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## Pictures that Touch the Heart

### New Photo Exhibit Helps Older Children Find Adoptive Homes

Chicago, IL, Sept. 27, 2005 – When most people think about adoption, they usually think of infants. However, many older children are also in need of adoptive families, and they need help getting connected with them. Now these older children are receiving help from a new source – the Heart Gallery of Illinois.

The Heart Gallery of Illinois is a beautiful collection of museum-quality photos of local children who are waiting to be adopted. The photos have been taken by professional photographers who have donated their time and talent to the project. When completed in November, the exhibit will travel and be displayed at various museums, galleries, and public spaces throughout Illinois.

The goal of the Gallery is to increase public awareness about Illinois' "waiting children" and their need for loving adoptive homes. Organizers hope that the remarkable photos, which capture the spirit and personality of each child, will encourage more families to consider adoption.

While the Gallery is a serious effort aimed at improving the lives of young people, the children themselves are enjoying their participation in the project. Ten-year-old Kiana is a good example. Talking about her recent photo session with photographer Paul Sherman, she said that she enjoyed having her hair and make-up done by professionals, and that Sherman was "funny and nice." She was surprised by some aspects, saying, "I knew we were going to take pictures, but I didn't know it would be so many!" Afterwards, she couldn't decide which photo she liked best and happily announced that she liked "all of them." Asked about her overall experience, Kiana said, "It was fun – I want to do it again."

Positive reactions from participating children and gallery visitors have helped Heart Galleries become successful in other states. A number of adoptions have occurred, including some where photographers have adopted the children they photographed.

The Illinois gallery was initiated by a group of volunteers who had read about these successes. The organizing partners have since grown to include the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Office of Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn, and the Adoption Information Center of Illinois.

The Heart Gallery of Illinois will open with a special reception from 6:30 pm until 8:30 pm on November 4, 2005, at Chicago Children's Museum at Navy Pier. The exhibit will continue at the museum through November 6. The event is open to the public. For more information, visit [www.heartgalleryofillinois.com](http://www.heartgalleryofillinois.com).

For information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, call toll free 800-572-2390. November is National Adoption Month!

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The Heart Gallery of Illinois is a 501(c)(3) non-profit guided by a collaboration of volunteers and organizations including:



Illinois Lt. Governor Pat Quinn