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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **HEART GALLERY CHANGES LIVES**

The Images Are Breathtaking, The Need: Staggering, And The Pictures Are Worth A Thousand Words

**San Francisco, CA - March 18, 2008** – When Shoshana and Nann Phoenixx-Dawn first met, they knew they were meant to be parents. “It was something we talked about on our first date” says Shoshana, “we were both ready for a family right away.” When Nann saw three-year-old Scorpio’s photograph in last year’s Bay Area Heart Gallery, it was love at first sight.

The Bay Area Heart Gallery is a stunning, museum-quality exhibit featuring the photographs and stories of local children and youth in foster care who are eligible for adoption. The exhibit is an annual project that is coordinated by a partnership of four public and private agencies serving children and youth in foster care, and volunteer professional photographers from throughout the Bay Area. The Heart Gallery will open as a joint exhibit at the Alameda County Administration Building at 1221 Oak Street in Oakland, and at the Eden Area Multi-Service Center in Hayward, on April 1st. The exhibit will then travel to various San Francisco, and San Mateo County locations throughout the rest of the year.

“There’s such a wonderful response to the Heart Gallery each year,” says Jill Jacobs, Executive Director of Family Builders, one of the participating agencies, “it gives us the opportunity to tell each child’s story in an intimate and powerful way, and it helps us find permanent families for young people that have been waiting a long, long time.” Robin Fryday, the project’s Photography Chair, oversees the team of professional photographers that volunteer their time and skill to help create the Bay Area Heart Gallery. “Each time I see one of the photographs” says Fryday, “I know we’ve had the chance to make a difference in a child’s life. It’s an incredible feeling.”

There are over 10,000 children and youth in foster care in the Bay Area at any given time. “A picture really is worth a thousand words” says Fredi Juni, of the Alameda County Social Services Agency. “The Heart Gallery gives a human face to what are all too often just foster care statistics. It’s an opportunity to show children and youth in foster care as great children who need families, just like we all do.”

In May of 2007, Shoshana and Nann brought Scorpio home to join their family. “One day at breakfast, he announced that he wanted to be called Isaiah, his middle name,” says Shoshana “it was then we knew he finally felt at home. I still get a little emotional thinking about that moment.”

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**About the Bay Area Heart Gallery** – The Bay Area Heart Gallery Team is a partnership of four public and private agencies serving children and youth in foster care – working together with volunteer photographers and artists from throughout the Bay Area. The partner agencies are Alameda Social Services Agency, San Francisco Human Services Agency, San Mateo Human Services Agency and Family Builders. The result is a stunning exhibit, consisting of photographs of children, youth and families, accompanied by their compelling stories.

**WHEN:**

The 2008 Bay Area Heart Gallery joint exhibit opens in Oakland and in Hayward on April 1st. Exhibit Hours at both locations are 8:30a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday.

**WHERE:**

Alameda County Administration Building, 1221 Oak Street, Oakland, CA  
Eden Area Multi-Service Center, 24100 Amador Way, Hayward, CA

**PRIVATE TOURS AVAILABLE:**

To schedule a private, guided tour of the exhibit for your camera or news crew, please contact Fredi Juni of Alameda County at (510) 268-2433 or (510) 414-7326, or email [junifx@acgov.org](mailto:junifx@acgov.org).

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To inquire about becoming an adoptive or foster parent in Alameda County, please contact Lori Carr Johnson at [johnsle@acgov.org](mailto:johnsle@acgov.org) or (510) 259-3575. If you'd like more information about The Bay Area Heart Gallery, or to schedule an interview with adoptive parents, youth, photographers, agency staff or volunteers please call Fredi Juni of Alameda County at (510) 268-2433 or (510) 414-7326, or email [junifx@acgov.org](mailto:junifx@acgov.org).



*Jabari, Endya and Dantrell.*

*Photographed for this year's Bay Area Heart Gallery by Robin Fryday*

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