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**Los Angeles County recruits gay and lesbian foster and adoptive families through RaiseAChild.us**

**Los Angeles, Calif.** – The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is partnering with three non-profit organizations to recruit gay and lesbian families to foster and adopt children during November, National Adoption Month, in an effort entitled *RaiseAChild.us*.

The coalition has placed large banners on light poles along major boulevards across L.A. featuring two gay families who have fostered and adopted children from the County. They have also placed PSAs on local radio stations and created *RaiseAChild.us*, a resource website.



*Local families are featured on banners displayed across L.A. in November, celebrating National Adoption Month.*

One of the families profiled in the campaign includes actor /comedian Alec Mapa, known for his work on ABC's *Desperate Housewives* and *Ugly Betty* television series. Alec and his husband fostered and adopted their six-year-old son in 2010.

“Our prospective dads are curious to learn about the benefits of creating their families through fostering and adoption,” says Rich Valenza, Co-President of The Pop Luck Club, a Los Angeles-based non-profit organization founded in 1998 with a mission to support gay fathers, prospective fathers and their children. “We are thrilled to partner with L.A. County and two of the most visible agencies working with LGBT families, Southern California Foster Family and Adoption Agency and Penny Lane Centers.

Sari Grant, DCFS Recruitment Administrator for foster care and adoption, believes the partnership will be beneficial. She says, “We have had great success training people from the LGBT community and providing children with safe, secure and loving homes.”

Nationwide, there are nearly 500,000 children in foster care, with approximately 115,000 available for adoption. As the nation's most populous county, Los Angeles serves a very large percentage of these children. As of July 2011, there were 35,223 children receiving child welfare services, 15,390 of them in “out of home” care.

“Ten years ago there were very few LGBT families that understood that they could foster and adopt through the county,” says Robyn Harrod, Adoption Director at Southern California Foster Family and Adoption Agency. “Now, nearly 50% of the families our agency works with are headed by single or partnered gays and lesbians.”

Laurie Rein, Adoption Program Manager at Penny Lane Centers underscores the importance of a large-scale media campaign. “We want the LGBT community to see these posters, hear the radio PSAs and realize that fostering and adopting is an option for them. We want to establish the fact that gays and lesbians are welcome to foster and adopt. We know this community provides safe and loving homes... and our kids are waiting.”

For more information, visit [www.RaiseAChild.us](http://www.RaiseAChild.us)

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**Photos from the RaiseAChild.us Outdoor Campaign**

**CAPTION:** Local families are featured on banners displayed across L.A. in November, celebrating National Adoption Month.



*Sunset Blvd from Fairfax Ave to Laurel Canyon Blvd*



*Beverly Blvd at La Cienega Blvd*



*Cahuenga Ave at Universal Studios Blvd*



*Highland Ave at The Hollywood Bowl*



*Los Feliz Blvd at the 5 Freeway*



*Vermont Ave at Sunset Blvd*