



Dave Thomas  
Foundation  
for Adoption®

Forever Families for Children in Foster Care



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CANADA®

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## 15,000 Children Adopted Through Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption Program

**The Foundation's Wendy's Wonderful Kids® program serves youth most at risk of aging out of foster care without a permanent family.**

**Columbus, Ohio** — The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, a national, nonprofit public charity, is proud to announce that its signature program, Wendy's Wonderful Kids, has helped find permanent homes for more than 15,000 children and youth in foster care across the United States and Canada since 2004 — including nearly 12,300 children since scaling in states began in 2012.

“This means 15,000 children — like [Pippa](#), [Marisol](#) and siblings [Isaiah](#), [Jordan](#) and [Sophia](#) — no longer have to worry about never having a family or what will happen if they age out of care,” said Rita Soronen, President & CEO of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. “Today, we celebrate the collective impact of our caring community, including foster and adoptive parents, adoption professionals, partners and donors, and thank them for their dedication to this critical work. *Together*, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of the children and teenagers we serve.”

Through Wendy's Wonderful Kids, the Foundation supports the hiring of adoption professionals, known as recruiters, who serve the longest-waiting children in foster care. A rigorous, [five-year evaluation by Child Trends](#) in the U.S. revealed that children served by the program **are up to three times more likely to be adopted.**

Based on this evaluation and a successful pilot of Wendy's Wonderful Kids, the Foundation launched an aggressive, multi-year business plan in 2017 to expand the program across all 50 states and Washington, D.C. To date, 19 states — Alabama, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, Texas, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia — as well as Ontario, Canada have scaled or are currently scaling the program with a total of more than 580 recruiters working tirelessly on behalf of every child in their care.

“This milestone is truly something to celebrate. Having a permanent family and a place to call home makes all the difference for a child. Thanks to the diligent work of Wendy's Wonderful Kids adoption recruiters, 15,000 children now experience safety, comfort and love every day,” said Rob Geen, chair of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's board of trustees.

“It's wonderful to see the continued growth and expansion of this program. It makes a profound impact for children waiting in foster care for their forever family. I am thrilled to celebrate this achievement and look forward to the program's future success.” said John Mulvihill, chair of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption-Canada's™ board of directors and Vice President, Canadian Supply Chain, QSCC Canada, Inc.

Ohio became the first state to commit to an innovative partnership to scale the program statewide starting in 2012 — with generous support from The Wendy's® system. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, who has made serving children in foster care one of his administration's top priorities, praised the Foundation's work and collaboration with the Ohio Department of Children and Youth.

“We celebrate that more than 15,000 children, including almost 1,800 in Ohio, have been adopted with help from Wendy's Wonderful Kids,” said Governor DeWine. “We have more work to do to help find loving homes for kids in foster care and look forward to working with Wendy's Wonderful Kids to help even more kids.”

When a state is fully scaled, it means there are enough recruiters to serve the program's focus population of children over the age of 9, teenagers, children with special needs and siblings who are too often overlooked. These adoption professionals serve smaller caseloads of 12–15 children to ensure every child receives the time, resources and support they deserve.

Of the youth served by the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program in the U.S. and Canada:

- 14 is the average age
- Youth have an average of 5.7 previous placements
- 73% have at least one special need
- 78% are part of a sibling group
- Prior to being referred to Wendy's Wonderful Kids, 87% had minimal or no adoption recruitment efforts on their behalf

Using the Foundation's child-focused recruitment model, adoption professionals begin the diligent search for a permanent family within the network of adults the child already knows, including extended family members, who already care for them and can meet their needs.

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption was established in 1992 by Wendy's® founder Dave Thomas, who was adopted. For more than 30 years, the Foundation has been committed to achieving Dave's vision that *every* child will have a permanent home and a loving family.

“At Wendy's, we are committed to making more special family moments possible. That's why our partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is so meaningful. Their relentless dedication to find permanent, loving homes for children waiting in foster care means that 15,000 children are now making cherished memories with their forever family,” said Kirk Tanner, President & CEO, The Wendy's Company, and member of the U.S. board of trustees. “We are proud to call the Foundation our charity of choice and look forward to celebrating many more families brought together through adoption.”

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#### **About the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption**

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a national, nonprofit public charity dedicated exclusively to finding permanent homes for the more than 140,000 children waiting in North America's foster care systems. Created by Wendy's founder Dave Thomas, who was adopted, the Foundation implements evidence-based, results-driven national service programs, foster care adoption awareness campaigns and innovative grantmaking. To learn more, visit [davethomasfoundation.org](http://davethomasfoundation.org).

#### **About the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption-Canada™**

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption-Canada is a registered charity dedicated to finding permanent homes for the more than 30,000 children waiting in Canada's foster care system. Created by Wendy's® founder Dave Thomas who was adopted, the Foundation implements evidence-based, results-driven national service programs, foster care adoption awareness campaigns and innovative grantmaking. To learn more, visit [davethomasfoundation.ca](http://davethomasfoundation.ca).