

MY TURN | Celebrate Adoption Day in Court, Nov. 20

Reader submitted

People often ask me whether I like my job. Generally, I respond with a truthful, but safe response about the satisfaction that comes from public service.

On rare occasions, I am a little more forthcoming and express my disheartenment at the overwhelming sadness inherent in this position. No one who comes to court is happy; they have been accused of a crime, sued by their neighbor over a fence line, or entrapped in a dissolution proceeding. No one at court is happy. Except ...

Except adoptions.

This year we celebrate National Adoption Day on November 21, 2009 with courthouse ceremonies on Friday, November 20th. Across the nation an unprecedented number of courts and communities will come together to finalize thousands of adoptions of children from foster care and to celebrate all families who adopt. Kitsap County Superior Court invites you to join our celebration on that Friday afternoon at 3 p.m. in Courtroom 271, when nine local families will joyously add at least one new member.

The children involved in these adoptions are from the foster care system and are some of the lucky ones who find their “forever” families. There are an estimated 510,000 children in foster care in the United States and more than 129,000 of them are waiting to be adopted. Through no fault of their own, these children enter foster care as a result of abuse, neglect or abandonment. The average child in foster care waits for an adoptive family for more than two years and 20 percent spend 5 years or more waiting for a family. More than 26,000 foster children each year reach the age of 18 without ever finding a permanent place to call home.

Most of these children have suffered a terrible and unimaginable loss. They have no center, no place in the universe that is theirs and theirs alone. Many of these children dream of a permanent home and long for something as simple as a family dinner, where they know that a place will be set for them. These children need parents who can celebrate with them when they do well in school; parents who know what to do if the

children are floundering; and, parents who can care for them regardless of adult turmoils and concerns.

A national survey in 2007 revealed that 48 million Americans have considered adoption from the foster care system. If just a small fraction of those families followed through on their reflections, all children who ever searched for a “forever family” would be wildly successful. The good news is that more than 50,000 children are adopted from foster care each year finding homes with former foster parents, relatives and other caring families.

In the midst of all this sadness, there are silent heroes in our midst. Those are the adoptive parents who open the doors of their homes and, more importantly, open the doors of their hearts to reform the universe of a lonely and hurting child. They choose to take on the challenges of parenthood and meet that task with patience, kindness, unshakeable determination, and unconditional love. When they saw a child in pain, they didn't walk on thinking that someone else will take on the problem. They stopped, picked that child up and held on for dear life. For forever life.

Ordinarily court adoption proceedings are closed to the public. However, on November 20th, with the endorsement of the adoptive families, and in honor of National Adoption Day, Kitsap County Superior Court, in concert with courts throughout our nation, will open its doors to the public. I hope that you will join us in person or in spirit as we applaud the beginnings of newly adopted children and their families.

Come see happiness at court in action.

Judge Anna M. Laurie

Kitsap County Superior Court

Read more: <http://www.kitsapsun.com/news/2009/nov/15/my-turn-celebrate-adoption-day-in-court-nov-20/#ixzz0X3Xzxs0M>