



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CLERMONT COUNTY, OHIO

ROBERT L. PROUD

R. SCOTT CROSWELL III

EDWIN H. HUMPHREY

Immediate Release

May 10, 2010

Foster Parents Can be Life Savers

Batavia, Ohio. The Board of Clermont County Commissioners (BCC) has proclaimed the month of May as *Foster Care Month*. In making the proclamation on May 10, 2010, the BCC recognized the valuable and extraordinary contributions of foster families who show unconditional love and support for children in crisis. Currently, there are 100 foster parents in Clermont County, but there is a need for many more. "This is about saving children's lives," said Clermont Commissioner Scott Crosswell. "Many of the children come into foster care from despicable and horrific conditions. Through foster care with a loving and nurturing family, our community is able to give these kids a life they never would have had."



"We have 320 children in the custody of the Clermont County Department of Job and Family Services (DJFS); because we do not have enough foster parents locally, many of these children have to be placed outside the county," said DJFS Children's Protective Services (CPS) Director Tim Dick. "Keeping these children in the community lessens the trauma children experience after being removed from their homes."

Melissa Burke has been a Clermont County foster parent for four years. "When we first welcomed a 16-month-old girl into our home she was biting and acting out," she said. "Now, I am happy to say our story has a happy ending. Our *daughter* now eagerly runs to meet us when we enter the house, showers us with kisses, and interacts well with her three brothers." Burke and her husband adopted the girl and her brother. "I never thought I could get attached so quickly; loving them was so easy."

Leslie Fehlinger has been a Clermont foster parent for five years. "Yes, it is stressful and emotional, but it is the most rewarding experience I have had in my life," she said. "Foster parents give so little and get so much back in return. Clermont County has a unique program that links caseworkers and foster families; a lot of help is available." Fehlinger has adopted two of the six children she has fostered.

"We encourage those who can provide these children with a safe, secure, and nurturing environment, to consider becoming a foster parent," said CPS foster care supervisor Erica Boller. For more information about the Clermont County foster care program, call (513) 732-7173 or visit the Web site www.ClermontForKids.org.

Pictured above: Clermont County foster parents Leslie Fehlinger and Melissa Burke

#

For additional information about this or other county news, contact Clermont County Communications Director Kathy Lehr at (513) 732-7597 or by e-mail, klehr@co.clermont.oh.us.