



## **ONE CHURCH ONE CHILD INFORMATION BRIEF**

- One Church One Child was founded in 1980 to help the State of Illinois address the disproportionate number of African American children lingering in the foster care system.
- Father George Clements and innovative social service leaders Greg Coler and Gordon Johnson realized that African American communities relied on their churches for leadership.
- They determined that if one family in each African American church adopted one child, they could move every child currently in state care into a loving, permanent home.
- The success of One Church One Child in improving adoption rates for African American children in Illinois caused other states to take notice; soon states across the nation began to follow the successful model.
- In March 1988, One Church One Child was implemented in Florida under the leadership of Greg Coler and in 1990, the Florida Legislature passed the One Church, One Child Corporation Act

- This law mandated that the Governor appoint members to the One Church One Child Board of Directors.
- These volunteer board members are recruited from local communities to represent each of the Department of Children and Families districts.
- One Church One Child of Florida (OCOC) is a grass roots organization administratively.
- Board members and staff work directly with churches, businesses and other organizations to promote adoption and recruit adoptive families for waiting children.
- Four Tallahassee staff coordinate board meetings, provide orientation and training to the local advisory groups, facilitate ongoing relationships with area CBCs and coordinate National Adoption Month activities statewide in addition to promoting OCOC Adoption Sunday annually.
- OCOC is contracted by the Department of Children and Families to provide referrals to the CBCs in each region of the state. These families are also mentored through the adoption process.

- While adoptions in Florida have increased in recent years, the need for this program remains. We must all work to ensure permanency and stability for all of Florida's children.
- OCOC promotes statewide awareness of the need for adoptive homes by hosting community events to engage and educate the public.
- Some examples of our efforts in this area include
  - Educating and engaging churches to partner with OCOC in promoting adoption in their congregations, encouraging them to consider adoption or foster care and referring interested families to OCOC.
  - Providing photographs and brief bios to churches to share with congregations information on children in Florida's foster care system that are awaiting adoption.
  - Asking pastors to expand Church Watch Care Ministries to include children in foster care and families in local communities who need strengthening.

- Promoting National Adoption Month, November, and One Church One Child Adoption Sunday – Second Sunday in November – bring special recognition to adopted children and their families and to encourage others to consider adoption as a viable option to growing families.
- Promoting National Foster Parents Month – May – 60% of children are adopted by foster parents or relatives. Recognizing the families and encouraging others to consider getting involved.
- Coordinating support activities for children who are in foster care and for local families through building partnerships with churches, local businesses and individuals who wish to help make a difference in the lives of children.
- Most of these children are African American and are over 5 years old. Some are part of sibling groups that would like to stay together, and some have other special needs.