011 Legislator of the Year awards. VFA's Legislator of the Year awards recognize members of Congress who have demonstrated a strong commitment to child welfare issues, specifically promoting adoptions from foster care and support for adoptive families. Senator Nelson demonstrated leadership through extending and expanding the Federal Adoption Tax Credit in March 2010. Representatives Davis and Doggett were champions of the recent reauthorization of federal foster care programs that provide funding to States to support the promotion of foster care adoption.

VFA selected the Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center (ORPARC) as the recipient of the 2011 Drenda Lakin Memorial Award for Continuing Service to Adoptive Families. This award honors an individual,



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state, or nonprofit organization, whose programs provide valuable adoptive family support after adoptions are finalized. In 2006 the VFA board of directors created this award to honor the memory of Drenda Lakin, one of VFA's founding board members and an inspirational and dedicated advocate for children.

Located in Portland, Oregon, ORPARC is an organization whose mission is to provide ongoing support, education, information, and assistance to the Department of Human Services post-adoptive and guardianship families statewide. ORPARC serves Oregon's entire population of state adoptive and guardianship families, who are parenting approximately 11,896 children under the age of 18. On an annual basis ORPARC staff travel statewide to facilitate 25-35 trainings for parents and professionals. The organization fields numerous calls for parenting consultation, crisis intervention or service referrals. In addition they coordinate a lending library complete with foster care and adoption related learning materials and assist with 55 statewide adoptive family support groups.

VFA's theme for this year's Adoptive Family Portrait Project is: *Families at the Forefront: Post-Adoption Services Support Forever Families*. "It is my hope that through this year's project we raise visibility to some of the ongoing challenges that adoptive parents face when raising children who have experienced abuse or neglect or instability in foster care; but also reflect on the growth of these children and the difference that having a consistent and loving family can make in the life of a child," says Nicole Dobbins, Voice for Adoption's Executive Director. Voice for Adoption's board of directors wish to extend their congratulations to each of the recipients of this year's VFA adoption awards.

Founded in 1996, VFA is a grassroots group of approximately 100 national, state and local organizations and individuals, formed by professionals, parents, and child welfare advocates to address the urgent needs of children who are waiting for permanent loving homes. VFA has members across the nation who recruit families to adopt children and youth from the foster care system. VFA members also provide vital support services both before and after adoptions are legally finalized to help adoptive families through the challenges they often face.

The Adoptive Family Portrait Project is sponsored by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and the Freddie Mac Foundation. To learn more about Voice for Adoption visit: [www.voice-for-adoption.org](http://www.voice-for-adoption.org)

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