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Opinion**VIEWPOINT~~Child welfare services changing**

By Jim Adams/Family Support Services

Family Support Services of North Florida took over child welfare services - foster care and adoption - in Nassau County on Sept. 1.

As the agency ranked first in Florida for overall performance among 22 community-based care agencies, FSS will continue to be community focused, a tradition established by Family Matters of Nassau County. Family Matters was rated third in the state in overall performance so, together, we can build on the successes of the past by continuing to improve and enhance the services children and families receive in Nassau County.

FSS employees are committed to customer service - treating others as they want to be treated. We are committed to recruiting and training additional foster parents so that each child, who needs one, can have a safe and healthy environment in which to grow up.

To those who open their homes and hearts as foster parents, we want to begin an association for you to get questions answered, get help and provide fellowship and support.

We are committed to ultimately finding a permanent home for those children whose parents have had their parental rights taken away by the court. These children deserve a permanent, safe and loving family, too, through the process of adoption.

To do that, children who are eligible for adoption will be featured on our Heart Gallery, a collection of professionally done photographs and each child's story that is moved around public venues in North Florida so those interested in adoption can call and ask about each child.

As a resident of Nassau County and an elected Nassau County School Board member, you know that I have personal ownership in making sure the children of Nassau County are healthy, safe and secure. You will see FSS employees taking active roles in the community, and we look forward to working with local governments, law enforcement and the school system and Nassau's families to make sure our foster children are well taken

care of.

We will hold an open house soon so that the community can visit the offices and meet our employees, many of whom are the familiar faces from Family Matters. We hope to see you there.

Jim Adams of Bryceville is chief executive officer of Family Support Services.

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