

Proclamation 8661 of April 29, 2011**National Foster Care Month, 2011**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Progress in America can be measured by the opportunities we pass on to our children. For nearly half a million youth in foster care across our country, the best path to success we can give them is the chance to experience a loving home where they can feel secure and thrive. During National Foster Care Month, we renew our commitment to ensuring a brighter future for foster youth, and we celebrate the selfless individuals who make a meaningful difference in their lives.

Young people in foster care are in the system through no fault of their own, and each of our Nation's children deserves a stable home and a devoted family. Strong support structures provide children with the environment needed to learn, grow, and reach their greatest potential. Permanence is critical to the future success of foster youth and must be a key component of foster care initiatives.

My Administration is committed to achieving security for every child and supporting adolescents in foster care as they transition to adulthood. The Permanency Innovations Initiative, spearheaded by the Department of Health and Human Services, is providing support to public-private partnerships focused on decreasing the number of children in long-term foster care. Over the next 5 years, this program will invest \$100 million in new intervention strategies to help foster youth move into permanent homes, test new approaches to reducing time spent in foster care placements, and remove the most serious barriers to finding lasting, loving environments. Over 110,000 children in foster care today are waiting to be adopted. Across America, there are families who need these children as much as these children need families. I encourage those interested in adopting a child in need of a home to explore the life-changing resources available at www.AdoptUSKids.org.

We are also investing in the health and well-being of our young people in foster care. Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we have significantly increased funding for the Title IV-E adoption and foster care assistance program to provide safe and stable out-of-home care for children. As a result of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act I signed into law last year, all children enrolled in foster care automatically qualify for free meals in all Department of Agriculture child nutrition programs. Additionally, beginning in 2014, the Affordable Care Act will require States to extend Medicaid coverage up to age 26 for all youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

As a Nation, we all have a responsibility to remain persistent in the charge to provide the best care possible for children when they cannot remain in their own homes. During National Foster Care Month, we recognize the efforts of foster families, social workers, faith-based and community organizations, and others that are improving the lives of young people in foster care across our country, and I encourage all Americans to partake in efforts to serve these children in the year ahead.

Proc. 8662

Title 3—The President

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2011 as National Foster Care Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by taking an active role in activities across our country that recognize not only these cherished children and youth, but also the commitment of so many that touch their lives at a most challenging time.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8662 of April 29, 2011

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month, 2011

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month shines a spotlight on the important role physical activity plays in our Nation's health and wellness. Participation in sports can strengthen both body and mind, and all kinds of active pastimes can help improve physical and mental well-being. During this month, we rededicate ourselves to educating, engaging, and empowering Americans of all backgrounds and abilities to live a healthy lifestyle.

Through the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition, my Administration is encouraging Americans to make physical fitness and nutritious eating part of their daily lives. Regular physical activity and good nutrition are essential to staying healthy. A balanced diet and exercise can help reduce the risk of developing chronic and costly diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. For more information on the President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition, and for tips on exercise and nutrition, visit: www.Fitness.gov.

The health of our sons and daughters is key to our Nation's future. Unfortunately, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled over the past three decades, and nearly one in three children in our country is either overweight or obese. With the help of adults serving as role models and encouraging positive behaviors, we can give our children the healthy future they deserve and turn around these troubling statistics. Playing a game of basketball or taking a walk through a park with a child may seem like small steps, but they can have an immeasurable impact on the conduct and health of a young person. When children see people in their lives making healthful decisions and encouraging them to do the same, they are more likely to emulate those actions.

The First Lady's "*Let's Move!*" initiative is focused on solving the epidemic of childhood obesity within a generation by inspiring children to be physically active and empowering parents and caregivers to make healthy choices for their families. In its first year, "*Let's Move!*" made great strides