Can you open your heart and home to us?

Photo by Martin Schoeller

heartgallerynyc.org
Why a Heart Gallery Sponsorship?

The impact of the Heart Gallery project brings immediate emotional response to the viewer/public. This elegant and “seemingly” simple solution for raising awareness of and recruiting “forever families” for the neediest children…kids without homes…has already touched millions of viewers nationwide through Heart Gallery efforts in over 80 cities throughout 45 states.

The proof of the concept is in the increase of inquiries and adoption cases. Heart Gallery exhibits have resulted in hundreds of requests for information. In Connecticut, homes were found for 19 children after the first exhibit of 40 photographs was featured in a November 2003 supplement of the Hartford Courant.

Numerous other success stories have been documented, and thousands of children have found permanent, loving families as a direct result of the Heart Gallery exhibitions. Nationwide…the public has been touched by the Heart Gallery project, and its success stories.

The Heart Gallery project, linked to high profile celebrities/ personalities and world-class renowned photographers has garnered tremendous media attention. Heart Gallery has been featured in numerous media outlets such as People magazine, Parade magazine, The Today Show, The View, CNN, MSNBC, USA Weekend, New York Times, ABC World News Tonight, and 20/20.

An alliance with the Heart Gallery brings millions of positive impressions through Heart Gallery’s traveling gallery displays which are located in heavily trafficked public venues such as Times Square, Grand Central Station and LaGuardia Airport, as well as on-going national electronic, print, and media attention.

The Heart Gallery NYC exhibit features compelling images of children in foster care who are in need of “forever families”. Slated to launch in Penn Station, NYC in November 2013 for our seventh annual Heart Gallery Exhibit in honor of National Adoption Month, this exciting exhibit generates extensive media attention, raising awareness to millions.

The following sponsorship opportunities are available to support the National Adoption Month Heart Gallery Exhibit.

Please help make a difference in the life of a child…

www.heartgallerynyc.org
The National Adoption Month Heart Gallery Exhibit
Sponsorship Package

Presenting Heart of Gold Sponsorship ($50,000 value)

- Photo Exhibition Launch title: National Adoption Month Heart Gallery Exhibit Opening Launch and Reception presented by your company
- Featured in all pre and post media coverage, including on air, press releases, media advisories as well as any advertising campaigns produced to promote the exhibits to the public in New York City, Long Island and throughout the nation
- Signage at all exhibitions including New York City Opening Launch & Reception and Traveling Gallery at additional sites
- Cover page in program insert
- Logo on 20,000+ invitations sent out for Opening Launch and Exhibition
- Hyperlink on Heart Gallery homepage
- DVD title mention, Your Company, Helping America’s Kids find Families! Your Company is Proud to Present the National Adoption Month Heart Gallery Exhibit...to be viewed during audio/visual presentation at launch and exhibition openings.
- A table top exhibit at the Opening Launch
- On-site distribution of materials at Opening Launch and all exhibition openings
- Opportunity for company representative to address audience at Opening Launch
- Opportunity to design and participate in a special event for your audience at an exhibition

Silver Heart ($25,000)

- Pre-event media coverage including on air, press releases and media advisories as well as any advertising campaigns produced to promote the exhibits to the public
- Signage at the Opening Launch and Reception
- First full page in program insert
- Signage at three exhibitions of your designated choice during traveling gallery tour
- Logo on 20,000+ invitations sent out
- Hyperlink on Heart Gallery homepage
- Bronze Heart ($10,000) 2 spaces available
- Pre-event media coverage including press releases and media advisories as well as any advertising campaigns produced to promote the exhibits to the public
- Signage at Opening Launch and Reception
- Signage at one exhibition of your choice during traveling gallery tour
- Back inside page in program insert
- Hyperlink on Heart Gallery homepage

Supporting Heart ($5,000) 2 spaces available
- Pre-event media coverage including press releases and media advisories as well as any advertising campaigns produced to promote the exhibits to the public
- Signage at Opening Launch and Reception
- Full page in Program
- Hyperlink on Heart Gallery homepage

www.heartgallerynyc.org
What began in New Mexico in 2001 as a way to promote the adoption of children on a local scale has snowballed in the past few years. Heart Galleries have sprung up in cities around the nation from Seattle, Washington, in the Northwest to Tampa, Florida in the Southeast. Oklahoma and Connecticut have also joined the ranks of states that have hosted Heart Galleries.

The project brings together the diligent work of adoptive agencies with the creative capacities and social conscience of photographers to, in the words of Diane Granito (the Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment Coordinator for the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department), “put a face on the issue of adoption in New Mexico and elsewhere.” Not only do the Heart Galleries do that but they also, as their name suggests, create an opportunity for empathy and connection. Numerous children and youths who would normally be very challenging to place because they are more than nine years of age or are a member of a sibling group have found homes as a direct result of these exhibitions.

The success and spread of this project has surpassed even the hopeful expectations of its founders. The inspiration for the project initially came from Ellie Ortiz while she was interviewing Granito for a position as an adoptive parent recruiter. The idea began simply enough: to enlist professional photographers to create a body of expressive photographs of children in need of adoption as a way of introducing them to prospective families. The photographs were then to be hung in a gallery for exhibition.

The response received from the community was overwhelming from the start. Many photographers were elated to have the opportunity to use their art to help children find a home. As Granito
expresses it they came in “with an open heart and an open lens.” This openness for connection created many lasting relationships between the photographers and the children. Several photographers have actually adopted the children that they photographed, while others became mentors and friends with their subjects.

Diane Granito considers one of the Heart Gallery’s greatest accomplishments to be the finding of homes for older children. Often, these youths in their mid-teens or older are shrugged aside with the justification that they are almost old enough to strike out on their own. As Granito says, it is “important to know that these children need families too; they need someone to turn to with joys, problems, when they get engaged or go to college.”

Another striking feature of the Heart Gallery and the portraits themselves is their powerful ability to move viewers. Granito related several instances where people, upon viewing one of the photographs for the first time, instinctively caught their breath as one of their hands simultaneously flew up to cover their heart. This recurrent reaction is a testament not only to the receptivity and skill of the photographers and open beauty of the children but also to the purity and meaning of the Heart Gallery project itself.

RESOURCES:
For information about hosting a Heart Gallery or about any of the children please call 1-800-432-2075. Also you can visit the Washington Heart Gallery’s project website at www1.dshs.wa.gov/heartgallery.
Heart Gallery Exhibits Share Foster Possibilities

Photography Exhibits Help Foster Children Find Families

By BOB BROWN

June 1, 2006 — Sometimes a lens sees things that people miss. Sometimes it sees the subtle beauty in landscapes that would have vanished in a second through a car window. Sometimes it sees possibilities that otherwise might have gone unnoticed.

Through her lens, photographer Jackie Mathey saw possibilities in the form of a 10-year-old girl.

She was photographing Faye, who had lived in five foster-care homes. For most of the session, Faye was active and playful. The photo that most appealed to Mathey, though, was one in which the girl showed a reflective, solemn side.

"She did not show that side of herself to me until the second that I took that one picture," Mathey said. "But I chose that one because it showed her inner strength and her dignity and a really strong character that you sensed in her right away."

Through new collections of children's portraits in a project known as the Heart Gallery, tens of thousands of people have sensed the same range of possibilities that Mathey has seen.

In cities throughout America, art galleries and public spaces have mounted stunning exhibitions taken by some of the world's most famous photographers. The photographers work for free, using their talents to bring out qualities that otherwise might have gone undiscovered in children who are in foster care, hoping to be adopted by a family.

Mathey, who lives in Santa Fe, N.M., was one of those photographers.

"It softens you up inside. ... And it humbles you because you take for granted, what you have," Mathey said.

Santa Fe Exhibit Grows Into National Movement

The project has gained so much momentum that its founder prefers to describe it as a movement.

The idea originated five years ago in Santa Fe, where a local photographer suggested it to Diane Granito of the New Mexico Youth and Families Department.

Space was donated by the prestigious Gerald Peters Gallery in Santa Fe, which continues to host exhibits. Because older children are the most difficult to place with adoptive families, they are the focus of what the exhibits are about: improving the rate of adoption by humanizing the children and inviting prospective parents to view the results.
Before the Heart Gallery, the file photos of foster-care children were often compared to mug shots.

"All children are supposed to have a photograph in their file," Granito said. "And the photographs are the kind that you might get taken at school, where the child has his or her hair slicked back, and they're cropped in front of a fake backdrop. It doesn't express the individuality of the child at all. They're almost interchangeable."

Granito said that Heart Gallery exhibits created an immediate impact "when you walk into a room, and see dozens of children looking out at you. But the real magic happens when people take the time to stop and look into the eyes of each child, and stand there, talk with the child's social worker a little bit about the child, and actually apply to adopt the child -- because of the connection they felt with this portrait."

There are more than 80 Heart Gallery organizations in 40 states. In some places, the adoption rate after an exhibit is more than double the nationwide rate of adoption from foster care.

**Bonding With Kids, Boosting Adoption Inquiries**

Najlah Feanny, a photojournalist who helped assemble a who's who of photography for the New Jersey Heart Gallery, said, "I was stunned at the emotional level of some of these children having just met a photographer and an hour later saying, 'Please don't leave me.' One little girl said, 'This is the best day of my life.'"

"The thing that changed me the most," said Martin Schoeller, a well-known portrait photographer, "is to see these kids really trying so hard to find parents."

Erica Berger, who shoots celebrities for People Magazine, said, "I think the most important thing for me when I was working with them was to try to figure out very quickly what their mood was and then go with that."

After a Heart Gallery exhibit in New Jersey in August 2005, the state's Division of Youth and Family Services said it had experienced a 280 percent increase in adoption inquiries -- with approximately 2,300 of 3,000 inquiries attributed to the Heart Gallery.

Nationwide, out of the half-million children in foster care, nearly 118,000 are available for adoption.

"If every child waiting in the foster-care system was photographed for the Heart Gallery and people dedicated just one minute to each portrait, it would take 82 days to view them," Granito said.

**Finding a Daughter in a Photograph**

There is a term for foster-care children who never find a family. It's called "aging out." Children who aren't adopted by the age of 18 are released into the world, to do the best they can.

After photographing Faye for a Santa Fe Heart Gallery exhibit in 2002, Mathey remembers driving home with the friend who had volunteered as a stylist on the photo shoots.

"Something changed inside of me," Mathey said. "I knew, and I think even my stylist knew. We didn't say anything for about half the drive home. ... Then we started crying."

Mathey's husband, Courtenay, also knew that she had been deeply affected. The couple have a teenage
son Jackson. They had discussed adopting a child, but never as seriously as they did following Jackie's photo session with Faye.

"It was like, a little bell goes off and then it keeps getting louder and louder," Courtenay Mathey said. "We had conversations that night about pursuing [adoption] and knowing that we'd have to get training, and not knowing if we were really ready to commit."

Within a few months, they were fully committed. Today, the portrait of Faye that hung in the Santa Fe Heart Gallery exhibit hangs in her own room -- in the Mathey house, where she moved in March 2003. Her adoption was formalized in October 2003. She will be 14 on June 18.

In November 2005, the entire Mathey family traveled to Washington for a national event to promote the Heart Gallery.

"When I photographed Faye, it was a completely life-changing moment," Jackie Mathey told a large crowd.

As the movement has spread, so have the results. Granito estimates that by the end of 2006, 1,000 children will have been placed in families directly as a result of the Heart Gallery exhibits.

To those who express concern that the Heart Gallery appears to use marketing techniques to place children in adoptive homes, Granito said, "That's an understandable concern. But my take on the Heart Gallery is that it's not marketing children, it's marketing the idea of adopting from foster care."

No one pretends such adoptions are easy. When adoptions involve an older child, parents and child often wind up testing each other through a period of adjustment.

For the child, one key to adjusting is coming to believe that he or she won't be moved again, that the new family is there for life.

"I don't have to worry about seeing other people that I don't know -- knowing that my parents are there," Faye said. "And I will always wake up to the same place and in my own bed."

"Since it's been almost three years now, it's easier to see how time changes things," Courtenay Mathey said. "And to see that she has that belief now growing in her that, 'Well, I am here. This is my home, and I can lay down on the couch and I can play with the dog and I can have a warm place to sleep.' It's just lots of confidence and happiness that lets her be a kid."

To find out more about adopting a child from foster care, please visit www.adoptuskids.org. To find out more about how you can support the Heart Gallery please e-mail Diane Granito at dianeg.granito@state.nm.us." dianeg.granito@state.nm.us.

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Galleries, photographers capture spirit of children in need of homes

By Eden Pontz, CNN
November 11, 2010 -- Updated 0705 GMT (1505 HKT)

The grand opening exhibit of the photographs was held Wednesday at the Times Square Information Center in New York.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Celebrity photographers join the effort to help children in need of a home
- They hope the kids will be seen in a different light
- The event is part of National Adoption Month
- Heart Gallery NYC works with other locations in the U.S. and Canada

More information can be found at www.heartgallerynyc.org or www.nyc.gov/acs.

New York (CNN) -- A picture may be worth a thousand words, but for foster children in New York City and across the country, a picture is worth improved self-esteem, and potentially, a new home and family.

As part of National Adoption Month, Heart Gallery NYC along with more than 100 other Heart Gallery locations in the United States and Canada have teamed up renowned celebrity portrait and fashion photographers.

The photographers will take pictures of children in the foster care system in need of permanent adoptive families -- in hopes the kids will be seen in a different light.
On Wednesday evening at New York's Times Square Information Center, some foster kids found themselves staring back at their larger-than-life-sized pictures among the lights of Broadway at a grand opening exhibit held in their honor.

For celebrity photographers such as Robert Ascroft, whose clients include Brad Pitt, Penelope Cruz, and Mariah Carey; Howard Schatz, whose shutters have exposed the likes of Michael Douglas, Whoopi Goldberg and Brooke Shields; and Barbara Bordnick, whose works are in the permanent collections of the International Center of Photography as well as innumerable magazines, volunteering their time and studios made for a change and reward, but came with challenges.

"I was hoping I could make them feel comfortable and make them feel special -- I wondered if I'd be able to do that," Bordnick said, voicing concern that she "... wanted to get 'them' on film, not make them into anything."

Paul Lange, a celebrity photographer who counts Halle Berry, Tyra Banks and Oprah among his clients said, "My whole career was fashion and beauty. The nice thing about it is, instead of selling a product, we're campaigning for a person's future. It spoke to me to give these kids an opportunity to get a foot up on the ladder."

Lange said his biggest surprise was the "genuineness" in the children's expression.

"It's like they're saying, 'I'm a good person inside. Give me a chance.' They're dying for an opportunity for someone to step forward and take a chance on them," he said.

Jasmine, 14, who posed next to her portrait at the exhibit, said she loved it.

"I was shocked at first to see it, but I like it. ... I feel like a star."

Laurie Sherman Graff, founder of Heart Gallery NYC, says one picture can make all the difference.

"Some of the pictures prospective families typically see of these children -- it's like looking at a driver's license photo compared to these photos."

An average shoot for the project takes several hours. For some of the kids, the shoot provides a mini-family reunion.

Lange said he's photographed siblings who are living in the system, but not necessarily together.

"I've had grandparents, aunts, uncles, show up at my studio so they can have an afternoon together," he said.

Once the final photographs have been chosen for each kid, giant posters are created to be exhibited for four to six weeks at high-trafficked spots including Times Square, Grand Central Station, malls and airports -- places where their curators hope to get many eyes on them.

Along with the exhibit, recruitment and information tables are set up for when people stop and ask, "What are these pictures about?" Graff said.

Jean, 18, is close to being too old for the foster-care system, but says his poster inspires him.

"Spontaneous, handsome, intelligent," were words he used to describe his chosen shot.

"I'd like to be a star for eternity. But for now, I hope to get a family and live my life," Jean said.