

Superior Court of California,  
County of Los Angeles  
Media Relations  
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# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**November 19, 2021**

## **105 FAMILIES WILL ADOPT 158 CHILDREN TOMORROW DURING THE COURT'S VIRTUAL NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY CELEBRATION**

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

For the second year, National Adoption Day will be celebrated in a virtual format to welcome 158 children into 105 Los Angeles County families on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. With the help of 11 volunteer 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 during the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual National Adoption Day event, which originated in LA County more than two decades ago.

Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court Akemi Arakaki will lead off a virtual news conference at **8:15 a.m. tomorrow**, followed by adoption hearings at **9 a.m.** The virtual news conference, which may be viewed at [this link](#), will feature remarks from U.S. Congresswoman Karen Bass, LA County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda L. Solis, DCFS Director Bobby D. Cagle, Public Counsel's President and CEO Mónica Ramírez Almadani, actress and author Danica McKellar on behalf of the Dave Thomas Foundation, the Millner family, and the Alliance for Children's Rights President and CEO Jennifer L. Braun. A special tribute will be included for adoption advocate and actor Willie Garson, who recently passed away. **Once the live stream ends, the video will be available at the same link for those unable to tune in live.**

**-MORE-**

## **NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY 2021**

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"National Adoption Day is a heartwarming annual event showcasing the power of adoption in the lives of children and families throughout LA County," Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County Eric C. Taylor said. "The Court is proud to continue this annual tradition and wishes all of the newly formed families a wonderful holiday season as they begin this new chapter."

"The Court is delighted to conduct this National Adoption Day," Judge Arakaki said. "Though we are disappointed we are again unable to celebrate the creation of forever families in person due to the ongoing pandemic, the essence of National Adoption Day endures – to establish permanence and stability in the lives of children through the finalization of loving and lasting homes with adoptive parents. Thank you to our partners at the Alliance for Children's Rights, Public Counsel and DCFS for their commitment to make this happy occasion possible for these LA County families."

Cynthia J. Billey, director of the Alliance for Children's Rights said, "Despite unprecedented hardships posed by the pandemic, hundreds of families in Los Angeles have persisted in pursuing adoption and providing safety, security and permanency for the children in their care. Today, we celebrate their resilience and commitment, and congratulate them on building a family through adoption."

While National Adoption Day showcases the power of adoption by providing a venue to finalize large numbers of families at one time, the Court and its partners work throughout the year to ensure children in the LA County foster care system are placed in the forever homes they deserve. In fact, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Court has finalized 2,442 uncontested adoptions virtually since March 2020.

"There are many children living in foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families," Cagle said. "On National Adoption Day, these children will permanently become part of a loving family.

**-MORE-**

## **NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY 2021**

**3-3-3-3**

When a child is adopted, they benefit from the stable and nurturing environment needed to become confident adults. By opening their hearts and their homes, adoptive parents change the lives of these children forever."

National Adoption Day symbolizes the formation of new families for children and their adoptive parents and the Court and its partners' dedication to pursuing forever homes for every child. National Adoption Day was inspired by a program developed by former Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court Michael Nash, in collaboration with the Alliance for Children's Rights, Public Counsel and DCFS. Judge Nash (ret.) is now the Director of the County's Office of Child Protection.

"National Adoption Day is the culmination of months of work by pro bono attorneys, DCFS social workers, nonprofit law firms, and the Children's Court staff," said Ramírez Almadani. "More importantly, today is an opportunity to recognize the incredible families finalizing adoptions, and to celebrate their love, commitment, and unwavering patience and support for their children. Thank you, families, for allowing us to share this unforgettable day with you!"

November is also National Adoption Month. This year's National Adoption Month theme, "Every Conversation Matters," highlights the importance of integrating youth engagement into daily child welfare practice and creating an environment where adoptive children can be honest and ask questions.

"Thank you to our pro bono attorneys, the volunteer judicial officers, our court staff, and justice partners for making this event possible," Judge Arakaki said. "Thank you also to Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor, Assistant Presiding Judge Samantha P. Jessner and Executive Officer/Clerk of Court Sherri R. Carter for your continuing support of this event and for your commitment to the children and families of LA County. Congratulations to all adoptive parents and children on participating in the wonderful opportunity that National Adoption Day brings to celebrate the significance of loving and lasting homes."

**###**



## November 20, 2021 – 22nd Annual National Adoption Day Fact Sheet

### **Los Angeles Foster care and adoption statistics\*:**

- Virtual adoptions scheduled for today: **158 children (105 families)**
  - 31% of the children being adopted today are 10 years or older
  - 57% are sibling groups (35 groups of two or more siblings)
  - 63% of the children are being adopted by relatives and 37% of the children are being adopted by non-relatives
- Age range:
  - 0-2 8%
  - 3-5 32%
  - 6-9 29%
  - 10-14 27%
  - 15+ 4%
- Number of Los Angeles children receiving child welfare services: 32,963
  - 3,722 of these are youth age 18 and older in extended foster care (AB12) (11.3%)
- Number of Los Angeles children in out-of-home care: 21,165
- Number of Los Angeles children waiting to be adopted: 2,429 (freed children)
  - 632 of those “waiting” children have yet to be matched with an adoptive family
- In 2020, there were 1,721 adoptions from foster care in Los Angeles
  - Of those, 62% were relative adoptions and 38% were non-relative adoptions
- In 2020, 895 children “aged out” of foster care without a permanent family

\*Source: L.A. County DCFS Fact Sheet, Child Welfare Services – September 2021 (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: 80,000
- Number of participating cities/counties 2019 NAD: 430
- Due to COVID-19, many participating cities are holding virtual adoption events again this year. So far, 38 NAD events across 17 states are scheduled including in California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and West Virginia. Visit [www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org).

\*Source: Alliance for Children’s Rights

National Adoption Day Los Angeles Virtual Press Event on Saturday, November 20 @ 8:15 am (PST) will be streamed online via YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2D3UYcmzBs>



## About National Adoption Day

Today is the **22nd 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](http://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 **41,000** 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, **“Every Conversation Matters,”** 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 are “aging 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](http://www.childwelfare.gov) for resources to support opportunities for young people to effectively share their voice and perspective.

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