



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

Matthew G. Bevin
Governor

Division of Communications
275 E. Main Street, 5C-A
Frankfort, KY 40621
(502) 564-6786
Fax: (502) 564-0274
www.chfs.ky.gov

Vickie Yates Brown Glisson
Secretary

News Release

Media Contact: Doug Hogan, 502-564-6786, ext. 3467;
or Anya Armes Weber, ext. 3104

CHFS Distributes Luggage for Children in Foster Care
Public donated bags at Kentucky State Fair, First Lady's events

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 21, 2017) – Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) leaders distributed several hundred duffle bags, backpacks and luggage to Service Region Administrators (SRAs) who are meeting in Richmond this week. The SRAs will take the bags back to their multi-county regions and pass them on to front-line staff. Children coming into foster care will receive the bags for their belongings.

“I do not want another child to have to put their belongings in a trash bag,” said Kentucky First Lady Glenna Bevin. “Kentucky’s citizens have taken steps to help change that. The duffle bags that were collected will give kids something to call their own. I am so humbled by everyone’s generosity!”

Hundreds of Kentuckians donated more than 500 duffle bags, backpacks and suitcases this summer at the CHFS Kentucky State Fair exhibit and at several advocacy meetings hosted by First Lady Glenna Bevin.

CHFS Secretary Vickie Yates Brown Glisson thanked the SRAs for their part in delivering the luggage and said it will bring dignity to children in foster care.

“All too often, when children are removed from their home and placed into state care, there is no choice but for them to stuff all their belongings into a black garbage bag,” Secretary Glisson said. “Because of the generosity of people from across the state, we can change that with these bags.”

DCBS Commissioner Adria Johnson added that the SRAs are part of what she calls a circle of kindness.

“In taking these bags to your county staff, you are completing the giving acts we saw during the State Fair and at the Governor’s Mansion, when visitors brought one or more bags to contribute to this tremendous effort,” Johnson said.

A number of organizations have sponsored duffle bag and backpack drives this year. Specifically, Children’s Home of Northern Kentucky launched a “Duffle Shuffle” campaign to ensure children entering out-of-home care would not have to use trash bags to carry their belongings. More information is available at www.duffleshuffle.org or by searching #DuffleShuffle on social media.

A Frankfort Realty company, Century 21 Simpson and Associates, is currently collecting bags for children coming into care. The company's donation drive continues through the end of this month. Find out how you can donate at www.century21simpson.com.

Others, including Girl Scout Troops and office groups, have sponsored duffle bag drives. Earlier this summer, the "Foster Care Pack Drive," coordinated by employees at Disability Determination Services (DDS), which is part of CHFS, raised \$4,200 to purchase new bags and collected nearly 900 donated bags.

Donating duffle bags and backpacks is just one way to help children in foster care. For more information about how you can become a foster or adoptive parent, or to get more general information, email: openhearts@ky.gov, visit the state adoption website adopt.ky.gov, which helps families more easily navigate the foster care and adoption process or call 1-800-232-KIDS (5437).

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Note: Attached photos show Service Region Administrators and staff unloading bags at their meeting this week.

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services, the Department for Public Health, and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.