

NEWS



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Department of Human Services

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Philadelphia Foster Parents Named Hometown Heroes by 76ers

Philadelphia--Philadelphia foster parents Jessie Floyd and Michael Gaymon will be honored as Hometown Heroes by the Philadelphia 76ers. The couple, who are raising four foster children, will be honored in a ceremony at the 76's game against the Indiana Pacers on Monday, January 21, at 2:00 at the Wachovia Center. The ceremony will take place at the first half quarter.

Floyd and Gaymon were winners of a contest sponsored by the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS) in which foster care agencies were asked to nominate outstanding foster parents for recognition. The couple was nominated by social workers Kim Nelson and Jonathan Madoff of Presbyterian Children's Village (PCV).

According to Madoff, Floyd, who was herself a child of the foster care system, "knows what it is like to be unwanted." As a result of her experiences, she specifically sought to take in children that are difficult to place.

"All of the children in their care are 13-14 year old males who have behavioral challenges at home and at school," said Madoff. "But they love each child as if he was their own flesh and blood and they fight for each child with tenacity and grace."

According to DHS Acting Commissioner, Arthur Evans, on any given day there are more than 7,000 children in foster care in Philadelphia. Most enter the system as a result of abuse and neglect.

“Foster parents provide these children a lifeline that allows them children to heal and grow. They are the backbone of the child welfare system,” says Evans. “We are delighted that the Sixers have chosen to honor these special people and draw attention to the need for more loving families who will open their home and hearts to a child in placement.”

Floyd, Gaymon and their foster children learned of their award when members of the 76ers organization, including team mascot Hip Hop, made a surprise visit to their home. The family will receive free tickets to Monday’s game where they will be honored. In addition, DHS purchased tickets for nine other nominated foster parents and their children as well as 50 older foster youth who are members of the Achieving Independence Center.

As part of this celebration, the 76ers have invited all of the foster families who attend the game to win a chance to play the Family Feud game, with “surprise guests.” The families will be divided into teams and will compete to be named the All-Star Family of the Day. Each family member will be asked to work together to answer questions on Martin Luther King Jr. and other influential African Americans. Prizes will be given to the winning family.

Those who are interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent should visit DHS’ website at dhs.phila.gov.

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The Philadelphia Department of Human Services is the City agency charged with protecting children from abuse, neglect, and delinquency; ensuring their safety and permanency in nurturing home environments; and strengthening and preserving families by enhancing community-based prevention services. In partnership with community organizations, DHS provides services to strengthen the overall well being of Philadelphia children, youth, and families using a customer focused approach that is responsive to evolving community needs.

The Achieving Independence Center, a project of Philadelphia Department of Human Services, is a “one-stop” center designed to help youth aging out of foster care achieve their goals of self-sufficiency.