

**Related resources:**

- Heart Gallery of New Mexico (<http://heartgallerynm.org/>)
- Read 'How the Heart Gallery' was born at The Daily Nightly by founder Diane Granito at: [http://dailynightly.msnbc.com/2006/11/how\\_the\\_heart\\_g.html](http://dailynightly.msnbc.com/2006/11/how_the_heart_g.html)
- AdoptUsKids.org: Find out if there is a Heart Gallery in your state: (<http://www.adoptuskids.org/resourceCenter/heartGallery/exhibits.aspx>)

SANTA FE, N.M. - In a place where beautiful pictures are common, one woman had an uncommon idea. On her first day working for New Mexico's Adoption and Family Services, Diane Granito thought the very least she could do for children looking for adoptive homes was to take a decent photograph. Not a snapshot, a portrait by a professional.

Granito chose children considered difficult to place in adoptive families—difficult because they came along with siblings, or they had just grown older, like Arron, still hoping for parents at 16.

“When you're hoping for something like that for a long time and it doesn't happen, your heart gets a little more broken each time,” says Granito. Soon all the photographs Granito had arranged began to fill her office.

“I was surrounded by these children, and the emotion that came up in me was so powerful that I knew we were onto something,” she says.

And this is where Diane Granito followed her very good idea with a great one. She had recently been walking along Santa Fe's art gallery row and she thought to herself, photographs this beautiful deserve an equally beautiful home. So she went to one of Santa Fe's finest art galleries.

“What a great idea!” recalls Lisa Bronowicz, the former special events director at Gerald Peters Gallery. “You have the kids, we have the gallery.”

She called it, “The Heart Gallery.” Three sisters featured in the exhibit found a family in less than an hour. Soon, other states were calling.

“It was almost as if the country was waiting to be told these children are here, because nobody really talked about them before,” says Granito.

And after five years, almost 100 Heart Galleries have opened in 48 states. Different locations, but the same magic. More than 1,000 children have found homes.

Twelve-year-old Jalinda saw her portrait for the first time at the St. Louis Heart Gallery. “I think it looks good!” said Jalinda. “I like it, it is cute!”

For the photographers, who all donate their time, something often clicks. The very first frame Santa Fe photographer Jackie Mathey took of Faye captured them both.

“I could see her strength and her character in the mirror,” remembers Mathey. She and her husband adopted Faye. She says it is even better than she hoped it would be.

“They're very special children,” says Granito. “They deserve to be seen in this type of environment — a beautiful place.”

And it helps us see the need of thousands, through the eyes of a child.