



DAVE THOMAS  
FOUNDATION  
FOR ADOPTION®

Ohio

Department of  
Job and Family Services

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**First adoptions finalized in Ohio partnership**  
*Sibling group of three finds family in Allen County*

**COLUMBUS, OHIO** – Three northern Ohio siblings have a loving, permanent new home and are the first adoptions a result of a partnership between the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption that will help more of Ohio’s waiting children find homes.

The new family was formed in January, when an Allen County mother adopted the 8-, 10- and 12-year-old siblings. The children had been in foster care since 2009, and their adoptive mother originally thought she only would be able to provide them foster care.

But it was the tenacity of a Wendy’s Wonderful Kids recruiter who made the difference in helping the adoptive mother see the difference she made in the children’s lives. The recruiter gave her the skills she needed to address the tough questions children can have about adoption, to help them understand the permanency of adoption, and to discuss what it would be like to have a family again.

[Wendy’s Wonderful Kids](#) is the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption’s child-focused recruitment model that moves America’s longest-waiting children from foster care into adoptive families.

“It’s all about finding the best families we can for waiting children in Ohio’s foster care system,” said Rita Soronen, president and CEO of the Foundation. “These children already had a great parent to care for and love them during the last three-and-a-half years. She just needed the expertise and support that the recruiter brought to understand the bond she has with her children is one they can have forever.”

“Through the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids program, Allen County Children Services has been able to hire two highly qualified and experienced children services social workers as our specialized adoption recruiters,” said Scott Ferris, executive director of Allen County Children Services. “They work a reduced, yet intensive caseload to achieve the goal of securing forever families for our harder to adopt children and sibling groups. We would not have this ability without the support of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.”



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In May, ODJFS Director Michael Colbert [announced that his agency would spend \\$2.3 million](#), including \$1.1 million in state funding, to hire specialized, child-focused recruiters whose sole mission is to find adoptive homes for older children in foster care. In October, 24 recruiters, currently serving 55 counties, began working to find Ohio's waiting children the permanent and loving homes they deserve.

"Too many children, especially older children, linger in foster care," Colbert said. "Through this partnership, we are finding adoptive families who will care for these children, love them, and give them the sense of belonging and security they need. I'm honored to work with the Dave Thomas Foundation, which does so much good for children who can be so easily forgotten."

In 2011, the Foundation released the results of [an empirical five-year study of the Wendy's Wonderful Kids model](#). The study proved that children in the program are up to three times more likely to get adopted.

"This is just the beginning," Soronen said. "Our adoption model has had tremendous results all throughout the United States, and we want to make Ohio the state all others look to for how to give children the families we promised."

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

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a national nonprofit public charity dedicated to dramatically increasing the adoptions of the more than 134,000 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 signature programs, foster care adoption awareness initiatives and research-based advocacy efforts. To learn more, visit [davethomasfoundation.org](http://davethomasfoundation.org), or call 1-800-ASK-DTFA.