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For Immediate Release

## FaithBridge Foster Care Seeks Foster Parents for Growing Number of Teens in Care

### *Awareness Campaign Coincides with National Foster Care Month*

ALPHARETTA (May 6, 2021) – The number of older children in foster care continues to rise in Georgia, and FaithBridge Foster care is seeking additional foster parents to provide loving homes for these children.

As part of *National Foster Care Month* in the month of May, FaithBridge is working to raise awareness of the growing number of children ages 13 and older in foster care who need placement in homes where a parent or guardian can love and nurture them.

Data shows that in 2015, about 20 percent of children referred to FaithBridge Foster Care by the state Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) were children ages 13 and older. By 2020, that number had risen to 49 percent.

“We are pleased that so many of our families have stepped up to welcome teens in their homes,” said Bob Bruder-Mattson, President and CEO of FaithBridge Foster Care. “But as we see this trend climb upward, we know we need even more foster parents who will foster older children in their greatest time of need.”

FaithBridge Foster Care works with more than 50 churches in 15 North Georgia counties to recruit potential foster parents to serve children. It also reaches out to birth parents to mentor them and try to heal their family situation so that children eventually may be reunited with their families.

There currently are 11,840 children in the state’s foster care system, and 254 of them are placed in FaithBridge homes.

May is *National Foster Care Month* — when child welfare agencies raise awareness of the needs of foster children. The number of teenagers in foster care statewide has steadily risen from 27 percent of children in care in 2019 to 31 percent in 2020.

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“Simply put: there aren't enough foster families available to care for teens. Because of this, they are often placed in group homes,” Bruder-Mattson said. “But the need for more foster families is only going to increase this fall. The state will no longer receive Title IV-E federal funding for children in group homes if they remain there for more than two weeks.”

He said the goal of FaithBridge is to build additional capacity to serve approximately 100 more foster children aged 13 and older and churches are the answer to finding loving foster parents.

"Teens need a safe and loving space to grow, just like younger kids. The amazing thing is every day we choose her, and every day she chooses us," said Molly Berg, a FaithBridge foster parent of a teen. "It isn't easy, but there is nothing more joyful than serving where God has called us."

Bruder-Mattson said: “What better way to walk in faith and love one another than to provide a home for a teenager. When others invest in the lives of these teens, it gives them the hope they need for their futures.”

During *National Foster Care Month*, FaithBridge Foster Care will conduct additional outreach to its church partners seeking additional foster parents.

If you belong to a church or just want to learn more how to become a foster parent with FaithBridge, go to [faithbridgefostercare.org](http://faithbridgefostercare.org).

For more information about the National Foster Care Month awareness campaign contact Katrina George at 678-690-7128 or [kgeorge@faithbridgefostercare.org](mailto:kgeorge@faithbridgefostercare.org)

**About FaithBridge Foster Care** - FaithBridge Foster Care is the largest Georgia-based and Christ-centered child placement agency in the state. They recruit, train, and support foster care families in local churches and license them to provide community-based, short- and long-term traditional and therapeutic care for foster children in Georgia. FaithBridge Foster Care's vision is for every foster child to experience the hope, healing, and unconditional love of Jesus Christ and their mission is to mobilize, organize, and equip local churches to solve their community's foster care crisis.

They pioneered the Community of Care® model which is designed to surround every foster family with a network of trained volunteers and professionals providing the support they need to provide safe and stable homes for foster children. Each family is also paired with a FaithBridge Foster Family Consultant who will walk through the journey of foster care with each parent. Since 2007, FaithBridge has served more than 3,000 children in foster care through partnering with 97 churches. For more information, please visit [www.faithbridgefostercare.org](http://www.faithbridgefostercare.org)

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