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Children & Families First Addresses Delaware's Need for New Foster and Adoptive Parents Using Nationally Recognized Training Program, *Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE*.

Wilmington, DE – Children & Families First (CFF), a Delaware non-profit Human Services agency has introduced *Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE*, a nationally recognized training program, creating a new path to ensure that skilled foster and adoptive parents (Resource Parents) will be available to care for Delaware's growing number of children who are separated from their birth parents because of abuse and neglect. *Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE* integrates preparation (pre-service training) and assessment to realistically educate prospective Resource Parents about what is expected, what the child may be like, and how the child welfare system works.

Already growing, the number of Delaware children requiring foster care and adoptive services is expected to surge as an estimated 600 Delaware babies will be born addicted, many requiring separation from their parents. Since 1919, CFF has partnered with over 3000 resource parents and facilitated 2,518 adoptions. “Our Resource Parents are selected and trained to protect and nurture children, meet their developmental needs, support their relationships with their birth families, connect children with relationships intended to last a lifetime, and work as members of our professional team,” explains Theresa Broom, MSW, Program Director for Adoption and Foster Care services at Children & Families First.

When an individual or family shows interest in caring for these vulnerable children, participating in *Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE* prepares them to become team members in child protection and to be confident in this new role. CFF staff members report that the *Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE* program offers insight that makes them more empathetic and supportive of the Resource Parents and children they work with.

Created by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), the “Pride” model has been used for years, but *Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE* is a dramatic departure from long-standing practices in the child welfare industry. The paradigm shift is reflected in the dated language of children being “placed” with adoptive and foster parents as if they were objects, to the accepted language of children “joining” families. According to Eileen Mayers Pasztor, DSW, a consultant/trainer for CWLA, “Children & Families First is exactly the kind of child welfare agency we are proud to have implement *Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE* and our entire model of practice. CFF is committed to minimizing trauma and maximizing teamwork.

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Children & Families First recognizes that foster and adoptive parents are a rare, valuable resource. Without them, children who must be separated from their families of origin would not have the benefits of family living. *Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE* also emphasizes that to be any kind of parent (birth, foster, adoptive) is a privilege, not a right; but for children to be protected, that is a right, not a privilege.

More About Children & Families First

In existence since 1884, Children & Families First (CFF) helps children facing adversity on their journey to adulthood. CFF uses proven methods to help families raise their children so they can flourish. Children & Families First strengthens Delaware families by delivering an innovative and effective continuum of community-based social services statewide. Services are provided in our five sites located in all three Delaware counties, as well as in homes, schools and other community locations. CFF employs 275 staff, and serves approximately 40,000 people each year.

CFF is positioned to meet changing community needs through replication of evidence-based practices and rigorous outcomes management. CFF is a member of the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, the Children's Home Society of America, and a partner agency of the United Way of Delaware. CFF is accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA). COA is committed to maintaining the highest level of standards and quality improvement in order to identify providers that have set high performance standards for themselves and have made a commitment to their constituents to deliver the highest quality services.

Children & Families First provides a comprehensive array of programs within these areas of service: Positive Parenting, Healthy Babies, Early Childhood, Supporting Teens, Community Schools, and the Workplace. Specific programs include the Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families America, Seaford House residential treatment center for adolescents, Functional Family Therapy, Intensive Outpatient therapy, Delaware Stars for Early Success (childcare), and Rise Up – Keep a Job.

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Children & Families First helps children facing adversity on their journey to adulthood. We use proven methods to help families raise their children so they can flourish. Children & Families First strengthens Delaware families by delivering an innovative and effective continuum of community-based social services. To learn more, please visit: www.cffde.org. For more information about the PRIDE model, please visit the Child Welfare League of America: www.cwla.org/pride-training/