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\$60,000 Raised to Help Local Children Find Permanent Families *More than 300 participated in A Walk Home-The Walk for Adoption*

Boston, MA- Some important steps were taken this weekend – steps that will help local children and teens in foster care find the “forever families” they have been waiting for.

More than 300 adoption supporters united on May 16, at Jordan’s Furniture in East Taunton for A Walk Home – The Walk for Adoption. This 1-hour, non-competitive walk raised \$60,000 for the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) and will fund MARE’s work to recruit adoptive parents for the hardest-to-place youth in state foster care.

WBZ TV reporter Eileen Curran led the Walk with her adopted daughter. Adopting Grace was “the best thing I’ve done in my entire life,” Curran told the crowd.

Angelo McLain, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families, congratulated the crowd and thanked them for their dedication to children in foster care.

Adoption agencies, families, and businesses all fielded teams at the Walk. Prizes were awarded to top fundraising teams and individuals. The top three teams were:

- 1.) “The Wandering Walkers,” social workers and families from The Home for Little Wanderers, which raised over \$8,700
- 2.) FAAT Cats made up of adoptive parents and friends from Worcester, raised \$3,400
- 3.) Communities for People, social workers and families from the Somerville agency, raised over \$2,400

Walkers enjoyed a casual 1-hour stroll in perfect weather around the Jordan’s Furniture corporate warehouse, along a walking path just over 1-mile long. After two laps along the path, walkers settled in for a party with a carnival atmosphere – stilt walker, caricatures, spin art, limbo games and contests, face painting, balloon animals, and lunch.

The crowd also sang “happy birthday” to the LeBlanc family from Milford, which had adopted 10-year-old Patrick exactly 5 years ago to the day. Luis Carmody of Framingham thanked the walkers for supporting adoption. “I was a MARE kid,” 27-year-old Luis explained. “I met my forever family when I was 11, thanks to MARE’s work.” He encouraged the walkers to continue supporting adoption for the children who are just like he was as a boy, hoping for a forever family.

More than 2,000 local youth are currently growing up in temporary foster care while waiting for adoption into permanent, safe, loving homes. MARE’s programs to find potential adoptive families include Wednesday’s Child on WBZ TV, children’s profiles in newspapers statewide, and the Heart Gallery portrait exhibit displayed in libraries, stores, and shopping malls. Through these public programs and behind the scenes work, MARE has helped more than 5,400 children leave foster care for permanent families over the past 52 years.

“This event not only raised critical funds, but it also helped bring people together to celebrate the importance of adoption,” said Lisa Funaro, executive director of MARE. “Every child deserves a safe and loving family.”

MARE’s Walk for Adoption was sponsored by [Jordan's Furniture](#), [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts](#), [StoneTurn Group, LLP](#), and [Webster One Source](#).

For more information on *A Walk Home*, MARE's Walk for Adoption, or to learn about adoption from foster care, contact MARE at 800-882-1176, 617-54-ADOPT, or visit www.MAREinc.org.

The Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) exists to find "a permanent place to call HOME" for CHILDREN in foster care in Massachusetts, including sibling groups and youth who are traditionally harder to place. We do this by recruiting, educating, supporting and advocating for FAMILIES throughout the adoption process while targeting recruitment efforts to attract potential families for specific children. We are the Commonwealth's central clearinghouse for adoption information and referral, and work to identify potential matches between children and families. Our objective is to find a safe, nurturing family to adopt every child in Massachusetts foster care who cannot be reunited with his or her birth family.

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