



Dave Thomas  
Foundation  
for Adoption®

Finding Forever Families for Children in Foster Care

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Leigh Burnside Joins Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption Board of Trustees

**Foundation committed to finding adoptive homes for the more than  
155,000 children waiting in North America's foster care systems**

**Columbus, Ohio** — The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, a national non-profit public charity, today welcomed Leigh Burnside, Senior Vice President, Finance and Chief Accounting Officer at The Wendy's Company, as a member of its board of trustees. She will serve a three-year term.

“Every child deserves a permanent home and loving family,” said Burnside. “I’m humbled for the opportunity to serve such an outstanding organization and a mission that is near to my heart.”

In her 15 years at Wendy's®, Burnside has held numerous leadership roles, including Chief Accounting Officer; Vice President, Finance and Planning; and Vice President, Strategic Financial Analysis. Her collaborative leadership approach has helped strengthen finance across the Wendy's system, including uniting franchisee and company finance leaders to review business initiative economics and benchmark financial results.

“Leigh is a caring, talented and innovative leader with a great passion for the Wendy's brand and our signature cause, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption,” said Mary Schell, Chief Public Affairs Officer for The Wendy's Company and chair of the Foundation's board of trustees. “She will bring tremendous energy and expertise to the board.”

Through its signature program, Wendy's Wonderful Kids®, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption provides funding to adoption agencies to hire recruiters who implement an evidence-based, child-focused recruitment model. A rigorous, five-year evaluation revealed that the model is up to three times more effective at serving children who have been in foster care the longest, including teenagers, children with special needs and siblings.

To date, more than 475 Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters have found adoptive homes for more than 9,500 children in foster care across North America.

“Leigh is an outstanding addition to the board,” said Rita Soronen, President & CEO of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. “She has a proven track record of success as a leader, a deep knowledge of finance and accounting and a collaborative spirit that will be extremely valuable in growing the Foundation’s impact across the country.”

Burnside is a graduate of the University of Maryland, College Park, and is a certified public accountant (inactive). She lives in Dublin, Ohio.

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

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a national nonprofit public charity dedicated exclusively to finding permanent homes for the more than 155,000 children waiting in North America’s foster care systems. Created by Wendy’s founder Dave Thomas who was adopted, the Foundation implements evidence-based, results-driven national service programs, foster care adoption awareness campaigns and innovative grantmaking. To learn more, visit [davethomasfoundation.org](http://davethomasfoundation.org).

Attachment: Leigh Burnside photo

