

Superior Court of California County of Santa Clara

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SUPERIOR COURT JOINS IN NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY TO HELP LOCAL CHILDREN FIND PERMANENT FAMILIES

The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, in partnership with the Santa Clara County Department of Social Services, is pleased to announce that it will be taking part in National Adoption Day, an annual event in which courts and communities in all fifty states come together to finalize thousands of adoptions of children and to celebrate all families that adopt. Since 2000, more than 35,000 adoptions have been finalized nationwide on National Adoption Day. Although the official observance of National Adoption Day is Saturday, November 19, the Court has arranged to have its Adoption Day celebration during morning business hours on Friday, November 18 at the Downtown Courthouse, 191 N. 1st St., San Jose. Judges and staff have volunteered to forego their regular duties that morning in order to turn the Downtown Courthouse into “Adoption Central”, as the Court hopes to finalize the placement of as many as 30 children into adoptive homes.

The Adoption Day celebration will officially start with an Opening Ceremony at 8:30 A. M. in the Jury Assembly Room on the first floor of the Downtown Courthouse, and will feature remarks by Superior Court Judge Katherine Lucero (Supervising Judge of the Dependency Court), as well as speakers from the Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS). The Court has arranged for refreshments for the participants and activities to keep the children entertained while awaiting their adoption hearings. Special procedures have been set up to expedite the processing of paperwork and the movement of adoptive families to and from the courtrooms in order to finalize as many adoptions as possible by the event’s conclusion at 11:00 A. M.

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that there are over 408,000 foster care children in the United States, with over 107,000 of them waiting for adoption. Since 1987, the number of children in foster care has nearly doubled, and the average time a child remains in foster care has lengthened to over three years. Each year, approximately 28,000 children in foster care will age out of the system without ever being placed with a permanent family. The goals of National Adoption Day are to enhance public awareness of the need for adoptive parents, to

educate would-be parents about the adoptive process, and to celebrate the local families who have opened their lives to children in need of permanent homes.

Although adoption proceedings are generally confidential, the Court has made allowances for media coverage in order to increase public awareness about the adoption process in Santa Clara County. The hearings themselves will be closed, but the Court will notify the participating families that there may be media representatives present after the hearings and that family members may be asked to comment about their experience for publication or broadcast. Those who agree to make themselves available to the media will be wearing tags with colored balloons printed on them, and those who do not wish to comment will be not be wearing tags. The Court asks that any media representatives in attendance be aware of these conditions and not approach any individuals who are not wearing the balloon tags.

Media organizations requesting permission to photograph, record, or videotape this event must submit the completed forms MC-500 and MC-510 (Rule 1.150, California Rules of Court) prior to the event. Requests may be faxed to the Court's Public Information Office at 408-882-2779.

Families and other interested parties can learn more about adoption by visiting the Court's website at http://www.sccourt.org/self_help/probate/adoption/adoption_home.shtml, the Social Services website at <http://www.sccgov.org/portal/site/ssa>, or the National Adoption Day website at www.nationaladoptionday.org