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NEWS RELEASE

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NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY CELEBRATION WILL FEATURE VIRTUAL RECORDED NEWS CONFERENCE FOLLOWED BY WEBEX HEARINGS FOR 149 CHILDREN

On Saturday, November 21, 11 judicial officers from the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, pro bono attorneys with the Alliance for Children's Rights and Public Counsel, and the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) will complete virtual adoption ceremonies for 149 children in Los Angeles County foster care as part of the 2020 National Adoption Day.

In past years, families gathered in the Edmund D. Edelman Children's Courthouse for their adoption hearings amid a festive celebration including refreshments, entertainment and cherished family photo shoots. The COVID-19 pandemic required substantial changes to this year's 21st National Adoption Day event to keep everyone safe. By using an existing Court-developed program to allow for the finalization of remote adoptions, hearings will be held safely using Webex to connect the judicial officers presiding in courtrooms to the families appearing from their homes.

"The Court is pleased to continue our support for National Adoption Day during the pandemic," Presiding Judge of Juvenile Victor H. Greenberg said. "To ensure social distancing and public health, we are unfortunately unable to celebrate together in person at the Edelman Courthouse this year. However, the most important aspect of this event is the formation of new families for children and their adoptive parents. While we may not be able to enjoy National Adoption Day in our usual environment, we are together in this moment, and remain dedicated to pursuing permanence for every child we have the privilege to serve."

Judge Greenberg will lead off a recorded virtual news conference via YouTube scheduled to begin at 8:15 a.m. on November 21, which will include Alliance for Children's Rights President & CEO Jennifer L. Braun, Public Counsel's President & CEO Judge Margaret Morrow (ret.), Los Angeles

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VIRTUAL ADOPTION DAY 2-2-2-2

County DCFS Director Bobby D. Cagle, and the Goodloes, a family participating in this year's National Adoption Day. The virtual adoptions are scheduled to begin at 9 a.m.

To register to receive the link to view the news conference, visit: <http://bit.ly/NAD2020LA>.

National Adoption Day was inspired by a program developed by former Presiding Judge of Juvenile Michael Nash, in collaboration with the Alliance for Children's Rights, Public Counsel, and DCFS. Judge Nash (ret.) is the Director of the County's Office of Child Protection.

The Saturday before Thanksgiving was specifically chosen as the annual day for the event – a time symbolic of loving families gathering together in the spirit of gratitude.

"We are so proud and profoundly grateful to have, even amidst an incredibly challenging year, pushed forward in collaboration with our partners to ensure that hundreds of families in Los Angeles can safely finalize their adoptions," said Cynthia J. Billey, director of the Alliance for Children's Rights Adoption Program and co-founder of National Adoption Day. "While this National Adoption Day may look different than years before, one thing remains true—children and young adults deserve to find love, security, and stability in a family, and we are deeply honored and committed to supporting them on that path to permanency."

November is also National Adoption Month. This year's National Adoption Month theme, "Engage Youth: Listen and Learn," brings attention to the needs of teenagers 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, 14% of youth in California foster care are "aging out" of the system without the support of a permanent family, and experience high rates of homelessness and other adverse outcomes. Of the 149 children who will be adopted on Saturday, 35 youths are older than 10.

"On National Adoption Day, these children will have a stable and loving family to call their own for the rest of their lives," Cagle said. "Foster parents will become parents, reminding their child that they deserve to be loved, protected, connected, and most importantly, that they are not alone. With this foundation, their futures are immeasurably brighter."

"Thank you to all of our partners, including Public Counsel, the Alliance for Children's Rights, the many pro bono attorneys representing adoptive parents, our court staff (especially the Adoptions Unit), and our volunteer judicial officers," Judge Greenberg said. "Thanks also to Presiding Judge Kevin C. Brazile, Presiding Judge-Elect Eric C. Taylor, and Assistant Presiding Judge-Elect Samantha P. Jessner for their continuing support for children and families in our community."

"Congratulations to both the adoptive parents whose compassion and commitment continue to inspire us and the children who are finding the families, love and stability they have always deserved."

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November 21, 2020 - 21st Annual National Adoption Day Fact Sheet

Los Angeles Foster care and adoption statistics*:

- Virtual adoptions scheduled for today: **149 children (92 families)**
 - 23% of the children being adopted today are 10 years or older
 - 63% are sibling groups (36 groups of two or more siblings)
 - Age range:
 - 0-2 13%
 - 3-5 37%
 - 6-9 26%
 - 10-14 18%
 - 15+ 6%
 - Number of Los Angeles children receiving child welfare services: 38,450
 - 2,360 of these are youth age 18 and older in extended foster care (AB12)
 - Number of Los Angeles children in out-of-home care: 21,829
 - Number of Los Angeles children waiting to be adopted: 2,700
 - Over 300 of those “waiting” children have yet to be matched with an adoptive family
 - In 2019, there were 1,855 adoptions from foster care in Los Angeles
 - Of those, 940 were relative adoptions and 915 were non-relative adoptions
- *Source: L.A. County DCFS Fact Sheet, Child Welfare Services – September 2020 (Data from CWS/CMS)

California Foster care and adoption statistics

- 60,778 children in out-of-home care (on 7/1/20)*
 - 14,436 waiting to be adopted**
 - 5,241 foster care adoptions finalized*
 - 3,037 youth aged out/emancipated from foster care (in the 12-month period 7/1/19 – 6/30/20)*
- *Source: Center for Social Services Research, School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley
- **Source: U.S. Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, AFCARS Report No. 27: Preliminary FY 2019 Estimates as of June 23, 2020

National Foster care and adoption statistics*

- 424,000 children in out-of-home foster care
 - 122,200 waiting to be adopted
 - Of those, 41% are over the age of 8 and 21% are teenagers
 - 66,000 adoptions finalized (the largest number since AFCARS began reporting in 1995)
 - 20,445 (or 8%) youth aged out of foster care without permanent families
- *Source: U.S. Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, AFCARS Report No. 27: Preliminary FY 2019 Estimates as of June 23, 2020

National Adoption Day (NAD) statistics*

- Number of children adopted on 2019 NAD: 5,200
 - Total number of children adopted on NAD since 2000: 79,700
 - Number of participating cities/counties 2019 NAD: 430
 - Due to COVID-19, many participating cities are holding virtual adoption events this year. So far, over 30 NAD events across 20 states are scheduling including in Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington. Visit www.nationaladoptionday.org.
- *Source: Alliance for Children’s Rights

RSVP for the National Adoption Day in LA Virtual Press Event on Saturday, November 21 @ 8:15 am (PST) to receive a link to tune in: <http://allianceforchildrensrights.org/nad2020> or <http://bit.ly/NAD2020LA>.



About National Adoption Day

Today is the **21st 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 **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 Los Angeles foster care. The Los Angeles Adoption Days are normally held four times throughout the year. Over **40,000** 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, “**Engage Youth: Listen and Learn,**” brings attention to the needs of teenagers 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, 14% of youth in California foster care are “aging out” of the system without the support of a permanent family, and experience high rates of homelessness and other adverse outcomes. Visit www.childwelfare.gov for resources to support opportunities for young people to effectively share their voice and perspective.

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