

## **Adoption Day means happiness for eight children in Skagit County**

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A dozen or more excited children and their prospective families recently gathered in a Skagit County courtroom for a very important event: Their adoptions were about to become official.

Delilah George, the Superior Court administrator said the courtroom filled up quickly that Friday, Nov. 22, transforming it from the usual formal atmosphere to “a warm and friendly courtroom filled with bright balloons, colorful streamers and sweet, little stuffed animals lined across the front bench area.”

County Commissioners Ron Wesen and Sharon Dillon read the proclamation declaring Nov. 22, 2013, as National Adoption Day in Skagit County. George said an adoptive parent told her story of being in the same courtroom some 20 years ago, and she shared the happiness that her adopted children have brought to her family.

Christine Domes, adoption supervisor with the state Department of Social and Human Services, said adoptions, unlike births, are sealed records and names of the children are not available to the public.

Eight adoptions, all by relatives of the children, were finalized that afternoon with Judge John Meyer and Court Commissioner Brian Paxton officiating, Domes said.

Each adoptive family was called to the front of the courtroom and went through the formal process. After a joyful round of applause, each family then approached the bench for pictures with Meyer and Paxton.

“Each of the children got to pound the gavel,” George said.

A celebration followed with a decorated cake donated by the Mount Vernon Safeway and a stuffed teddy bear for each adopted child from radio station Warm 106.9 FM.

In Washington alone, George said 9,800 or more children are in foster care and nearly 1,500 have permanently lost their parents and await families to adopt them.

“It was a wonderful, emotional event that was very heartwarming,” George said. “It is so sad that most of the public is unaware of the number of children available for adoption and that approximately 23,000 kids turned 18 this year and never got a forever family.”