

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PITTSBURGH KINSHIP CARE AGENCY LAUNCHES
NATIONAL FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH**

PITTSBURGH, May 1, 2007-- A local kinship care agency launches a new campaign this month in recognition of May as National Foster Care Awareness Month. *A Second Chance, Inc.* will take the lead in a community-wide initiative to increase awareness and promote the significance of *Changing A Lifetime* through Foster Care.

Each year thousands of families are affected by child welfare issues. Amazingly, there are 513,000 American children in foster care because their own families are in crisis and unable to provide for the standard well-being of their children involved. Children and youth in foster care call for safe, stable, and nurturing environments to live in until they can either safely reunite with their parents or establish other lifelong family relationships. These children are in our neighborhoods, play in our community centers and, frequent our church congregations and attend our local schools.

Unfortunately, few citizens understand the magnitude of the issue or what foster care is all about. Promotional support at the local level is a key step in the education process. The more frequently people see positive messages about foster care in their community, the more likely they will be to come forward and do something to *Change a Lifetime* for a child in need. Child welfare issues are nondiscriminatory. They arise in families of every race, ethnicity, culture and age group. Even though research shows no difference in the incidence of abuse and neglect according to racial group, children of color comprise a disproportionate percentage of youth in foster care.

For failure to rally together as a community, our children will face very brutal realities. Statistics state that by the year 2020, nearly 14 million confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect will be reported. A staggering 22,500 children will die of abuse or neglect, most before their fifth birthday. More than 9,000,000 children will be forced into the foster care system. More than 300,000 children will age out of the foster care system, in poor health and ill prepared for success in higher education, technical college or the workforce and 99,000 former foster youth, who aged out the system, can expect to experience homelessness.

With guidance and support from nurturing adults, children and youth in foster care are capable of overcoming the repercussions of previous abuse and neglect. Across the country, people just like you are helping them build brighter futures by serving as their foster parents, relative caregivers, mentors, advocates, respite caregivers social workers and volunteers.

For additional information on how to *Change a Lifetime* through Foster Care, you can contact Joseph Jaffe of A Second Chance, Inc. at (412) 342-0600. You can also visit the agency's website at www.asecondchance-kinship.com for additional information.