

October 1, 2013

Dear Faith Leader,

Become a 2013 partner in our fifth annual *Bells of Hope: Ringing in a Brighter Tomorrow for CT's Waiting Children*. *Bells of Hope* is one of Connecticut's statewide National Adoption Month initiatives. It is a weekend where faith communities can partner with the Child Welfare System by raising your community's voices in prayer and ringing bells for all the Connecticut children who are waiting for permanent homes.

We are asking faith communities to offer prayers during weekend services anytime the weekend of November 1 - 3rd and ring their bells (if they have bells) November 3rd at 6 p.m.. Bells are to ring one time for each Connecticut child in need of a permanent home. In the past four years this event has grown to include close to 200 faith communities throughout the state. Some faith communities have held candlelight vigils during the bell ringing while others held prayer vigils including guest speakers and music. Many have simply arranged for their bells to be rung at 6 p.m. by children who were already adopted or in adoptive families. Any part or combination of prayer and bell-ringing on behalf of the children is truly appreciated.

Why should you support this effort? Over 250,000 children enter foster care in the United States every year. A little more than half will eventually go home to their birthparents. The rest will need to a new permanent family. Nationally, there are over 104,000 children in the foster care system awaiting a family. Some of these children will never be adopted and will "age out". Of those who age out, approximately 50 percent of them eventually experience homelessness or become incarcerated. Most will never finish high school and many of the girls will end up becoming single mothers, repeating the cycle of poverty, abuse and addiction that brought them into care.

Please prayerfully consider participating in this event. For those faith communities interested in more information, you can be connected with one of our regional coordinators who will be happy to provide you with information about the beautiful vigils held last year or arrange for you to speak with one of the faith communities who held one. The events they planned were exceptional and incredibly inspiring!

Sincerely,

www.BellsOfHope.org



Connecticut
Foster / Adopt