



House District 4 State Representative Duane Stark



News Release: January 27, 2017
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Statewide Launch of Every Child Program Builds on Efforts in S. Oregon State Rep Duane Stark Applauds New Partnership

(Salem) [State Representative Duane Stark](#) (R-Grants Pass) was a featured speaker at the launch of a new statewide public/private partnership in Salem today that hopes to increase the number of foster homes and support vulnerable children and families around Oregon. The [Every Child](#) program www.everychildoregon.org got off the ground last year in [Josephine](#), [Jackson](#) and Lane Counties. Thanks to a new partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS), Every Child will now be rolling out in Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties, eventually expanding to all 36 counties over the next five years.

During a news conference today, Representative Stark said he was proud to see Every Child and DHS find a way to inspire community support that's working. "They found a new way to tap into the hearts of community members to remind them of their love and duty to care for children and they're doing it at success rates that we've never seen," explained Representative Stark. "I'm so excited and have so much hope as we partner with them from Southern Oregon, Josephine and Jackson counties. A new day is coming - where we are not far from the time when every child has a safe home for them. And we are not far from defining what it means for a community to embrace every child."

Representative Stark and his wife started doing foster care eight years ago. They have adopted one foster daughter and are seeking to adopt two other foster children. Representative Stark is also on the board of the non-profit organization overseeing the Every Child program in Josephine County. There are approximately [1,100 children in foster care](#) in Josephine and Jackson counties, but only 350 foster homes. Statewide there are an estimated 8,700 foster children and 3,500 homes.

"We are so grateful for Representative Stark's leadership in helping foster families in Southern Oregon and across the state," said Ben Sand, CEO of the [Portland Leadership Foundation](#), the non-profit organization which started Embrace Oregon, a program in the Portland area designed to mobilize the faith community to address the foster parent needs in the metro area. "Representative Stark is passionate about eliminating the shortage of foster beds in Oregon and he has been instrumental in getting the Every Child initiative off the ground in Josephine County."

In 2016 the Embrace and Every Child programs received 469 inquiries from Oregonians seeking information about becoming foster parents. Representative Stark pointed out that not everyone can become a foster parent, but every person can make a difference. "So what's amazing about this effort is that there is a role for every single community member, so we're in it as a community." Volunteers are needed in a variety of ways to help foster families.

For more information about [Josephine County](#) Every Child go to www.everychildjosephine.org
For more information about [Jackson County](#) Every Child go to www.everychildjackson.org

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