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## **Debra and Wayne Shurts Presented Award for Service to Foster Children in NJ**

EATONTOWN, NJ – Debra and Wayne Shurts of Houston, Texas do all they can to lift up vulnerable children. Because of this, and for their commitment to providing safe, stable and nurturing homes to children in New Jersey, the Shurts received the Outstanding New Foster Family of the Year award at Foster and Adoptive Family Services (FAFS) and the state Department of Child Protection and Permanency’s (DCP&P) annual recognition awards.

The Shurts accepted the award at the Pacific Concord Hotel in front of a crowd of more than 100 foster, adoptive and kinship parents and children, as well as dozens of FAFS and DCP&P staff members.

For more than two decades, Debra and Wayne have been members of FAFS and the Morris County Foster Parent’s Association, giving generously to both organizations. The Shurts’ fostered many children in need over that time and added two of them to their family through adoption.

In partnership with Zion Lutheran Church, Debra and Wayne helped to raise funds for FAFS’ Fostering Wishes program when it started in 2000. Because of their generosity, the program grew from serving children in six counties to offering enrichment opportunities to all children in foster care in New Jersey. The partnership also helped fund FAFS’ summer camp scholarships for more than 10 years.

FAFS Chief Executive Officer Mary Jane Awrachow said, “Debra and Wayne’s long standing desire to aid the organizations that help children in need and the parents that support them knows no bounds. The couple exemplifies what is so remarkable about thousands of foster, adoptive and kinship families across the state – their willingness to provide safe, stable, nurturing homes for children. We applaud their dedication to New Jersey’s children in care.”

To earn the award, Debra and Wayne met criteria set by the FAFS Board of Directors, which included heightening awareness of foster care, extraordinary commitment to children in care, positive impact on the foster, adoptive and kinship community and improving community outreach for the benefit of children in adoptive care.

For more than 20 years, FAFS, in cooperation with DCP&P, has recognized individuals and families for outstanding achievement in supporting children in foster care.

The mission of FAFS is to provide support, training and advocacy to meet the special needs of foster, adoptive and kinship families who provide safe, stable and nurturing homes for children in foster care in New Jersey. FAFS is a federal

501(c) (3) nonprofit organization, with headquarters on Route 1 in Monmouth Junction. Simply stated, FAFS is the voice of foster, adoptive and kinship families in New Jersey.