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## **Heart Gallery of Oregon in Salem for Foster Care Month**

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May is National Foster Care Month, and the Heart Gallery of Oregon is being exhibited at the Salem Center Mall all month to help create awareness of the nearly 14,000 Oregon children who are in foster care each year.

The Heart Gallery of Oregon, an exhibit of Oregon's adoptable children is displayed in a storefront near Nordstrom's on the ground level of the mall at 401 Center St., in Salem. A smaller permanent exhibit also is at the A.C. Gilbert Discovery Museum.

The exhibit, open through May, features compelling photographs of children who are waiting for adoptive families. Information about adoption and foster care also will be available. The Heart Gallery of Oregon first opened in Salem at the Oregon State Capitol on February 14, 2007 and has since moved to some 40 locations around the state.

"Every child needs and deserves a permanent loving family. The Heart Gallery of Oregon seeks to find those families," said Pam Vorachek, one of the founders of the Heart Gallery and executive director of the A.C. Gilbert Discovery Village. "The Heart Gallery will help these children receive the exposure they need to find permanent homes."

The Heart Gallery of Oregon has been successful in raising awareness of the need for loving families for children by putting real faces on the issues. Outstanding photographers aim to capture the essence of each child's personality in their portraits. Inquiries to local child welfare offices and the state's adoption line have increased significantly following Heart Gallery exhibits. During the Heart Gallery's

first two years, almost three-quarters of the children featured in the exhibit either were placed in an adoptive home or had been paired up with a potential family.

The Heart Gallery of Oregon is based on the simple truth that a picture is worth a thousand words. Dozens of Professional photographers have donated their time and talent to the project.

The gallery can be seen at [www.heartgalleryoregon.org](http://www.heartgalleryoregon.org).

Heart Galleries do beyond finding adoptive families; the exhibits also point out other important contributions the public can make to help at-risk children, such as becoming a foster parent or mentor, or volunteering for organizations such as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).