

Superior Court of Los Angeles County – Media Relations

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# NEWS RELEASE



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## **235 CHILDREN TO GAIN FOREVER FAMILIES ON THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY**

On Saturday, November 23, judicial officers from the Superior Court of Los Angeles County will perform adoption ceremonies for 235 children in Los Angeles County foster care during National Adoption Day at the Edmund D. Edelman Children’s Court in Monterey Park.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of National Adoption Day, which was inspired by a program developed in Los Angeles by the Court’s former Presiding Judge of Juvenile Michael Nash, in collaboration with the Alliance for Children’s Rights, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services and Public Counsel. National Adoption Day is now celebrated in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court Victor H. Greenberg said of the event, “Each Adoption Day is one of the happiest and most rewarding days for our judicial officers, Court staff, families, and especially for the children. We are so proud to host this 20<sup>th</sup> National Adoption Day celebration in the courthouse where it all began, and to reflect on the collaborative efforts of so many who have made the dream of finding a forever family come true for thousands of children in Los Angeles and across the nation.”

“I want to acknowledge everyone involved — the judicial officers, the Alliance for Children’s Rights, Public Counsel, the pro bono attorneys, and especially Court staff, who put in a tremendous amount of extra work to prepare for this event,” Judge Greenberg said. “Because of everyone’s efforts, the lives of 233 children will be immeasurably improved by helping to provide them with permanent, loving, adoptive families.”

“It has been my life’s work to make sure that no child who cannot safely return home to a parent languishes in the child welfare system if we can help them find love and stability through adoption,” says Cynthia J. Billey, director of the Alliance for Children’s Rights Adoption Program and one of the co-founders of NAD. “Today, I’m so pleased to say that over the history of this event, collectively we’ve been able to create that bond for thousands of kids — and we’ve reached thousands of people, to encourage them to consider foster adoption. It’s such a special way to build a family.”

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## **NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY CEREMONY 2-2-2-2**

This year's theme for National Adoption Month is "Youth Voices, Why Family Matters." The event will focus on the needs of young adults aging out of the foster care system. To highlight this year's theme, the event will feature a personal adoption story from an older adopted youth.

Judge Greenberg asked Judges to volunteer to preside over Saturday's Adoption cases. The judicial officers selected have not been assigned previously to hear Adoption cases, which provides them the opportunity to preside over these joyful matters.

In addition to the cases handled on National Adoption Day, Adoption cases are heard every day at the Edelman Children's Courthouse. In Fiscal Year 2018-19, the Department of Children and Family Services filed 1,716 Adoption cases with the Court. Due to the volume, "mini- adoption days" are held throughout the year, with each event averaging more than 200 cases. It is estimated that more than 30,000 children in the Los Angeles County foster care system have been adopted since National Adoption Day began in 1999.

These adoptions would not be possible without the collaborative efforts of The Alliance for Children's Rights and Public Counsel. The Alliance for Children's Rights provides free legal services and advocacy to protect the rights of impoverished, abused and neglected children and youth. Public Counsel, the largest pro bono law firm in the nation, works with major law firms and corporations to assist more than 30,000 children, youth, families and community organizations every year.

Pro bono attorneys working with the Alliance and Public Counsel help the adoptive families with the paperwork and other issues relating to the adoption process. The Alliance and Public Counsel provide the amenities to make these events extra special, including children's books, decorations and party favors--all of which accentuate the joy experienced by these newly formed families.

The courthouse doors will open at 7:30 a.m. The news conference is scheduled at 8 a.m., with the adoption proceedings beginning at 9 a.m.

Please contact the Court's Media Relations Office for further information at (213) 830-0815 (#6).

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