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THE GENERAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AUTHORITY RECEIVES GRANT FROM THE DAVE THOMAS FOUNDATION FOR ADOPTION

Winnipeg, Manitoba, November 20, 2013— The General Child and Family Services Authority has received a grant from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption that will bring children one step closer to finding homes. Manitoba is the fifth province to be awarded this grant.

The grant is dedicated to funding a child-focused adoption recruiter for Wendy’s Wonderful Kids, a signature program of the Foundation. The General Child and Family Services Authority recently hired Laura Wilson for the position of adoption recruiter. Wilson comes to the position with 18 years of experience in the field of adoption. “It’s an amazing opportunity for Manitoba and I’m excited to be part of the program. I believe that the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids program will make “unadoptable” an unacceptable word for children who might otherwise have grown up in the foster care system,” Wilson said.

The Wendy’s Wonderful Kids (WWK) model is simple and effective: Wendy’s restaurants, its customers and other partners raise funds for the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. The Foundation issues grants to local adoption organizations, which hire adoption professionals and implement an aggressive child-focused recruitment program. This program is targeted exclusively at placing children in foster care into permanent homes – particularly the longest-waiting children. Recruiters must dedicate 100 percent of their workdays to the program.

In 2011, a rigorous five-year evaluation by Washington, D.C.-based Child Trends revealed that a child referred to WWK is up to three times more likely to get adopted, especially those with mental health disorders, and children over age 15.

“Dave Thomas was a great philanthropist,” said Jay Rodgers, Chief Executive Office of the General Child and Family Services Authority. “His legacy lives on through the Dave Thomas Foundation and tremendous initiatives like the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids Program. We all know how important it is for kids to grow up with a permanent loving family. For children in care, this doesn’t always happen and many turn 18 in care without being adopted. As a service system, we need to do better. With the support of Wendy’s Wonderful Kids, the General Child and Family Services Authority can focus dedicated time to matching the longest waiting children in foster care with families who hope to adopt. This is all about creating a new and hopeful future for

these children and youth by finding permanent loving families. It is especially rewarding for us to be able to announce this new partnership during National Adoption Awareness Month which has been celebrated across North America on an annual basis since 1990,” Rodgers said.

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption president and CEO Rita Soronen said the model is having a direct impact already: “Since the national launch in April of 2004, 188 recruiters throughout the U.S., the District of Columbia, and Canada have joined Wendy’s and the Foundation to serve children waiting in foster care.” Soronen added, “As of today, over 10,000 children have been served by the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids program. Of those children, more than 6,600 have had families identified for them, and 3,828 have been adopted and another 638 are waiting for a final court hearing as a direct result of this terrific partnership.”

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