



national foster care coalition

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UNIQUE COLLABORATION GENERATES FIRST OF ITS KIND EFFORT TO SUPPORT FOSTER CARE

*New study indicates that 82% of Americans have never received information
about supporting foster care*

WASHINGTON, D.C. May 19, 2004 – In conjunction with National Foster Care Month (May), four of the nation’s leading foster care organizations are announcing a groundbreaking effort to help generate support for the half-million children and youth in foster care. The National Foster Care Coalition, Casey Family Programs, the Child Welfare League of America and the National Foster Parent Association will be teaming up with financial services giant Capital One to conduct a test to identify effective ways to motivate the American public to take action to help children and youth in foster care succeed.

Children and youth in foster care are a vital part of this country’s future and deserve every chance to be a part of a safe and healthy family. Yet historically, there has been little support for this often forgotten population of more than half a million children in the United States. “At present, more than 280,000 foster parents are needed to care for these children in need of a loving home,” said Karen Jorgenson, Executive Director, National Foster Parent Association.

However, coordinating a national recruiting effort presents a challenge. “Until now we haven’t had the communications vehicles to reach the public nor the resources to determine what messages and approaches will be most effective,” said Robin Nixon, Director of the National Foster Care Coalition.

Low consumer awareness of the need to support foster care exacerbates the problem. In a recent study, only 18% of Americans say they have ever received information about foster care.*

ADMINISTERED BY Connect for kids

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Capital One, known for its target marketing expertise and rigorous test and learn approach to marketing, is applying these expertise to this cause. This summer, Capital One will test different messages with two million Capital One customers to learn what will motivate the public to volunteer time, donate money or become a foster parent. These customers will be invited to call a toll-free number, engineered and staffed by Capital One associates. These associates, who were specially trained by the National Foster Parent Association, will answer questions and distribute an informational brochure to interested customers. This process will enable Capital One to create demographic profiles and models to share with foster care organizations nationwide to help inform their future outreach and public awareness campaigns. Capital One expects to complete the test and analysis by Fall 2004.

“Capital One has stepped forward to become the first corporation in the nation to provide meaningful leadership for children and youth in foster care,” said Shay Bilchik, President & CEO, Child Welfare League of America. “We are pleased that Capital One has embraced the vision shared by CWLA and its nearly 1100 member agencies that are committed to engaging people and communities everywhere in ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Our hope is that through this collaboration we will gain greater community support for foster care.”

“We learned from our foster care colleagues that there is little quantitative information about what motivates Americans to become foster parents, and practically no information about what motivates them to volunteer or financially support foster youth and families,” said Marge Connelly, Executive Vice President of Operations at Capital One. “Our associates jumped at the chance to apply what’s made us successful in the financial services industry to such a worthy cause. To that end, we have brought our top direct marketing, call center, information technology, creative and analytic experts together with the leading foster care organizations to understand what will help make an impact.”

To help understand consumer willingness and motivations to volunteer, donate time and/or become a foster parent, Capital One conducted a consumer internet survey** on awareness and perceptions of foster care earlier this year. Among the findings, 4 in 10 respondents say they definitely or probably would consider donating or volunteering their time (42%), or donating money (42%) to foster care; and 16% say they would definitely or probably consider becoming a foster parent.

“As a company dedicated to helping youth at risk, Capital One is proud to support children and youth in foster care as part of our commitment to the community,” said Connelly. “These children are in foster care through no fault of their own, and they all deserve a safe loving family and caring adults in their lives.”

“This is a bold new public-private collaboration. We hope this research will be a new catalyst to motivate more Americans to support this issue and we welcome Capital One’s commitment and energy to this effort,” said Antoinette Malveaux, Director of Strategic Alliances at Casey Family Programs.

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***Foster Care Survey Methodology**

Capital One and Directions Research conducted an internet survey among a nationally representative sample of 516 consumers 18 years and older whose incomes match US Census from April 9th to April 13th, 2004. Sampling tolerance for this sample size is +/- .04, 90% confidence level.

National Foster Care Coalition

The National Foster Care Coalition is a diverse group of national organizations working in collaboration to raise public awareness, coordinate advocacy efforts, and build diverse alliances that strengthen foster care and community supports for children, youth, and families. Coalition partners fund local, regional, and national transition initiatives, sponsor regional and national conferences on foster care, and provide significant levels of training and technical assistance to programs, governments, and advocates nation wide. The National Foster Care Coalition is administered by **Connect for Kids**, the nation’s premier on-line children’s advocacy and communications organization. www.connectforkids.org

Child Welfare League of America

Established in 1920, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) is the nation’s oldest and largest membership based child welfare organization. CWLA strives to advance sound public policy on behalf of the more than nine million children and families served by its nearly 1,100 public and private member agencies. To further its mission of preserving, protecting, and promoting the well-being of all children and families, CWLA conducts research, develops standards of best practice, hosts regional and national conferences, provides comprehensive, field-based consultation and professional development services, and is the largest publisher of child welfare materials in North America. Additional information can be found on the CWLA website at www.cwla.org.

National Foster Parent Association

The National Foster Parent Association, a nonprofit, volunteer organization, is the only national organization which strives to support foster parents, and remains a consistently strong voice on behalf of all children. The NFPA strengthens foster families through nationally focused legislative advocacy, training and education, publications, and networking among foster parents, state and local foster parent associations, and child welfare organizations. The NFPA’s purpose is to bring together foster parents, agency representatives and community people who wish to work together to improve the foster care system and enhance the lives of all children and families, to promote mutual coordination, cooperation and communication among foster parents, Foster Parent Associations, child care agencies and other child advocates, to encourage the recruitment and retention of foster parents, and to inform the membership and general public of current issues regarding foster care. www.NFPAinc.org

Casey Family Programs

Casey Family Programs’ mission is to provide and improve—and ultimately to prevent the need for—foster care. Established by United Parcel Service founder Jim Casey, the Seattle-based national operating foundation has served children, youth, and families in the child welfare system since 1966. www.casey.org

Capital One

Headquartered in McLean, Virginia, Capital One Financial Corporation (www.capitalone.com) is a holding company whose principal subsidiaries, Capital One Bank and Capital One, F.S.B., offer consumer lending products and Capital One Auto Finance, Inc., offers automobile and other motor vehicle financing products. Capital One is dedicated to sharing their success with the communities they operate. They have built long-term collaborative alliances with agencies that are dedicated to revitalizing communities and helping youth at-risk. Capital One offers leadership grants to non-profit organizations, volunteer community outreach programs, donations to underprivileged children, and other corporate charitable giving.