

Faith, love unite Woodinville family with two babies in Tacoma on Adoption Day

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Eddie Jane Kahler, 5, front, holds up her hand while her parents, Aundrea and Scott, are sworn in for the adoption of Etta Mae, 1, left, and Ethan Judah, 11 months, by Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck as part of National Adoption Day at Remann Hall on Friday. Addie's sisters, Makenna, 11, left, and Aynsley, 9, also participated in the adoption. The Kahlers had raised Etta and Ethan since birth as foster parents. LUI KIT WONG — Staff photographer | [Buy Photo](#)

A year ago, the future looked bleak for two Pierce County infants.

Born a month apart in 2012 — she in November, he in December — both were left by their drug-addicted parents at the hospital.

Their parents didn't even leave them with names, according to social workers.

Enter the Kahler family of Woodinville.

Already the parents of three girls under age 12, Aundrea and Scott Kahler felt called by their religious faith to open their family and their hearts to other children in need of a home.

“We felt led into adoption,” said Aundrea, who said they were friends with other families who had adopted children. “It was a journey we were supposed to take.”

“God had a plan for these babies,” added Scott. “This was not about us. It was about them.”

On Friday, the Kahlers became the legal parents of Etta Mae Hope Kahler and Ethan Judah Scott Kahler. Their babies’ adoption proceedings in Pierce County Juvenile Court — along with those of 12 other children — were part of National Adoption Day, an event launched in Washington state in 2005 to raise awareness of the adoption process.

The Kahlers were one of nine families adopting children in Pierce County on Friday. More than 140 foster children in 21 Washington counties were scheduled to be adopted over the past week in connection with the event, according to the state Department of Social and Health Services.

About 8,300 children in Washington live in foster care, and more than 1,600 are legally free to be adopted. That means that their biological parents’ rights have been terminated in court. This year, about 350 kids were adopted in Pierce County, according to juvenile court officials.

Adoption hearings are usually closed court proceedings, but in honor of Adoption Day, they were opened. In a packed courtroom filled with the Kahlers’ friends and extended family, as well as social workers who had assisted in the adoption, Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck made it official.

The family was invited to pose for pictures in the courtroom, decorated with balloons and Teddy bears. Each Kahler baby was presented with a bear and other gifts.

Outside the courtroom, three big sisters – 11-year-old Makenna, 9-year-old Aynsley and 5-year-old Addie – were all smiles as they took turns holding and playing with the babies.

“My sister walks really good,” Addie noted. And Ethan? “He walks with (help from) his hands.”

Their parents said all three girls have taken to big sisterhood with gusto, even learning to change diapers.

“They were willing to have the spotlight off them,” Scott said of his older girls. Added Aundrea: “They were willing to not be the center of attention.”

Both parents said growing their family from three to five children was a leap of faith. But now they can’t imagine their family without both little ones.

The Kahlers had raised Etta and Ethan since birth as foster parents. Etta came to them first, then Ethan.

Although they're not biologically related, the babies are close in age and resemble each other, both with sandy brown hair and big blue eyes.

Asked if strangers often mistake them for siblings, Aundrea replied: "They do. And now, they are."

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