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Upcoming Events

FYI Program

May 23-July 25

FYI Networking Lunch

July 8

Congressional Roundtable:
Preventing Teen Pregnancy and
Promoting Healthy Relationships
Among Youth in Foster Care
July 16

FYI Congressional Briefing
July 23

Deadline for 2009 Angels in
Adoption Nominations
July 31

Deadline for Members of
Congress to Submit 2009 Angel
in Adoption Selections to CCAI

CCAI Joins Rosie O'Donnell and Lifetime Television in Hosting Congressional Screening of Foster Care Movie "America"



On Wednesday, May 6, CCAI hosted Rosie O'Donnell and Lifetime Television on Capitol Hill for a Congressional Screening of the Lifetime Original Movie America produced by and starring Rosie O'Donnell.

"Based on E.R. Frank's book of the same name, the film takes viewers on the emotional journey of seventeen-year-old

America as he navigates the United States foster care system. O'Donnell leads the cast as a therapist who gives America the support to deal with his troubled past and find the courage to survive against all odds."

The day's events included:

- A morning press conference attended by Rosie O'Donnell, Senator Mary Landrieu, Representative Joseph Crowley, and several alumni of CCAI's Foster Youth Internship (FYI) Program. The press conference called attention to that evening's Screening of the movie America as well as the need for Congress to act quickly to pass the Foster Care Mentoring Act (S.986), which outlines a wide variety of strategies for recruiting young men and women to serve as mentors to youth in foster care.
- Several exclusive press interviews with Rosie O'Donnell and Senator Mary Landrieu including Newsweek Magazine, Greta Van Susteren of Fox News ([click here](#) for the transcript of the interview and to find a link to the video), and Norah O'Donnell of MSNBC.
- A luncheon attended by Rosie O'Donnell, Darryl McDaniels (Run DMC), Senator Mary Landrieu, Senator Olympia Snowe, Representative Jim McDermott and five former foster youth from CCAI's FYI Program.
- A screening of the Lifetime Original Movie America starring Rosie O'Donnell in the Capital Visitor Center's North Theater.
- A question & answer session with the audience and Rosie O'Donnell.

August 31

Angels in Adoption Program
September 28-30

National Adoption Month
November 1-30

National Adoption Day
November 21

To add an adoption or foster care related event or briefing to this list, please contact CCAI at (202) 544-8500 or info@ccainstitute.org

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This Month's Spotlights

Angel in Adoption:

John and Holiday Hays, 2006



John and Holiday Hays of Bearville, Minnesota have 13 adopted children, 11 of whom have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). The Hays provide a caring and supportive home for each of their children while also advocating for the FASD community at large. Their advocacy organization, HaysKids, provides valuable resources such as education and parenting techniques for FASD families. To read more about the Hays, [click here](#).

Foster Youth Intern:
Rebecca Leach, 2006



CCAI commends actress Rosie O'Donnell and Lifetime Television for their commitment to using media and film to raise awareness of the needs of children in foster care across the United States, and looks forward to continuing to partner with them on behalf of children in need of homes.

Foster Youth Interns Descend on Washington



On May 23rd, CCAI welcomed the 2009 Class of Congressional Foster Youth Interns (FYI) to Washington, D.C. The 15 Foster Youth Interns hail from across the country, representing Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Maine, and Wisconsin. Each of the interns is working toward an advanced degree, with four working to complete post-graduate programs.

As advocates, you know the impact a well informed policy-maker can have. The focus of our Congressional Foster Youth Internship (FYI) Program is designed to empower these fifteen young adults and instruct them in how best to bring their unique perspective and resilient spirit to bear as ambassadors for the needs of other waiting children to the halls of Congress. Since its inception, the FYI program has provided 80 young people who spent their formative years in foster care with an opportunity to come to Washington, D.C. and participate in a nine-week Congressional internship.

By uniting former foster youth with Members of Congress, CCAI's FYI Program helps raise awareness of the policy barriers that hinder these youth from realizing their basic right to a family. Through interaction with these youth, Members of Congress are given a firsthand view of both the



"My internship experience was life changing. I was surrounded by other successful foster youth, as well as, the Nation's leaders who were responsible for creating legislation that would directly affect foster youth. Prior to my internship I did not want to work in Child Welfare policy. However, the internship taught me that each voice makes a difference. I learned that in order to see change you need to be part of change." To read more about Rebecca, [click here](#).

CCA Member:

Sen. Blanche Lincoln

As a child welfare advocate, Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) has led numerous efforts to recognize the crucial role that foster and adoptive families play in our communities and in the lives of our nation's most vulnerable children.

This spring she introduced the Resource Family Recruitment and Retention Act of 2009 (S.410). It establishes much needed standards of consistency in agency and state policies for foster and adoptive care, calling on agencies to follow best practices proven to increase and retain the number of foster, adoptive, and kinship parents. To read more, [click here](#).

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Research Corner

CRS Publication on Adoption

failures and successes of the U.S. foster care system. As part of the program, CCAI facilitates the production of an annual policy-related report, created entirely by the Foster Youth Interns. The FYI report represents the combination of a lifetime of experience and nine weeks of intense policy-related research. The report is intended to be used as a resource for Members of Congress working to address the many issues affecting youth in care. The interns then host a Congressional Briefing where they release the report.

Since arriving in Washington, the Foster Youth Interns have had a variety of activities aimed at both preparing them for their internships and strengthening the bonds within the group. Here are just a few of the highlights:

Orientation-Capitol Hill, May 23, May 28-30

During orientation, the internship class received a wide range of information about their Congressional internship.

Retreat-Danville, PA, May 24 - May 27

Hosted in Danville, Pennsylvania, the retreat offered the 2009 interns an opportunity to participate in group sessions specifically designed to help them discover the lessons learned from their journey through foster care and how to best use their personal experience in becoming an outspoken advocate for foster care reform.



Members Luncheon-Sen. Mary Landrieu's Home, June 17

During this lunch, Senator Landrieu and Congressman Aaron Schock reaffirmed their commitment to foster youth and their vision for bringing about change on behalf of youth in care.

Tax Benefits Updated

The CRS Report, Tax Benefits for Families: Adoption, was updated in September 2008. This report outlines the tax benefits for adoption, examines the associated policy issues, and provides a legislative history of the tax provisions for adoption. The CRS will continue to update the report as the legislation changes. The current Adoption Tax Credit legislation will expire on December 31, 2010 unless Congress reauthorizes it. The Order Code for this report is RL33633 and it is authored by Christine Scott. This report is an update to the version released in February 2007.

Child Welfare Information Gateway Report on Major Child Welfare & Adoption Legislation

Childwelfare.gov is a website dedicated to protecting children and strengthening families. The website includes a report of [Major Federal Legislation Concerned with Child Protection, Child Welfare, and Adoption](#). The report, current through February 2009, provides a framework for understanding the Federal legislation that has shaped the delivery of child welfare services and presents a summary of Federal legislation since 1974 that has had a significant impact on the field. It gives an overview of each act and its major provisions, including an illustrated timeline detailing when each piece of legislation was enacted. Particularly helpful to CCA Members will be the section on the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008.

GAO Releases Study of State Healthcare for Foster Youth

The GAO has issued a report documenting the specific efforts of ten states to provide healthcare for foster children. While the federal government oversees child care through the Administration for Children and Families, state welfare agencies are responsible for providing healthcare for the children, which Medicaid often pays for. A [one-page summary](#) of the report and the [entire report](#)



On May 29, government officials from the Kyrgyz Republic met with representatives of the 65 American families whose adoptions have been delayed since February, when the Kyrgyz government announced that it would not be processing adoptions until new adoption legislation is implemented. Representatives from more than twenty Congressional offices also joined the Kyrgyz officials. To read more, [click here](#).

Members Urge Reform in Romania

With the help of CCAI, 21 Members of Congress signed a letter to Romania's newly elected Foreign Minister to urge reform of current law in order to allow intercountry adoption and "more fully promote and support permanent parental care for children." The letter makes note of Romania's own startling estimate that 86,000 children are currently in state care in the country. To read more, [click here](#).

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CCAI is a non-profit organization. Our work on behalf of children would not be possible without support from the following organizations:

The Annie E. Casey Foundation



For more information about CCAI, visit www.ccaainstitute.org.

are available.

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We Need You!

The events described in this month's newsletter are just a few of the many ways that CCAI is working to help children realize their basic right to a family. We could not do any of this work were it not for the support of individuals and organizations who share our vision of a world where every child has a safe, loving and permanent family to call their own. To find out how you can help, please visit [our website](#).

Sincerely,

Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute