



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
May 17, 2004

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*Photo caption:*  
Jeff Griffiths with son Harvey (3 yrs.)

## **Local Foster Parent Appointed as Commissioner to First 5 Inyo County**

**(BISHOP, CA)** – First 5 Inyo County announced today the appointment of foster care advocate Jeff Griffiths to its Commission which is charged with distributing Proposition 10 revenues to programs and services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. In his role as Commissioner, Griffiths will help support First 5 Inyo County’s priority areas of early childhood education, child care, health, and safety.

For the last two years, Griffiths has lived in Bishop and supported various social and child development organizations across Inyo County through his volunteerism and activities in the community. Griffiths serves as the parent representative to the Inyo County Foster Family Advisory Committee, which is in the initial stages of assisting in the recruitment of new families to foster children in need. As a foster parent, Griffiths provides a temporary emergency home to children, and also provides longer-term care when needed.

“Jeff’s commitment to helping Inyo children in need and his expertise in the area of foster care is a major asset to the Commission,” said Kathy Peterson of First 5 Inyo County. “He is a strong advocate for the community and has a real desire to improve the quality of life for young children throughout the county.”

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Griffiths and his wife Taema Weiss, a physician at the Toiyabe Indian Health Project, are parents of two boys, ages 1 and 3. They also currently provide a home for a young foster child. “I am so pleased to have the opportunity to work with an organization that shares my views about the importance of the first years of a child’s life,” said Griffiths. “Each day I marvel at the changes my children make, the new words they’ve learned, the activities they now take part in and their daily discoveries. First 5 understands the importance of the early years and supports programs that have a positive impact on them.”

Over the last five years, First 5 Inyo County has supported children in the county with grants and partnerships which bring much needed services and programs closer to families. As part of this ongoing commitment to children, First 5 Inyo County has provided funding to the Toiyabe Indian Health Project to assist Native American foster parents with foster care related materials, including culturally relevant early literacy books.

According to Marilyn Mann with Inyo County Health and Human Services, Children’s Services, children come into foster care for a variety of reasons; ranging from parents going through temporary crises to children who have suffered from some form of abuse which places them in eminent danger. Inyo County Children’s Services helps children and their families with accessing family support services and, when necessary, placing children with foster families temporarily or long term.

Inyo County Children’s Services is currently seeking potential foster parents who are warm, resilient, enjoy a challenge and have a 'can do' attitude in life.

“Foster parents are one of our community’s most valuable resources whether they are able to provide care for only one night or for a longer period, their contribution makes a difference. Some foster parents prefer to provide only short-term, or emergency, foster care, such as providing care over a weekend while longer-term foster care is being arranged. We are in critical need of both short-term and long-term foster parenting in Inyo County,” said Mann.

Jean Dickinson, Director of Inyo County Health and Human Services and a First 5 Inyo County Commissioner, encourages community members to consider becoming foster parents. Any application

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for foster parenting is considered on its merit regardless of the applicants' marital or parenting status, race or sexual orientation. For more information about becoming a foster parent in Inyo County, call Inyo County Children's Services at 760/872-1727. In Mono County, call the Mono County Foster Parenting Line at 888/426-5568.

To learn more about First 5 Inyo County, call 760/872-0925 or visit their website at [www.cafc.ca.gov/Inyo](http://www.cafc.ca.gov/Inyo).

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