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**Wendy's Wonderful Kids Program Reaches Major Milestone of 500<sup>th</sup> Adoption.**

*Child-focused adoption recruitment program makes impact for waiting children.*

**(DUBLIN, OH – July 31, 2008)** July marks a momentous milestone for the signature program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program – it's 500<sup>th</sup> adoption.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids combines the fundraising strengths of Wendy's restaurants and its customers, aggressive grants management of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and the talent of experienced adoption recruiters throughout the nation and Canada to move children from foster care into permanent, loving adoptive homes.

Through customer donations dropped in the now-familiar canisters at Wendy's restaurants and support from other partners, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption raises considerable funds for the program. With the proceeds, the Foundation awards grants to local adoption organizations to hire recruiters to execute aggressive child-focused recruitment programs targeted exclusively on placing foster care children with adoptive families.

In Cleveland, grants are given to Northeast Ohio Adoption Services to fund Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters.

In four years, the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program has grown from seven to 119 recruiters throughout United States, the District of Columbia and Canada. To date, the program has helped more than 3,558 children—identifying parents for 2,300. Of the total number of children the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program has helped, 456 children have been placed in pre-adoptive homes. On July 1, 500 children had been adopted by their forever families and by mid-July the number of children adopted increased to 547.

“The 500<sup>th</sup> adoption marks a major milestone for the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program. Adoption was an important cause for Wendy's founder Dave Thomas because the need is real and the impact we can have in the life of a child is tremendous,” said Rita Soronen, executive director of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. “By the end of July, the Foundation expects nearly 600 children will be adopted as a result of Wendy's Wonderful Kids. That speaks to the momentum recruiters throughout North America have gained and the power of exponential. We anticipate the total number of Wendy's Wonderful Kids to be adopted will reach 700 by the end of August. We remain committed to our goal of finding forever families for 10,000 children waiting in foster care to be adopted.”



"Northeast Ohio Adoption Services is proud to partner with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. As Wendy's Wonderful Kids achieves the 500th placement of a child from foster care with an adoptive family, we celebrate and recommit to those children who still wait. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing a child who has waited for a family too long, achieve what most of us take for granted; membership in a family. Being part of an effort that involves all 50 states and Canada has inspired us as we work for the day when all children in foster care who are waiting for adoption have a permanent loving family," said Sandra Panezich, Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter with NOAS in Cleveland.

"On average, a child waits in foster care more than five years. Of equal concern, more than 20% children will age out of the system at 18 without having the love and support of a permanent family," said Soronen. "We're extremely grateful to every person who embraces this remarkable effort on behalf of the more than 159,000 foster care children in the United States and Canada who are anxiously awaiting adoption."

For more information on foster care adoption, call 1-800-ASK-DTFA or visit [www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org](http://www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org).

**About the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption:**

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a nonprofit public charity dedicated to dramatically increasing the adoptions of the more than 129,000 children in North America's foster care systems waiting to be adopted. Created by Wendy's founder, Dave Thomas, who was adopted as a child, the Foundation leads signature national service programs and works to streamline the adoption process and make adoption more affordable for families. As the only foundation dedicated exclusively to foster care adoption, we are driven by Dave's simple value: Do what's best for the child. To learn more about the Foundation's work, please visit [www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org](http://www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org).

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