The Heart Gallery of New Mexico Foundation was created to raise funds necessary to expand the Heart Gallery of New Mexico as well as to improve upon and support other New Mexico initiatives which encourage adoption through foster care. The Heart Gallery of New Mexico Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) organization. To find out how you can help or donate, contact Judy Richardson at (505) 982-2426 or visit www.heartgallerynm.org.

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We apologize for any unintentional omissions or inaccuracies. Please notify Judy Richardson at (505) 982-2426 for corrections.

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Heart Gallery of America, Inc. heartgalleryofamerica.org

A Special Report

Shanaya & Dominick by Julien McRoberts

Stephen by Julian McRoberts

Jessica by Candice Gould

Jerry by Stephanie Pennington
Birth of a nationwide movement

The Heart Gallery concept was born in New Mexico in March 2001. Diane Granito, a recruiter for the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) brought the idea to life at the nation’s first Heart Gallery exhibit in Santa Fe. Expanding on the suggestion of Cathy Maier Callanan, a photographer and adoptive mother, Diane gathered dozens of volunteer professional photographers to take portraits of available children. Christened “The Heart Gallery,” the awareness-raising exhibit opened at Santa Fe’s Gerald Peters Gallery. It drew a capacity crowd to view the stirring portraits of children in CYFD custody who were dreaming of finding their “forever families.”

Since then, the Heart Gallery of New Mexico events have helped find homes for many children who were considered “hard to place,” due to their age or the fact that they were members of a sibling group. One of the happiest endings came in June 2005, when a special portrait inspired a couple to adopt five teenage siblings. Two photographs even “clicked” so well with the children they were photographing that they went on to adopt them!

Caring hearts across America respond

Thanks to media coverage and technical support from CYFD, the Heart Gallery spread to several other states. At first the message spread slowly; then, in January 2005, an insightful article about the project by Rosemary Zibart appeared in Parade magazine. It was as though the nation had been waiting to learn about the children and how they could help. Hundreds of e-mails and phone calls poured into CYFD asking for guidance. As more groups sprang up, The Heart Gallery became the focus of extensive national media attention, at one point achieving a media milestone when it was featured on the Today Show and in the New York Times and People in the same week.

Other coverage followed with CNN, MSNBC, USA Weekend, Women’s World, ABC World News Tonight, The View, 20/20 and the CBS special: A Home for the Holidays, all doing stories on the Heart Gallery. Each time a piece appeared, more people were inspired to step up and help. Nearly every state now has a Heart Gallery and have some or many: Florida has thirteen groups, California has eight, and Texas has Heart Galleries that cover as many as 60 counties.

CYFD continues to be a conduit for the positive energy of these dedicated planners. The US Children’s Bureau initiative, The Collaboration to Adopt Us Kids, has also been a strong supporter of the project, naming the Heart Gallery a “best practice.” On November 1, 2005, they hosted the first National Heart Gallery exhibit at Union Station in Washington, D.C.

With 46 states currently hosting or planning Heart Gallery openings, the range of talent, generosity and caring is breathtaking. Each area’s group of volunteers, organizers, and photographers create a special setting to show these deserving children in their best light. Though each Heart Gallery is unique, creativity and dedication are evident in all of them. They have moved people to cry, to smile, and to act. Each number of Heart Gallery-inspired placements will soon number in the thousands. Individual children and sibling groups of three, four and five have found families... because their new parents saw a Heart Gallery portrait and wanted to make their dreams of “home” come true.

national news + notes

Santa Fe
Matthew Strab, of the Heart Gallery of Bowdrown County Florida, has joined CYFD and Diane Granito in a new initiative: co-founding Heart Gallery of America, Inc.

An adoption event held at Heart Gallery Tampa Bay has matched 40% of the foster children from our 2007 gallery with potential families since we opened in February, with 6 adoption finalizations already! Jesse Miller, Director, Tampa Bay Heart Gallery

Las Vegas, Nevada
Second opening event held May 2007. 37 children featured, 10 placed so far for this year. First year, 58 children featured, 55 have adoption plans, 30 are ready to go to finalization. The direct results from Heart Gallery would be 60 - 70%... Sharon Fenn, Las Vegas Heart Gallery

Lancaster, Oregon
Adoption inquiries – Pre-Heart Gallery 11/05 - 3/06: 30. Post-Heart Gallery 11/06 - 3/07: 72. Additionally, our foster/adoption orientation class size has grown from about 20 - 40 people to 70 - 80 people per class. This has resulted in the need for a second trainer at each class to assist with the large class size.

Honoalulo, Hawaii
From David Louis who “lived out of foster care himself,” we had a huge Heart Gallery exhibit in one of the largest and fanciest malls just outside of Honolulu, Hunds, maybe thousands through the Heart Gallery and most arrived that day because of the media coverage. We had over 100 families sign up to become foster parents and begin the process to become licensed to adopt. (Follow-up: David and his wife are adopting a Hawaii Heart Gallery teen)

Orange County, California
The Heart Gallery has been responsible for generating over 600 inquiries in Orange County since November 2005. We have already been the most successful adoption outreach program in Orange County’s history!

Thanks from the heart to: Adoption Means Love – Adopt Us Kids & A.D. Design Christian Community Foundation of South Florida – Sebastain Dartevelle Sherry Hurley/Lily’s Light – Rebekah Neyer/Center International – The Piscione Family – Matthew Strab – Randy & Elizabeth Travis – Ella Zamora

…and to Child advocates across the country who have embraced The Heart Gallery and its dream, to find a loving family for each of the 118,000 waiting children in America!