

**Stand up for our children**

Every year our agency and community recognize May as National Foster Care Awareness Month. The purpose of this recognition is to recognize and thank all of the wonderful and gifted foster parents in the Upstate. These families provide so much unconditional love to the most vulnerable children in our community. Imagine a 10-year-old boy coming to your home with nothing but the clothes on his back, which are dirty and too small. You do not know this child, however; as a foster parent, you invite him into your family and life. Furthermore, you provide him with the basic needs, educational needs and unconditional love despite whatever comes to the surface in his daily life. It is amazing all of the great things the foster parents in Greenville County are doing every day. We would like to thank each of them for that heartfelt love that they provide to the children of Greenville County.

We would also like to recognize and thank our staff at Greenville Department of Social Services for all of the relentless work they do every day for the citizens of Greenville County. Our workers and leadership take our mission statement very seriously and consider it an honor to serve our community. Our staff understands that it is more than a job at DSS; it is a lifestyle to care for our community. The mission statement for our agency and our staff is: "To efficiently and effectively serve the citizens of South Carolina by ensuring the safety of children and adults who cannot protect themselves and assisting families to achieve stability through child support, child care, financial and other temporary benefits while transitioning into employment."

We would like to encourage our community to get involved with child welfare in Greenville County. There are several ways for you to get involved:

- » Become a Foster Parent.
- » Adopt a child that is currently legally free.
- » Become a Guardian ad Litem.
- » Become a member of the Foster Care Review Board.
- » Mentor a teenager that has no one to give him or her positive reinforcement.
- » Consider becoming a part of the DSS staff and help us find permanency for children faster. If any of these opportunities interest you, please feel free to contact me at [keith.frazier@dss.sc.gov](mailto:keith.frazier@dss.sc.gov). Become a part of the solution and stand up for our children and families. Finally, we would like to share with the community that in 2013 Greenville DSS passed the federal program improvement plan and saved the state from paying penalties. We are very proud of this accomplishment and are looking forward to a great 2014 in improving our quality.

*» Keith Frazier is director of Greenville County's Department of Social Services.*



**Keith Frazier**