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Florida #1 in Adoptions from Foster Care

By: Dave Wax and Taren Reed

TALLAHASSEE, FL -- Florida is being rewarded for being the best state in the nation when it comes to adopting children from foster care.

As a reward for leading the way, the state is receiving \$9.75 million from the federal government in bonus funds, according to the Florida Department of Children and Families.

That money is a huge chunk of the total amount the government is paying out, which is \$35 million over 38 states and Puerto Rico.

"Florida has embraced a never-give-up attitude about finding families to adopt children in foster care. Our progress on adoptions is a great opportunity to thank all the adoptive parents who made a commitment to a foster child and the adoption counselors who supported their efforts," Secretary George Sheldon of the Florida Department of Children and Families said on Thursday. "Under Governor Crist's leadership, more families are making the choice to open up their hearts and adopt a foster child. Even in tough economic times, people want to adopt the children most in need of safe, loving homes."

The DCF reports 3,777 children adopted from foster care in the most recent fiscal year, breaking the record set the year before of 3,674.

The Governor and other state officials have supported the "Explore Adoption" campaign, focused on finding "forever families" for foster children.

Dalton, a 16-year-old, was in foster care for six years before being adopted this summer by the Rosenberg family, who live in Ocoee. Dalton is one of 25 teens on the "longest waiting teens" list who have been adopted. There are still over 75 others on that list.

"We're supposed to be together. It's probably the greatest thing I've ever done," said Theresa Rosenberg, who already had adopted another teen from foster care and has two biological children. "They're just as needy and loving as other kids. They don't have any concept of what a family is. They don't get it at first. Later when they get, they can't get enough of it."

CLICK HERE to learn more about the Governor's adoption program.

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