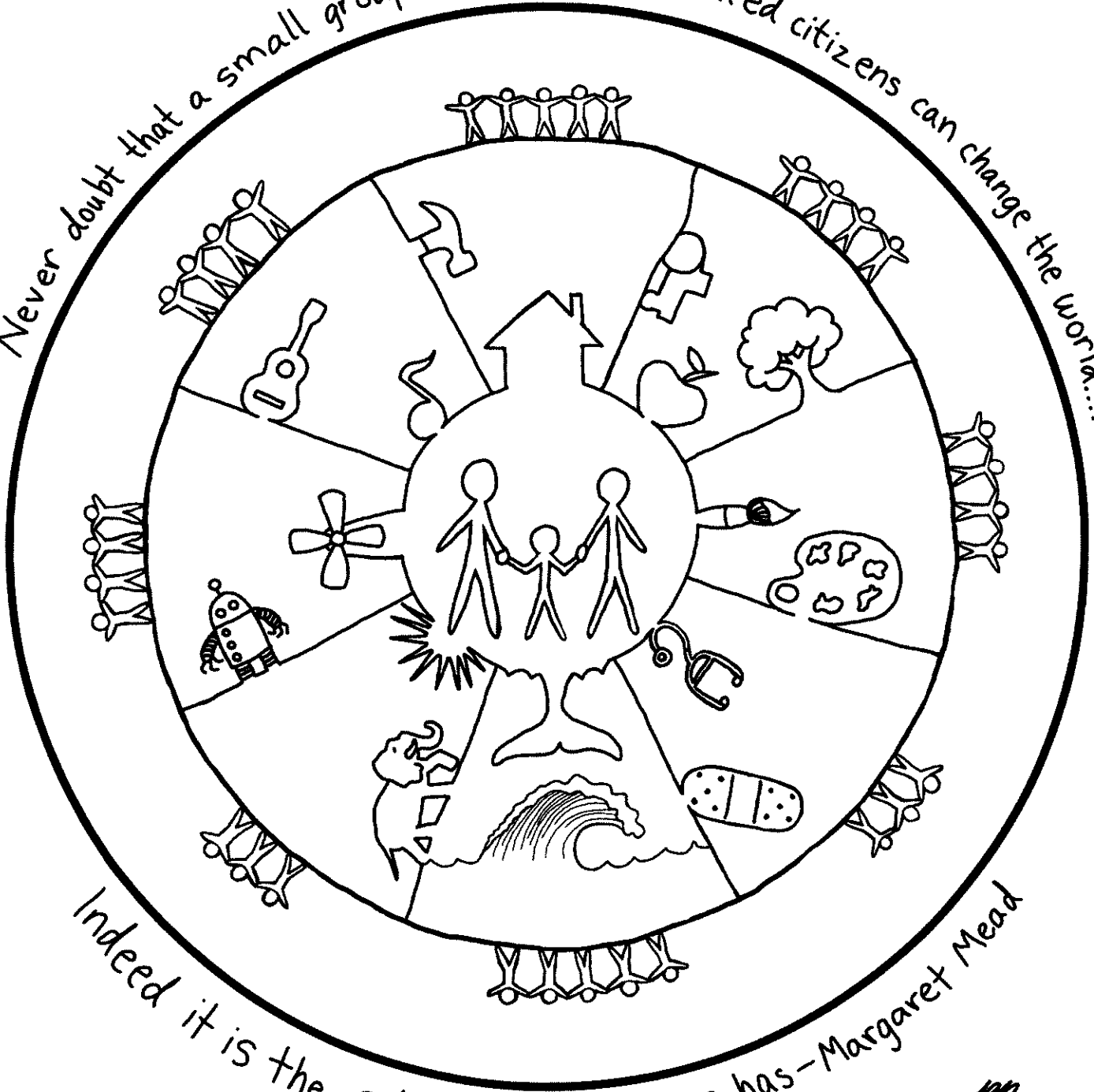


Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world...



Indeed it is the only thing that ever has - Margaret Mead

MB

Dear Fellow Parents:

This coloring page was created by Heart of a Hero Campers (our kids in Lake Oswego, Oregon), children's book author Mark Olmstead (www.truesunbeam.com) and artist Peyton Bruenn. The intent of this parent-led camp is to raise the dignity and value of the human being by helping campers and other kids contribute to initiatives that empower people.

The Family First Prevention Services Act (HR 5456, S 3065) is a federal, bipartisan bill (Wyden (D), Hatch (R)) that needs your support. It allows states to use federal funds to provide short-term financial support and caregiver services to caregiving relatives when children are at imminent risk of entering foster care. Through its preventative measures it will keep families together. Accordingly, it has support from more than 130 child advocacy groups. The Act passed by voice vote in the House of Representatives on June 21, 2016 but the bill was not allowed a Senate floor vote before the mid-July adjournment. According to the Chronicle of Social Change website, more than one senator has placed a hold on the bill. No senator has publicly taken responsibility for one.

The Congressional Budget Office projected the prevention aspects of Family First would cost \$1.3 billion over ten years, and that the restrictions on congregate care would save \$910 million in the same time frame. Reducing congregate care is a good thing. Senator Wyden pointed out findings concerning Texas's group homes (i.e. congregate care):

The U.S. District judge who wrote the decision directed the state to stop placing certain children in unsafe settings such as foster group homes that lack 24-hour supervision. At question was whether group homes should continue to operate at all, given concerns that they cause "an unreasonable risk of harm" to foster children. The Court heard testimony that in foster group homes that mix younger children with older children, sexual abuse "is usual rather than unusual."

The Senate will reconvene Tuesday September 6 and is targeted to pre-election adjournment on October 7, return November 14 and adjourn December 16, leaving precious little time to pass the bill this year. However, if just a few people step, we can make a huge difference. Here's what you can do:

- Please ask your kids to color the coloring page, fill out the support letter below, and send it to your Senator. Senator mailing addresses are here: <http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/>.
- We want to reach all 50 states and would love for you to distribute the coloring sheets to restaurants, PTOs, friends and family. You can find the downloadable coloring pages here:
 - o <http://www.truesunbeam.com/community-involvement> and here: <http://mettcenter.org/blog/heart-hero-kids-camp/>. Or just email aparanj@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Heart of a Hero Camp Parents

Dear Senator _____:

My name is _____ and I am _____ years old. I care about the welfare of all children and think it is only right that we protect their safety, well-being and dignity to the best of our ability. I respectfully request that you please support the Family First Prevention Services Act so that it passes in its current form, including the provision involving a Qualified Residential Treatment Program, which was strongly supported by American Academy of Pediatrics President Dr. Benard Dreyer.

Sincerely, _____