

**HEART GALLERY EXHIBIT AT RENSSELAER RAIL STATION
HIGHLIGHTS CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION
Professional Portraits on Display Until Jan. 15**

A New York Statewide Heart Gallery was unveiled at the Rensselaer Rail Station today (Nov. 17), and will remain on display for two months.

The traveling photo exhibit features professional portraits of children and youth in need of adoptive families. The display is a first for the station, and is a cooperative effort of the New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS), which oversees adoption; Heart Gallery of America; the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA); and professional photographers who donated their services.

Governor David A. Paterson proclaimed November as Adoption Month and Nov. 17 as Heart Gallery Day in New York State, noting: "It is the hope of New Yorkers that all children awaiting adoption will quickly be placed in a permanent and loving family."

OCFS Deputy Executive Director William Gettman Jr. said: "The children and youth portrayed are among 1,300 across New York State who are available for adoption and in need of a family. We urge all who are able to consider opening their home – the rewards are priceless."

Laurie Sherman Graff, board officer of Heart Gallery America, said: "We're proud to be part of these remarkable collaborative efforts. The talented photographers who volunteer their services capture so well the personalities and spirits of waiting children in need of their 'forever home.'"

CDTA Executive Director Carm Basile said: "We're proud to host this Heart Gallery exhibit, and hope the thousands of travelers who pass through the Rensselaer Rail Station each week will take a moment to view the portraits and consider becoming an adoptive parent."

The Heart Gallery is a high-profile traveling photographic exhibit created to find forever families for children in foster care. Founded in 2001 in New Mexico to assist adoptive parent recruitment efforts, the Heart Gallery became a national project of over 100 Heart Galleries throughout the nation. To date, thousands of children have found their "forever families" as a direct result of Heart Gallery exhibits.

Photographers volunteer their talents by taking portraits that help capture the individual personality and spirit of each child. The photos and biographies are then displayed in traveling gallery exhibits and on websites.

(over)

(2)

For information on how to become a foster or adoptive parent in New York State, visit the OCFS website at www.ocfs.state.ny.us , call 1-800-345-KIDS, or contact your local social services district. The OCFS website has information in English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and Arabic, and an Adoption Album with photos and summaries of children.

.For more information about Heart Galleries in New York State, visit the OCFS website or the Heart Gallery of America website, www.heartgalleryofamerica.org .

Train passengers to New York City this week will be able to view a Heart Gallery NYC exhibit in the Amtrak Rotunda at Penn Station.

#