



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 5, 2019

231 Los Angeles Children to Be Adopted **Los Angeles Celebrates the 20-Year Anniversary of National Adoption Day**

Los Angeles, California — On Saturday, November 23, 231 Los Angeles County children will be adopted, ending their long wait in foster care for permanent, nurturing families. On this day, 400 cities across the country will join Los Angeles in opening their courthouses to finalize the adoptions of more than 5,000 children. The event marks the 20th anniversary of National Adoption Day, a collective effort to raise awareness of the more than 125,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care in the United States.

EVENT DETAILS

Saturday, November 23, 2019

8 a.m. Press conference (cameras are welcome);
Adoptive families will be available to talk to the press.
9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Adoption finalization hearings

Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court, 201 Centre Plaza Drive, Monterey Park
Free parking is available in the adjacent garage.

HISTORY OF NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

Twenty years ago, a coalition of national partners — the Alliance for Children's Rights, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Freddie Mac Foundation, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, 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 coalition partners organized the first National Adoption Day, encouraging nine cities to open their courts on the Saturday before Thanksgiving to finalize a total of 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; as did the number of adoptions, from 1,500 in 2001 to 4,835 in 2009. By 2007, National Adoption Day was celebrated for the first time in all 50 states.

Today, judges, social workers, attorneys, adoption advocates and policymakers collaborate to plan these annual, one-day events in 400 cities across the country. To date, the dreams of nearly 75,000 children in foster care have come true as part of National Adoption Day.

"I remember at my very first National Adoption Day here in Los Angeles, when we looked out at the courthouse, which is often a sad place for children, seeing so much joy and relief on the faces of the families, and feeling such profound appreciation for their love and devotion to these children," says **Cynthia J. Billey, director of the Alliance for Children's Rights Adoption Program and one of the co-founders of National Adoption Day.**

“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. 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.”

*“As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of National Adoption Day, I am thrilled to be back in Los Angeles, where this collaborative effort to celebrate families adopting from foster care began and has grown to become one of the largest National Adoption Day events in the country,” says **Rita Soronen, President & CEO of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and one of the co-founders of National Adoption Day.** “Congratulations to all of the families who are finalizing their adoptions today.”*

*“Each Adoption Day held throughout the year is one of the happiest and most rewarding days for our judicial officers, staff, families and especially for the children,” said **Los Angeles Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Victor Greenberg.** “We are especially proud to host this 20th National Adoption Day celebration in the very 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.”*

For more about National Adoption Day and events across the country visit www.nationaladoptionday.org.

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

November is also National Adoption Month. This year’s National Adoption Month theme, *Youth Voices: Why Family Matters*, brings attention to the needs of young adults aging out of foster care, many of whom still long for a lasting connection to a supportive family. At our Los Angeles celebration, an older youth will share their adoption story. Currently, 14% of youth in California foster care are aging out of the system without permanency. Without the support of a permanent family, they experience higher rates of homelessness and other adverse outcomes.

About the Alliance for Children’s Rights

The Alliance for Children’s Rights protects the rights of impoverished, abused and neglected children. By providing free legal services and advocacy, the Alliance ensures children have safe, stable homes, healthcare and the education they need to thrive. For more information, visit kids-alliance.org.

About the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a national nonprofit public charity dedicated exclusively to finding permanent homes for the more than 155,000 children waiting in North America’s foster care systems. Created by Wendy’s® founder Dave Thomas, who was adopted, the Foundation implements evidence-based, results-driven national service programs, foster care adoption awareness campaigns and innovative grantmaking. To learn more, visit davethomasfoundation.org.

###

Contact:

Amy Heibel, Communications Director
Alliance for Children’s Rights
415-359-4851, a.heibel@kids-alliance.org