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— *For Immediate Release* —

## **Amara Honors Foster Family Who Provides Care for Medically Fragile Infants**

*Child welfare agency recognizes a Seattle couple and their daughter who serve as model foster parents*

SEATTLE, WA, May 20, 2009 — Child welfare agency, Amara, announced this year's winner of the Stella Mae Carmichael Award: John and Rhonda James, and their daughter Lindsay, of Seattle. The award honors foster parents who open their hearts and homes in an especially kind and selfless way to our community's children in foster care.

"Amara is honored and inspired to have the James family among the foster families we serve," said John Morse, Amara Executive Director. "They provide exceptional care for our community's most vulnerable children. They have gained special knowledge and skills so they can care for medically fragile children. They advocate strenuously for their children's needs and they build vital relationships with the professional team that serves their children."

### **Caring for Medically Fragile Infants in Foster Care**

As a foster family, the James family focuses on providing a safe, nurturing environment for all children in their care. Initially their hearts went out to babies who were drug-affected at birth and they began by providing short-term care to these and other infants. In the past 2 ½ years, the James family has provided temporary care to 12 young children, many of whom were medically fragile.

## **Foster-Adopt Process Completed for One-Year-Old Anthony**

“We’ve also had the pleasure of supporting them in their adoption journey with its recent heart-warming result.” added John. On May 14, the James family finalized the adoption of one-year-old Anthony from foster care. Anthony has a rare immunity disorder and has spent most of his life in the hospital. The James family met Anthony when he was three months old and living at Seattle Children’s, far from his birth family. And since that day, someone from the James family has been with him around the clock.

Rhonda, John and Lindsay have taken special training so they can keep Anthony in their home, rather than in the hospital, as much as possible. He needs a feeding tube; has chemotherapy every other week and they take his vital signs every two hours, around the clock.

## **About the Stella Mae Carmichael Award**

The Stella Mae Carmichael award was established by Amara in 2008 in honor of its namesake, Ms. Stella Mae Carmichael of Bellingham, who served as foster parent to hundreds of children of all ages during her lifetime. Each year the award recognizes a parent(s) or family who exemplify the attributes she shared with the children in her care: unconditional love; her vision for and encouragement of their futures; her blend of realism and hope; her spunk; and superb parenting.

Adam Cornell, Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, who as a child was one of the many children Ms. Carmichael cared for over the years, presented the award to the James family at Amara’s annual luncheon, on May 19, 2009.

## **About Amara**

Founded in 1921, Amara is a Seattle-based nonprofit agency offering domestic adoption, foster care, and pregnancy counseling services. Supported by a combination of individual, corporate and foundation donors, Amara partners with foster, adoptive, and birth parents to create and support stable, loving homes for children who need them. Amara proudly provides these services to everyone, regardless of marital status, religious beliefs, income level, education or sexual orientation.

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