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
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Broward County foster parents honored at ninth annual appreciation event




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Eugenia Welch, left, Francisco Nelson and Candelaria Mota (submitted photo, Society Scene / June 15, 2011)

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Across [Broward County](#) there are more than 500 foster homes where individuals serve as foster parents by helping foster children build brighter futures. Their dedication and commitment to [Broward County's](#) abused children was recognized on May 5 at ChildNet's ninth annual "Foster Parent Retention & Appreciation Conference" at the Global Grille and Event Center in [Fort Lauderdale](#). The event was planned in conjunction with May being National Foster Care Month.

One recognized foster parent was Eugenia Welch. Today, Welch gives back through fostering because years ago she needed foster parents to care for her biological children while she focused on rebuilding her life. "Foster Care isn't about taking kids away from their parents, but about helping both the children and parents rebuild their lives," Welch said. "I'm fully aware of the help foster parents provide because there was a difficult time in my past when a generous individual cared for my children, while I got myself together."

The event's guest speakers included Francisco Nelson, Welch's former foster son and owner of Francisco Nelson Creativity Production (FNCP); and Joe Rogers, foster parent-turned-adoptive parent and chief operating officer at [Broward Health](#). Both men also serve on ChildNet's board of directors. One of the evening's unforgettable moments was when Sue Redfern, a Broward resident who has been fostering for 19 years, was surprised with a heartwarming video message from her former foster children. During the [Cinco de Mayo](#)-themed event, complimentary hotel stays, restaurant gift certificates, festive gift baskets and department store gift cards were raffled off to more than 30 foster parents.

ChildNet is a private, nonprofit organization that administers the child welfare system in [Broward County](#). Its mission is to protect Broward's abused, abandoned and neglected children. ChildNet manages the cases of approximately 2,000 children and their caregivers, and delivers a comprehensive local system of care through subcontracts with more than 30 social service agencies. Since its founding in 2003, the organization has worked so that [Broward County's](#) abused children are safer, their placements are more stable and they are able to move to permanent homes more quickly. For more information about ChildNet and its services, visit <http://www.ChildNet.us> or call 954-414-6000. •



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