



ALL IN

for FOSTER ADOPTION

*A Challenge to Strengthen How the Church
Cares for Waiting Kids*

2021



Lynn Johnson

Former Assistant Secretary for Health and Human Services – Administration for Children and Families is now Vice President of Children’s Initiatives for CityServe.

Former Assistant Secretary Johnson created the ALL IN for FOSTER ADOPTION Challenge as a national call for partners in every state, including governors, agencies, courts, churches, community organizations, foster alumni and the public, to commit to being ALL IN for finding “Forever Families” for the 125,000 waiting children. Lynn believes these are America’s children and with a combined strategy of primary prevention on the front-end when families are struggling and need intervention, as well as communities wrapping around those who step-up to adopt waiting youth, the 125,000 could rapidly be reduced to zero if every state would focus on that number. This group is at eminent risk of ending up in another system, such as juvenile justice, homelessness or becoming trafficked.

STRATEGY

ALL IN for FOSTER ADOPTION

PREVENTION



Equip churches to support conditions for strong and thriving families to prevent the need for foster care placement by reducing child abuse and domestic violence.

AWARENESS



Present through a world class media campaign the plight of children in foster care and the need for healthy families and homes.

RECRUIT FOREVER FAMILY HOMES



Strengthen churches to assist in recruitment and retention of foster/adoptive parents to eliminate the number of children waiting for foster care and to ensure children and youth eligible for adoption are placed in safe, loving and permanent homes.

FIND HOMES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN



Promote foster and adoptive homes for children and youth with special needs. Train prospective parents to become specialists for these children.

EDUCATION



Support tutoring and educational assistance for children and youth in foster care.

ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH AND ADULT FOSTER ALUMNI



Enable youth and adults who have been in the foster care system to guide churches and communities towards successful action and return the voice and the dignity to those who have been in the foster care system.

MENTORS FOR AGING YOUTH OUT



Provide a support system for youth leaving the foster system, including a match program for mentors.

RESOURCES



Utilize CityServe's vast network of HUBs and PODs with resources to provide home furnishings, appliances, schools supplies and much more to foster care and adoptive families.



Our Children – Not Just Numbers!

122,000 waiting children have a plan for adoption, but have not achieved permanency.

71,000 may be described as “legal orphans” as the parental rights have been terminated.

Approximately **50,000-60,000** children/youth are adopted each year from foster care but before permanency may wait more than three years.

Approximately **14,000** youth, ages 15-17, wait twice as long for permanency as compared to those under the age of 14.

It is estimated that $\frac{2}{3}$ of children in foster care come from a sibling group and more than 50% are not placed with their siblings.

Approximately **20,000** youth exit foster care to emancipation, annually. Many children in the foster care system will experience PTSD, some at a higher rate of military war veterans. Many foster youth will not graduate from high school and rarely earn a college degree.

Many foster youth who age out of the system get involved in the criminal justice system, experience homelessness, are sex or labor trafficked, unemployed, and for young women, will be pregnant by age 21.

PRIORITIES

ALL IN for FOSTER ADOPTION

Advocacy

Challenge government officials at the federal, state and local levels to help waiting children and youth in their state by: 1) publicly prioritizing the needs of children in foster care, 2) working to remove any state-specific barriers for their waiting population, including court-related issues, and 3) engaging businesses, faith-based organizations, nonprofits, youth and adults with lived experiences and philanthropic groups to work together in recruiting and supporting adoptive and foster families.

Public Relations

Launch a nationwide ALL IN for FOSTER ADOPTION media campaign to bring awareness to the plight of vulnerable children and challenge the faith-based community to become foster parents and forever families. For example, ALL IN for FOSTER ADOPTION will champion the National Adoption Day each year across America.

Training

Host virtual and in person ALL IN Summits at churches and other venues to inspire participation in the ALL IN for FOSTER ADOPTION campaign.

Resources

Connect home furnishings, appliances and school supplies from CityServe warehouse HUBs to foster and adoptive parents. Learn more about the CityServe supply chain, www.cityserve.us.



“Lynn is a passionate leader who has dedicated her life to serving vulnerable children. She truly understands the imperative of government working alongside faith and community leaders to strengthen families.”

~ Mary Landrieu, Former U.S. Senator, Louisiana





ABOUT CITYSERVE

CityServe is a collaborative network of churches and community leaders connected to bring help and hope to families and individuals in need. CityServe trains, equips and mobilizes the local church to fulfill its God-given mission to serve its neighbors with tangible goods and proven solutions to struggling families, the fatherless, homeless, jobless, addictions and much more.

For more information about CityServe and its initiatives, please visit <https://cityserve.us> or on social platforms @cityservehq.



Jedd Medefind

president, Christian Alliance for Orphans

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Churches, government, nonprofits and businesses each play a vital role in the lives of waiting children. The ALL IN for FOSTER ADOPTION Challenge brings us together so every precious life can be touched and transformed.



Riley Greene

Winshape Homes

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For 25 years, I've witnessed the faith community create a place of love and care for society's most vulnerable children. It's a little taste of Heaven when you see families reunited and children adopted in forever homes. The ALL IN for FOSTER ADOPTION Challenge empowers more churches to serve these children and families.