

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Lauren Gibbs – Lt. Governor's Office
Cell: [410-570-3115](tel:410-570-3115)

Brian Schleiter – DHR
Cell: [443-253-4204](tel:443-253-4204)

**LT. GOVERNOR BROWN GREETES FOSTER PARENTS AT
ANNUAL BALTIMORE CITY DSS MOTHER'S DAY
BREAKFAST**

*Breakfast is one of several events occurring across the state in honor of
National Foster Care Month*

BALTIMORE, Md. (May 12, 2014) – In recognition of Mother's Day and National Foster Care Month, Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown greeted foster parents from Baltimore City yesterday at the annual Baltimore City Department of Social Services' (BCDSS) Mother's Day Breakfast. Now in its fourth year, the event honors the dedication and commitment of foster mothers who have opened their hearts and homes to thousands of children in foster care, many of whom have been abandoned, abused and neglected. Other special guests included Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) Secretary Ted Dallas and WBAL-TV 11 Lead Investigative Reporter Jayne Miller, who spoke about her personal experience as a mentor to youth in foster care.

"Every child deserves a safe, loving, and permanent home, along with a supportive family who will help them succeed," **said Lt. Governor Brown, an adoptive parent and foster care advocate.** "These Baltimore City families have made the decision to open their hearts and their homes to children in need and it's in their stories that I'm reminded of the true warmth, love, and compassion that makes us Marylanders."



Under DHR, BCDSS oversees resources including adoption, foster care, protective services to children, adults and families; public assistance and services to families with children. Additionally, BCDSS offers limited child care subsidies, emergency food provisions and housing and employment assistance.

“This Mother’s Day Breakfast is among our favorite events of the year,” **said BCDSS Interim Director David Thompson.** “The special relationship that is developed between foster families and children in our system is inspiring. It takes very special people to step into the role of mother to a child who simply needs support, stability and a sense of safety. The Mother’s Day Breakfast allows us to pause on one of the most important holidays of the year to give back to mothers who give so much to others.”

Every May, during National Foster Care Month, leaders and child welfare organizations across the United States come together to raise the visibility of foster care issues and encourage more people to get involved and support the over 400,000 children and youth living in out-of-home care. Maryland

has over 2,000 foster parents that help care for the more than 5,500 children who cannot safely live with their parents. The BCDSS Mother's Day Breakfast is one of several dozen events occurring all over Maryland this month to honor foster parents.

Under the O'Malley-Brown Administration, Maryland is leading the way in connecting more children in foster care to permanent, loving homes. In 2007, the Governor O'Malley and Lt. Governor Brown launched the "Place Matters" initiative, Maryland's innovative statewide program to reduce the number of out-of-home placements, increase the number of children living in family homes, reduce the number of children in group homes and increase the number of children placed with permanent adoptive families. The initiative was implemented on the premise that nothing matters more to a child than a place to call home.

In part because of these efforts, there are fewer Maryland kids in foster care today than at any time in at least 26 years when electronic record keeping started. Since 2007, the number of Maryland children in foster care has decreased by 47 percent, from 10,330 in July 2007 to 5,501 in April 2014. More than 17,400 children have found permanent homes through adoption, guardianship or reunification with families. Also, the percentage of placements to group homes for children 18 and under is down 38 percent since 2008.

Adoption and foster care is a very personal issue to Lt. Governor Brown, an adoptive parent himself. Throughout the year, the Lt. Governor visits churches across the state to encourage Marylanders to consider expanding their families through adoption or opening their homes to a foster child.

###