

National Foster Care Awareness Month and Provider Appreciation Day

WHEREAS, National Foster Care Awareness Month is observed each May to recognize the more than 390,000 children and youth in foster care across the United States, and to honor the foster parents, kinship caregivers, families, volunteers, and child welfare professionals who work together to support their safety, permanency, and well-being; and

WHEREAS, children and youth in foster care often face significant challenges, including trauma, instability, and separation from their families, and benefit from compassionate, coordinated, community-based systems of support that promote healing, resilience, and long-term stability; and

WHEREAS, strong partnerships among local governments, nonprofit organizations, and community-based providers are essential to ensuring that children and families have access to the services and support they need to thrive across all stages of development; and

WHEREAS, early childhood providers, educators, and family support professionals play a foundational role in strengthening families and building healthy developmental outcomes for children, forming a critical part of the broader continuum of care that supports children from early learning through times of crisis and transition; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Oak Park, in partnership with the Collaboration for Early Childhood and Hephzibah Children's Association, recognizes the interconnected system of early childhood care, family support, and child welfare services that collectively strengthen families and promote child well-being; and

WHEREAS, Hephzibah Children's Association, established in 1897, provides critical services including foster care and foster parent licensing, residential treatment for children who have experienced abuse or neglect, family support and counseling services, and enriching after-school and summer programs that serve thousands of children and families each year; and

WHEREAS, the Collaboration for Early Childhood works alongside local partners to support, elevate, and sustain the early childhood workforce, recognizing that high-quality care and education are essential to lifelong health, learning, and stability for children and families; and

WHEREAS, Provider Appreciation Day, observed annually in May, recognizes the essential contributions of childcare providers, early educators, and family support professionals whose work strengthens families, supports working parents, and fosters the healthy development of children in their earliest and most formative years; and

WHEREAS, the dedicated staff, caregivers, educators, foster parents, and volunteers across these systems play a vital role in creating safe, nurturing environments where children can heal, grow, and reach their full potential; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Oak Park is committed to supporting initiatives that strengthen families, promote child well-being, and expand awareness of the ongoing need for foster parents, childcare providers, and sustained community engagement;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Vicki Scaman, President of the Village of Oak Park, and the Board of Trustees do hereby proclaim May 2026 as NATIONAL FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH and recognize Friday, May 8th as PROVIDER APPRECIATION DAY in the Village of Oak Park, and encourage all residents to recognize the importance of the interconnected systems that support children and families, honor the professionals and caregivers who sustain them, and consider ways to strengthen our community.

DATED this 5th day of May 2026.

Vicki Scaman
Village President

ATTEST

Christina M. Waters
Village Clerk