

Suspect at large house in the 10100 block of north-



Mike Stocker, Sun Sentinel

Dana Poston hugs Keerin, 9, at the picnic Saturday. Poston and her husband hope to adopt the girl soon.

## FROM FOSTER CARE TO PERMANENT FAMILIES

### Picnic honors potential adoptive parents and kids in need of homes

By Gregory Lewis  
STAFF WRITER

**POMPANO BEACH** — Monique Gray giggles when one of her soon-to-be-adopted sons, Eric, puts a toy bug on her arm and calls her "Mommy."

It is not a new term for Gray, 37, a divorced hospital aide who has five biological children at home.

But Eric, 6, and his brother Latravis, 7, "need someone to love them," said Gray. So she plans to officially make them part of her family on Nov. 21, which is National Adoption Day.

There are 1,900 children in Broward County still in need of parents, said Emilio Benitez, CEO of ChildNet, a nonprofit agency serving abused, abandoned and neglected children.

On Saturday, Gray and other potential adoptive parents and children in the foster care system were honored at a picnic at Karl Weaver Park hosted by the Omega Psi Phi fraternity.

"It's important to bring together children who need parents and parents who need children," said Melvin Davis, a brother at the fraternity, which has sponsored the event for 19 years.

Bryant and Dana Poston drove from Callahan, north of Jacksonville, to visit a second time with Keerin, 9. They

said they would spend the night and have a third supervised visit with the girl today.

"It's a long process," said Dana Poston, who found ChildNet online.

The Postons have served as foster parents for 12 children and now are ready to adopt. The agency, which has placed 120 children in homes this year, matched them with Keerin. They hope to take her home for Christmas.

Lanecia Radcliff, the adoption home finder for ChildNet, says it is a lengthy process to adopt, but it's important to make the right match.

Background checks, supervised visits, classes and home studies are done before a child can be taken home by prospective parents. If things go well, a judge makes the adoption official.

Monique Gray is looking forward to that day.

"I want them to have a better life," she said of Eric and Latravis. "I want them to know they always have a family and home to come to."

Gregory Lewis can be reached at glewis@SunSentinel.com or 954-572-2084.