



# ILLINOIS FAMILIES Now and Forever

Families by Foster Care, Adoption and Guardianship®

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services®



## Foster Parent Appreciation Month

MAY 2004



*Bryan Samuels*

### From the DCFS Director

Dear Foster Parents:

May is designated Foster Parent Appreciation Month in Illinois – a time when the spotlight shines on foster parents. Many of you will participate in activities observing Foster Parent Appreciation Month. Some of you may even be recognized for your role as a foster parent. But I want to extend a sincere thank you to all foster parents, not just the ones who have received awards.

Being a parent is challenging. Add to it a child who is biologically not yours, has been abused or

neglected, and may have some bonding or social issues and the challenge may be overwhelming. But you chose to take on responsibilities not everyone can handle: numerous doctor's visits, school visits, attending counseling sessions, organizing sibling visits, continuous foster parent training, caring for children with disabilities, and sometimes dealing with destructive behavior. In addition to these responsibilities, many of you also work full-time jobs and care for your biological children. And for that show of love, you deserve to be recognized always, not just in the month of May.

Thanks to you, children in foster care have learned to love and trust again. You have encouraged these children to move forward and you have supported their dreams. You have opened up a world of possibilities for them and maybe even one day they will open their hearts and homes to a child. And for that, I am truly grateful for your commitment.

There is no greater way to make a difference in the life of a child than to be a loving, supportive foster parent. Thank you for choosing to help DCFS raise our children.

# FOSTER OUR FUTURE