

LYNDEN TRIBUNE

Attorney Keith Bode helps in grandson's adoption

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Mom Rebecca Manderson and grandfather Keith Bode interact with 10-month-old Isaiah Melkiso Daniel. — Lynden Tribune | CALVIN BRATT

LYNDEN — Over the years, attorney Keith Bode has represented families in the adoption of about 50 children. But this Friday will bring a first – he will stand alongside his daughter in the adoption of a grandson.

Rebecca and Dusty Manderson will make it official for 10-month-old Isaiah Melkiso Daniel on the second observance of National Adoption Day at the Whatcom County Courthouse.

Isaiah Melkiso, who has been with the Manderson family on Willey's Lake Road since July 19, is from Ethiopia. His native name means "lucky" or "fortunate" and Isaiah means "God is my salvation," and those apply in a remarkable way.

He is one of the "thrown and found" children in Ethiopia, abandoned by his mother at less than two weeks old, Bode said. He was found by a farmer who already has 12 children, and the man was amazed the baby hadn't been found by a lion or hyena first.

The boy was placed in an orphanage in Addis Ababa, where the connection was made to the Mandersons through Adoption Advocates International of Port Angeles.

Rebecca had just given birth to her own daughter, Gabriella, in July, so only Dusty Manderson went to Ethiopia. He traveled four hours into the bush to the area where Isaiah was born. "He got to meet the guy who found him, which filled in Isaiah's story," Bode said.

Ethiopia is facilitating adoptions right now, and more families are using Adoption Advocates as well.

Adoptions are finalized in courts throughout the year. But the annual National Adoption Day emphasis has caught on, with Whatcom County Superior Court Judge Charles Snyder an advocate locally. After the formalities, families and friends can gather in a room with a party-like atmosphere.

"It's a really neat part of the process," Bode said. "So it's going to be particularly neat to do my own grandchild."

Twenty families' adoption of 25 children will be finalized on Friday, starting at 10 a.m. Five adoptions are being handled by Bode's law office.

The organizations Hope 1.27, through Sonlight Community Christian Reformed Church of Lynden, and His Kids Our Homes have also boosted adoption and foster parenting locally.

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