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NEARLY 100 FAMILIES WILL ADOPT 136 CHILDREN TOMORROW DURING THE COURT'S ANNUAL NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY CELEBRATION

Virtual News Conference Will Kick Off Event at 8:15 a.m. Tomorrow

National Adoption Day will be celebrated in person and virtually tomorrow to finalize the adoption of 136 children into nearly 100 Los Angeles County families. Celebrated on the Saturday before Thanksgiving with the help of judicial officers from the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, pro bono attorneys with the Alliance for Children's Rights and Public Counsel, and staff from the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), these children in LA County foster care will permanently join their forever families. The event, which originated in LA County and has been celebrated nationally for 23 years, will see the return of in-person adoption hearings for the first time since the pandemic's onset, along with a virtual attendance option for families and friends and a virtual news conference.

Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court Akemi Arakaki will lead off a virtual news conference at **8:15 a.m. tomorrow**, followed by adoption hearings beginning at **9 a.m.** The virtual news conference will be streamed [via YouTube](#) with remarks from LA County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, DCFS Director Brandon T. Nichols, Alliance for Children's Rights President and CEO Jennifer L. Braun, Public Counsel's President and CEO Mónica Ramírez Almadani and Amy Chang on behalf of Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.

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NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY 2022

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Once the virtual news conference ends, the news conference video will be available at the same link for those unable to tune in at 8:15 a.m.

“The Court again looks forward to our National Adoption Day celebration to share in the one-of-a-kind joy created by these special children joining their forever families,” Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor said. “The true spirit of National Adoption Day lies in the permanence and stability of a loving adoptive home, and we thank our partners at the Alliance for Children’s Rights, Public Counsel and DCFS, along with our dependency judicial officers and court staff, who work together to bring this happiness to these loving families.”

“National Adoption Day is truly a labor of love,” Judge Arakaki said. “It is only made possible because of the herculean efforts of our non-profit partners, the attorneys they recruit and our court staff.”

Cynthia J. Billey, director of the Alliance for Children’s Rights, said, “Young people of all ages want and need the love, support and encouragement of a family. Helping make that dream come true for thousands of children in foster care has been the driving force behind National Adoption Day since it began here in Los Angeles more than two decades ago. We can’t wait to see and celebrate all the children and families coming together this year with the Children’s Court’s exciting return to in-person adoption hearings. The Alliance for Children’s Rights is proud to advocate for their futures and walk alongside them in their journey to security, opportunity and happiness.”

On this 23rd National Adoption Day, the Court will finalize the adoptions of 136 children. The Court finalizes more than 1,500 adoptions annually.

“This is one of my favorite days of the year,” Nichols said. “It is such a gift for us to be able to witness this private, life-altering moment as families formalize their love and commitment to one another. Adoption creates an enduring bond that offers children, siblings and parents a source of comfort and supports that each one of them can rely on in happy times and challenging moments.”

-MORE-

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY 2022

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Beginning in the late 1990s, Judge Michael Nash (retired), former Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court in LA County and current Director of the county's Office of Child Protection, worked with a coalition of volunteer organizations, including the Alliance for Children's Rights, Public Counsel and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, to organize adoption events on Saturdays in LA County. These events led to the launch of National Adoption Day, which has expanded to courts across the country.

"This year marks Public Counsel's 25th anniversary of the founding of our Adoptions Project by Karen Ullman and Juli Newhouse," Ramírez Almadani said. "Working closely with our pro bono partners, court and agency partners, and the Alliance for Children's Rights, we have proudly assisted in over 10,000 adoptions. Public Counsel's long-standing commitment has always been not only to finalize adoptions for children in foster care, but to ensure families have the support they need to succeed and persevere in the many days after their Adoption Day. We congratulate all the families who will finalize their adoptions today."

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services also has designated November as National Adoption Month. This year's theme, "Small Steps Open Doors," recognizes the powerful impact of youth engagement and the simple actions professionals can utilize to build supportive relationships with teens. It is estimated that 24% of all children waiting to be adopted nationally are teenagers. One-quarter of the children adopted tomorrow are 10 years old or older.

"It is a celebration of these families, their commitment to each other and to our future generations." Judge Arakaki said of National Adoption Day. "During this holiday season, we as a court community are grateful for this opportunity to serve these families and to honor this awesome tradition."

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November 19, 2022– 23rd Annual National Adoption Day Fact Sheet

Los Angeles Foster care and adoption statistics*:

- Adoptions scheduled for today: **136 children (99 families)**
 - 25% of the children being adopted today are 10 years or older
 - 48% are sibling groups (28 groups of two or more siblings)
 - 89% of the children are being adopted by relatives and 11% of the children are being adopted by non-relatives
 - Age range:
 - 0-2 10%
 - 3-5 44%
 - 6-9 21%
 - 10-14 18%
 - 15+ 7%
 - Number of Los Angeles children receiving child welfare services: 28,196 / Adoption Caseload 8,261
 - 2,644 of these are youth age 18 and older in extended foster care (AB12) (9.4%)
 - Number of Los Angeles children in out-of-home care: 18,448
 - Number of Los Angeles children waiting to be adopted: 3,595 (freed children)
 - 326 of those “waiting” children have yet to be matched with an adoptive family
 - In 2021, there were 1,539 adoptions from foster care in Los Angeles
- *Source: L.A. County DCFS Fact Sheet, Child Welfare Services – September 2022 (Data from CWS/CMS)

California Foster care and adoption statistics

- 47,871 children in out-of-home care
 - 15,386 waiting to be adopted
 - 6,242 foster care adoptions finalized
 - Roughly 4,000 youth age out of foster care each year
- *Source: U.S. Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, state-by-state-AFCARS data as of June 28, 2022

National Foster care and adoption statistics*

- 391,000 children in out-of-home foster care
 - 114,000 waiting to be adopted
 - Of those, 44% are over the age of 8 and 24% are teenagers
 - 54,200 adoptions finalized
 - 20,010 (or 9%) youth aged out of foster care without permanent families
- Sources: U.S. Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, national-AFCARS-trends-data as of June 28, 2022; AFCARS No. 28 preliminary estimates FY 2020 as of October 4, 2021

National Adoption Day (NAD) statistics*

- Number of children adopted on 2019 NAD: 5,200
 - Total number of children adopted on NAD since 2000: 80,000
 - Number of participating cities/counties 2019 NAD: 430
 - Due to COVID-19 pandemic, for NAD 2020 and 2021, many courts were closed and participating cities held virtual adoption events, including 38 events across 17 states last year. Visit www.nationaladoptionday.org.
 - This year, 70 jurisdictions in 26 states across the country have registered their events on the National Adoption Day website, and the NAD coalition anticipates a return to over 300 events across the country. Visit www.nationaladoptionday.org and click on “Find an Event.”
- *Source: Alliance for Children’s Rights

National Adoption Day Los Angeles Virtual Press Event on Saturday, November 19 @ 8:15 am (PST) will be streamed online via YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Yi1r4cgGcRA>.



About National Adoption Day

Today is the **23rd annual** National Adoption Day. A coalition of national partners – the Alliance for Children’s Rights, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Freddie Mac Foundation, Congressional Coalition on Adoption, and Children’s Action Network – founded National Adoption Day to raise public awareness of the thousands of children in foster care in the United States waiting to be adopted and to celebrate all loving families that adopt.

The first National Adoption Day was inspired by the innovative efforts of Michael Nash, former presiding judge of Los Angeles’ Juvenile Court, in collaboration with the Alliance for Children’s Rights, Public Counsel, and the Department of Children and Family Services to open the court on Saturdays and engage the volunteer efforts of *pro bono* attorneys to finalize large numbers of backlogged adoptions. Based on Los Angeles’ “Adoption Saturday” model, on November 18, 2000, the Alliance and its national partners organized the first-ever National Adoption Day, when *nine* cities opened their courts on the Saturday before Thanksgiving to finalize 1,100 foster care adoptions. As this grassroots effort took hold, the number of participating cities grew quickly, from 17 in 2001 to 340 in 2009 to 400 in 2018; as did the number of adoptions, from 1,500 in 2001 to 4,835 in 2009 to 5,200 in 2019. By 2007, National Adoption Day was celebrated for the first time in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Today, judges, social workers, attorneys, adoption advocates, and policymakers collaborate to plan these annual, one-day events in over 400 cities across the country and to date, the dreams of over **80,000** children in foster care have come true as part of National Adoption Day. Visit www.nationaladoptionday.org

Los Angeles “Adoption Day” Program

The Los Angeles “Adoption Day” program is a collaborative effort of the Los Angeles Juvenile Court, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, the Alliance for Children’s Rights, Public Counsel, and hundreds of *pro bono* attorneys to finalize large numbers of adoptions of children from the Los Angeles foster care system. The Los Angeles Adoption Days are normally held four times throughout the year. Over **42,000** adoptions have been finalized since the inception of this program in 1997.

National Adoption Month

November is also National Adoption Month. This year’s National Adoption Month theme, “**Small Steps Open Doors,**” conveys that pursuing permanency for teens can be challenging, but small steps along the way can make all the difference. This theme brings attention to the needs of teens who are less likely to be adopted, often because of their age, and are much more likely to age out of foster care without strong or stable family support. Currently, 12% of youth in California foster care “age out” of the system without the support of a permanent family, leaving them at risk of homelessness, unemployment and other negative outcomes. Visit www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam.

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