



Jim Kreuser, County Executive

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News Release

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Emergency need for foster homes

Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser said there is an emergency need for more foster homes in Kenosha County.

“We’re calling on people to open their hearts and their homes to children who, through no fault of their own, need to be placed in foster care,” Kreuser said at a news conference Thursday.

David Houghton, executive director of Community Impact Programs Inc., the agency that licenses foster homes and places children for the Kenosha County Human Services Department, said 33 children needed to be placed in the past six weeks.

“If we have another six weeks like that, there will literally be ‘no room at the inn,’” Houghton said.

There are currently 29 foster homes available to accept children. That’s down from 46 available homes from a year ago, Houghton said.

The number of children in need of placement is about the same as in previous years. There were 179 placements in 2011. But, the number of available foster homes has decreased as the result of a number of factors, he said.

“The economy is a factor,” Houghton said. “When people are worried about keeping their jobs, they are then reluctant to take additional children into their homes.”

There has also been an increase in the number of foster parents who are adopting children. While that’s a good thing for the children to have permanent homes, it does take those homes out of the mix for foster care. There are currently 14 foster homes on hold as a result of pending adoptions.

“For those who have ever thought about becoming a foster parent, now is the time,” Houghton said. “We need to restock the number of foster homes. It’s an emergency.”

Diane Lefers, who has been a foster parent in Kenosha County for seven years, and is the president of the Kenosha County Foster Parent Association, said she and husband find it very rewarding. They have had about 14 children come and go from their home over the years and have adopted four children.

“These children come to you on their worst day. They are scared and in a shell. To see them come out of that shell, to relax and just be able to be a child again – that, to us, is a great joy,” Lefers said.

Lefers said there is support available for foster parents 24 hours a day through the Foster Parent Association, Community Impact Programs, and through Kenosha County.

Kreuser said the goal is to have 20 to 25 additional foster homes licensed in Kenosha County. The licensing process takes about 30 days.

“I think we can accomplish the goal,” Kreuser said. “This is the season of miracles.”

For more information about becoming a foster parent, call 262-656-8420, ext. 123.

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