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Meet amazing children during monthlong celebration of adoption
By Ann Scott, Florida Voices

As a mother and as first lady of Florida, I know that all children have unique gifts and personalities, making them a blessing to their families and communities. On any given day in Florida, approximately 800 children in foster care are available for adoption. November is National Adoption Month, a time to recognize these amazing children and consider becoming an adoptive family.

I have spent time with several of Florida's foster children, and they have captured my heart. I know they will touch yours too as they share their hopes and dreams of belonging to a forever family.

One of those children is Jimmy, whom I met at a reading event at the Florida Governor's Mansion recently. He is a 16-year-old, red-haired teenager with an infectious smile. His favorite foods are Mexican and Italian cuisine. Jimmy's favorite color is red, and he enjoys watching shows with superheroes. He likes soccer, baseball, video games, watching TV and reading books. Jimmy dreams of becoming an architect or joining the military when he grows up.

Jimmy will be one of the amazing children featured during National Adoption Month. Throughout November, Florida is presenting "30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!" A different "Amazing Child" available for adoption will be featured every day during November on the Explore Adoption website at www.adoptflorida.org. Many of the children will share their stories in their own words by video. I encourage Floridians to visit the website daily and become acquainted with the children and their dreams of belonging to a family

You might have met some of them already and didn't even know it. In every community in Florida today, children in foster care -- particularly teens, sibling groups and children with medical needs -- are available for adoption. They might be in school with your children, attending your church or temple, or playing on your child's sports team. These children need and deserve loving, supportive and permanent families. It is so important that they have parents to love and guide them.

So many deserving children in foster care are waiting for a permanent family and a place to call home. While a private adoption can be expensive, adopting one of Florida's children in foster care costs little or nothing. In addition to changing the life of a child forever, Florida offers many benefits to adoptive families.

My husband, Rick, and I personally understand the difference adoption can make in a child's life. When Rick was a young boy and his mother remarried, her husband formally adopted Rick as his own son. This important step gave him the support and love every child deserves.

I hope "30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!" will spread the word about the many children in foster care in need of the support and love of a permanent family. They are Florida's children. Their futures depend on actions that all of us can take today. Please encourage your family, friends and colleagues to meet these amazing children online. With your help, we can raise awareness and recruit loving adoptive families willing to open their hearts and homes. Together, we can make their November a month to remember.

First lady Ann Scott and her husband, Gov. Rick Scott, are the parents of two daughters, 29-year-old Allison and 26-year-old Jordan. Visit Explore Adoption at www.adoptflorida.org or call 1-800-96-ADOPT begin_of_the_skype_highlighting 1-800-96-ADOPT end_of_the_skype_highlighting to meet Florida children in foster care who are available for adoption. The Community Partnership for Children, which

covers Volusia, Flagler and Putnam counties, will have its annual celebration of adoption Nov. 18 at the Sunset Harbor Yacht Club in Daytona Beach.

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