



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
announces Adoption Excellence Award recipients
*Gen Justice Founder Darcy Olsen receives national
award***

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – At a virtual awards ceremony today, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) presented Gen Justice Founder, Darcy Olsen, with an Adoption Excellence Award for “extraordinary personal and professional contributions” helping children in foster care.



HHS established the [Adoption Excellence Awards](#) program in 1997 to recognize outstanding accomplishments in achieving permanency for America’s children waiting in foster care. 125,000 American children currently are waiting for adoption.

Olsen, a single parent, opened her home to a drug-exposed baby in 2011 at the request of a social worker. She fostered ten infants and adopted four who needed a permanent family. In 2017, Olsen formed Gen Justice to fix the brokenness she’d seen.

“Children who are waiting for adoptive families often feel like they’re unwanted,” said Olsen. “But nothing could be further from the truth. These waiting lists reflect the failures of the system, and lawmakers have the power to fix this.”

Olsen said many children linger in care and age out parentless and homeless because they don’t have attorneys. Kids represented by lawyers exit the system up to 3x faster than other children and have much higher rates of adoption. Gen Justice has been working with lawmakers to give children proper legal representation.

“I’m so thankful to the individuals, companies and foundations who value the lives of these children and whose generous actions make it possible for Gen Justice to be in their corner,” Olsen said. Gen Justice would especially like to acknowledge the generosity of the Shamrock Foods Company, the Adolph Coors Foundation, the Challenge Foundation, the Leona Group, the T.W. Lewis Foundation, the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, the Watts family, and the Gregor G. Peterson family.

Gen Justice has worked with local leaders, national partners and the White House to drive the adoption of multiple reforms. These measures have expedited the search for relatives, shortened the time to adoption and opened the door for more children to get special education supports.

About Gen Justice

Gen Justice is an award-winning charitable organization working to mend the broken child protection system through nonpartisan policy changes and a pro bono Children’s Law Clinic. Online: www.genjustice.org

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