



Connections

child, youth and family services

MEDIA RELEASE

Attention: COS, news, social affairs, youth, health, finance & community

17 June 2009

SEARCHING FOR FAMILIES

CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED TO FIND FAMILIES TO CARE FOR KIDS

One of Victoria's largest welfare agencies is launching a special campaign to recruit permanent care families as it faces an unprecedented demand to place children. The Connections UnitingCare *Forever Family* campaign is rolling-out today.

Making the call for people to come forward, Connections Chief Executive Officer, Angela Forbes said it was an important campaign. 'We just can't find enough people to care for these kids,' she said. 'There are children that we are supporting that need a permanent and loving home today – we are appealing to people to consider this option for starting their family, but we do want to ensure that people realise it is a forever family.'

Connections UnitingCare operates an Adoption, Adoption Information Line and the Permanent Care program along with a broad suite of child, youth and family services. The Connections Permanent Care program facilitates stable, secure and caring family environments for children who cannot live with their own families due to risk or experience of abuse or neglect.

'We are facing a significant issue with the placement of children in loving and caring families,' says Sheri Shenker, Connections Program Manager, adoption and permanent care. 'It's not that there aren't enough people out there, it's that they don't know about permanent care and options that exist beyond adoption,' she said.

'All children need the stability and love of a permanent family to grow, and develop to their full potential. These children may have had an unstable start to their lives, but need the security of a family that can love them, accept them and provide them with a future. We are looking for their forever family,' said Ms Shenker.

Fiona, a Permanent care mother of two is keen to share her experience. 'The move from the foster home to mine was quite straightforward and to this day I am amazed at how the girls moved relatively seamlessly from a foster Mummy to me,' she said.

Connections is also launching a new important resource to support children and families. 'My Families' is a series of four books designed for children in Permanent Care. The books follow the narrative of the main character through life transitions from birth family to foster family and permanent care family. The books are written, illustrated and co-ordinated by Paula Russell and assisted by visual artist Kate Just in collaboration with permanent care families and staff of Connections UnitingCare's permanent care team.

For more information about Permanent Care or Connections please visit www.connections.org.au

Event: Permanent Care Books Launch, 3:00pm, Wednesday 17 June 2009 by Connections CEO Angela Forbes at Connections' office at 274 High Street, Windsor.

Media: Connections Chief Executive Officer, Angela Forbes, 'My Families' author Paula Russell, Connections Program Manager, Adoption & Permanent Care, Sheri Shenker and Fiona, a Permanent Care mother are available for interview. Contact Connections Communications and Fundraising Manager Matt Clear on 03 9271 0800 or 0403 229 094 or matt.clear@connections.org.au

Connections is a community welfare agency of the Uniting Church's UnitingCare network in Australia providing a range of innovative and early intervention programs that support vulnerable children, young people and their families giving them a better chance in life now and in the future.

More information at www.connections.org.au