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**The Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.) Joins HRC and Record Number of Partners Working on LGBTQ+ Inclusivity**

*New Report: 172 agencies partner with the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s All Children - All Families program, including C.A.S.E., and together serve more than 1.4 million clients annually.*

The Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.) ™ is *proud to be one of the 36 FIRST TIME partners. C.A.S.E. achieved the Solid Foundation for Inclusion tier of certification.*

**Burtonsville, MD** – C.A.S.E. is proud to be one of 172 child welfare organizations joining the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation’s All Children - All Families (ACAF) program in 2023, as highlighted in a new report. Together, these organizations work to improve the services provided to the LGBTQ+ community, including children in foster care and prospective foster and adoptive parents who are LGBTQ+. This year alone, this multi-organization partnership assessed 9,500+ policies and practices within child welfare organizations to ensure they meet ACAF best practices criteria — approximately 6,000 more than were assessed when this report was first released in 2019. This allowed for over 1.4 million children, youth, and families across 43 states to benefit from these LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and affirming practices.

“*Providing children and families with the most inclusive environment in which to grow should always be the number one priority*,” said **Phii Regis, Director of HRC’s All Children - All Families Program**. “*We are grateful for C.A.S.E.’s work as part of this partnership — together, we can win the fight for equality and build safe and loving communities at the same time*.”

In the past year, C.A.S.E. has made significant strides in enhancing its support of the LGBTQ+ community among its staff and the families it serves. "*All of these efforts align seamlessly with C.A.S.E.'s mission, vision, core values, and commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*," said **Debbie Riley, LMFT, CEO at C.A.S.E.** "*Through our work, we continually strive to improve the lives of children, youth, and families, providing a safe and supportive environment for all those we serve*."

HRC’s report comes at a time when LGBTQ+ people, particularly LGBTQ+ youth, are under threat:

* Only 13 states and the District of Columbia have explicit laws or policies in place to protect foster youth from discrimination based on both sexual orientation and gender identity.
* Seven additional states explicitly protect foster youth from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation but not gender identity.
* Approximately 1 in 3 youth in foster care are LGBTQ+.
* LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of abuse and mistreatment than their non-LGBTQ+ peers.

At the same time, there are an overwhelming number of LGBTQ+ families who have at least considered adopting or fostering a child in the future, but 55% of them feared being turned away because of their identity, and only 14% knew of an LGBTQ+-inclusive agency near them.

With the work of ACAF, A record-breaking 10,650+ professionals were trained in how to make their agencies as inclusive of LGBTQ+ families and youth as possible. Additionally, all partner organizations that earned a Tier of Recognition with the program, such as C.A.S.E., now include “sexual orientation,” “gender identity” and “gender expression” in their client non-discrimination policy, and communicate this policy to staff and clients.

To learn more about C.A.S.E. please visit <adoptionsupport.org>. To learn more about the All Children-All Families program, please visit <https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/about/all-children-all-families>.

The Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.) ™ is a nationally recognized nonprofit that improves the well-being and permanence of children and families by delivering adoption competent mental health services, training a national network of professionals, and informing the field through research and advocacy. C.A.S.E. has trained more than 33,000 mental health and child welfare professionals in 33 states. With offices in the greater Baltimore-Washington metro area, C.A.S.E. has provided clinical services for more than 7,000 clients and their families since its founding in 1998.

*The Human Rights Campaign Foundation is the educational arm of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) people. Through its programs, the HRC Foundation seeks to make transformational change in the everyday lives of LGBTQ+ people, shedding light on inequity and deepening the public’s understanding of LGBTQ+ issues, with a clear focus on advancing transgender and racial justice. Its work has transformed the landscape for more than 15 million workers, 11 million students, 1 million clients in the adoption and foster care system and so much more. The HRC Foundation provides direct consultation and technical assistance to institutions and communities, driving the advancement of inclusive policies and practices; it builds the capacity of future leaders and allies through fellowship and training programs; and, with the firm belief that we are stronger working together, it forges partnerships with advocates in the U.S. and around the globe to increase our impact and shape the future of our work.*

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