

# National Adoption Day: Smiles, Laughter and Hugs

Officially Family: Lewis County Judge Finalizes Nine Local Adoptions As Part of National Adoption Day



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## National Adoption Day

The Hick-Avron family (from left): Alex 10, Alyssa 4, Malachi 8, Tannen 3, Tiffany who is holding their infant daughter Elexis, Hunter 2, and Dominic 8, celebrate after Tannen and Hunter signed their adoption papers in Lewis County Superior court on Friday afternoon.



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In a courtroom typically filled with people dealing with child custody issues, divorce or criminal charges, on Friday afternoon was instead filled with laughter, smiles and high-fives.

“We see a lot of conflict and a lot of horrible things,” Superior Court Judge James Lawler told the group of 80 people who attended the National Adoption Day ceremony at the Lewis County Law and Justice Center Friday.

The two positive things Lawler said he gets to be a part of as a judge are marriages and adoptions.

“When I get to do a whole pile of adoptions — this is a great day for me,” he said.

Lawler finalized nine adoptions on Friday.

While most already considered their families to be complete long before Friday, the adoptions were their final legal step. Family after family went up to a table, which is normally used by attorneys and their clients, to sign the adoption papers. Each adoption was followed with loud applause.

For the Hicks-Avron family, National Adoption Day meant expanding their family from eight people to 10.

The Centralia family, who all wore plaid to Friday’s event, with the exception of 4-year-old Alyssa who wore a pink dress, crowded around the attorney’s table to take an oath and sign the papers.

“We’re just thankful for the opportunity,” said Tiffany Hicks-Avron, the mother of the eight children.

Tiffany and her husband Andrew had six children together: 13-year-old Tristan, 10-year-old Alex, 8-year-old Dominic, 8-year-old Malachi, 4-year-old Alyssa and 6-month-old Elexis.

The two finalized adoptions to the family were 2-year-old Hunter and 3-year-old Tannen.

“Children are our hearts and it’s what we love to do,” Tiffany said.

National Adoption Day is an annual event to bring attention to the 100,000 foster children awaiting adoption in the U.S.

Since 1987, the number of children in foster care nationally has doubled, and the average time a child remains in foster care has lengthened to nearly three years, according to a press release from Lewis County Superior Court.

Each year, approximately 23,000 children in foster care will age out of the system without ever being with a permanent family.

More than 11,000 children currently live in foster care in Washington. Many of these children are available for adoption.

If anyone is interested in more information on becoming a foster parent, contact Division of Licensing Resources at (360) 807-7081. Those interested in becoming a court appointed special advocate for a child can contact Lewis County Juvenile Court CASA Program coordinators at (360) 740-2683 or (360) 740-2687.