



15 March 2008

Media Release

Making Small Miracles Happen

The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare is promoting Foster Care in the Victorian Community. Foster Carers play a vital role in providing children with a safe and stable environment.

Stephanie Ferguson, a foster carer of 13 years, has cared for an amazing 122 children of all ages. She provides Short Term care, Respite Care and Long Term care for some of Victoria's most vulnerable children.

Stephanie says, "Fostering has been very rewarding. It has kept me young and fit, and although it can be very challenging at times, with the support of the agency and my own family you are able to work through these issues. If anyone was thinking of fostering I would say 'give it a go!'"

Another wonderful carer, Shirley Gearman agrees with Stephanie. Shirley says, "Foster care is a rewarding, positive experience, and I and my family enjoy being able to provide a safe and caring environment for the children in our care."

There has been a 7% decline in the number of Foster Carers in Victoria in recent years (DHS 2003). "According to a recent survey conducted by The Centre in Victoria, it is estimated that we need around 1000 additional foster carers to provide an appropriate placement for children and young people" says Coleen Clare, CEO of The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare. This is twice the number of approved carers in the system at present.

The Centre runs a 24 hour hotline service **1800 013 088** for the public who are interested in Foster Care or gaining information about Foster Care. People can also visit www.cwav.asn.au for information.

"Foster Care is a rewarding and challenging experience, but most importantly you are changing the life of a child, so I encourage anyone who is interested or has thought about Foster Care to call the Hotline number." says Coleen Clare.

-ends-

To arrange interviews please contact:
Karen Scobell
The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
03 9614 1577 / 0417 557 286