

**For Immediate Release – March 2012**

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## **AdoptUSKids Names Jenny Kilpatrick Caseworker of the Month**

(Spanish Fort, AL) – AdoptUSKids named Jenny Kilpatrick, a senior social worker in adoptions for the Alabama Department of Human Resources in Baldwin County, its March Caseworker of the Month. This award is part of AdoptUSKids’ national initiative to celebrate caseworkers for their dedication to children and families.

After taking on a home study following the departure of a colleague, Kilpatrick’s stellar customer service helped retain a frustrated family about to give up on adopting from foster care.

Amy Fooladi and her husband Michael of Elsanor, Alabama, who nominated Kilpatrick for the award, had been wading through their home study application process for 10 months.

“It was almost enough for us to quit the home study process with the public agency and go to a private adoption agency,” Amy Fooladi said. “Jenny is a little ray of sunshine. She just really picked up the ball and ran with it.”

Thousands of foster, adoptive, and kinship families across the U.S. rely on their caseworkers every day to connect them to vital services while offering support and guidance. More than 255,000 children in the U.S. enter the foster care system every year. While more than half of these children will return to their parents, the remainder will stay in the system. Each year more than 20,000 children age out of the foster care without being adopted.

About half of the children in foster care are children of color, with older African American boys waiting the longest for adoption. Today there are 424,000 children in foster care with approximately 115,000 of them who are available for adoption.

“AdoptUSKids is proud to recognize Jenny Kilpatrick as our March Caseworker of the Month. The strong, descriptive nomination of Amy and Michael Fooladi is just one example of her work to assure that children and youth have safety and permanency in their lives, and that their well-being and needs will be met,” said Kathy Ledesma, project director of AdoptUSKids.

The way Kilpatrick sees it, without families there would be no place for waiting children to go.

“We aren’t serving our children well if we are not serving foster and adoptive parents well,” she said. “They are on the front lines, even more so than we are. I just feel like we owe them the courtesy of keeping them informed.”

Find out more about Kilpatrick and how she helped the Fooladi family at <http://adoptuskids.org>.



*Together we hold their future*

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### **About AdoptUSKids**

AdoptUSKids is a five-year, federally funded project whose mission is to assist States, Tribes, and Territories in their efforts to recruit and connect foster and adoptive families with waiting children throughout the U.S. The project is managed by the Adoption Exchange Association based in Baltimore, MD, through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.

### **About the Alabama Department of Human Resources**

The mission of the Alabama Department of Human Resources is to help families receive the least disruptive services they need, when they need them, and for only as long as they need them in order to maintain children in or return them to a safe, stable home. The agency currently has about 4,200 State Merit System employees, most of whom work in the agency's 67 county departments. Although the agency employs a wide variety of professionals, social workers represent the largest category of employees. Find out more on their website at <http://dhr.alabama.gov>.

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