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For Immediate Release – 5-15-08

Worcester City Council Recognizes Mass. Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) for Finding Families for Children in Foster Care

“If I hadn’t been adopted, I wouldn’t be here today,” said Worcester City Councilor Kate Toomey at a reception Tuesday in Worcester City Hall. She was speaking in front of portraits of eighteen youngsters in Massachusetts foster care who are waiting to be adopted into loving families.

The portraits are on display in City Hall through June 2 as part of the Heart Gallery, a traveling exhibit organized by the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) to raise awareness of adoption from foster care and to recruit families for the children featured.

“How appropriate,” Toomey noted, that the Heart Gallery should be featured in Worcester - “The Heart of the Commonwealth.” She hoped more Worcester families would see the Heart Gallery and consider welcoming a waiting child into their hearts and homes.

Toomey, who was adopted at three months old, read the resolution she had sponsored, which resolves that:

... the City Council of the City of Worcester hereby recognizes the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange for its selfless efforts on behalf of children, and wishes them the highest degree of success in matching children with families, making the entirety of the Commonwealth a stronger and more cohesive family.

Worcester Mayor Konstantina Lukes presented the resolution, passed by the City Council, to MARE’s Executive Director Lisa Funaro during the evening’s City Council session.

Funaro thanked the Mayor, Councilor Toomey and her colleagues, and City Clerk David Rushford for welcoming the Heart Gallery, and the children it represents, into City Hall. The reception was organized by MARE and the Mass. Department of Social Services to raise awareness of the need for foster and permanent families for the children in state care.

In Massachusetts, there are over **10,000** children in foster care at any given time. Of these children, approximately **2,400** have “adoption” as their case goal. MARE focuses on recruiting adoptive families for the harder-to-place children, including school age children 6 – 16 years old, children of color of all ages, sibling groups, and children with emotional, physical and intellectual challenges. Since its founding in 1957 to find “a place to call HOME” for children in foster care, MARE has helped more than 5,000 children join permanent loving families.

For more information about the Heart Gallery or adoption from foster care, please contact the MARE. at 617-54-ADOPT (617-542-3678) or visit www.mareinc.org.

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MARE Executive Director Lisa Funaro accepts Worcester City Council resolution from City Councilor Kate Toomey and City Clerk David Rushford.