

A commission working to improve outcomes for foster children

The Washington Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care was established in 2005 to examine ways in which courts and child welfare agencies can work more smoothly together to improve outcomes for foster children.

Among its many efforts, the Commission sponsored the state's first National Adoption Day celebration in 2005 in courts across Washington. The state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Northwest Adoption Exchange join in sponsoring and planning the event.



2014 Celebration — Please join us!

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

For details call: _____

For more information about
adoption of foster children, contact:

- DSHS Division of Children and Family Services, adoption program, www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adopt/index.asp
- Northwest Adoption Exchange, (800) 927-9411, or visit www.adoptwashingtonkids.org.



National Adoption Day in Washington State Courts



*Helping legally-
free foster
children find
new families by
spreading the
word that they
are waiting*



WASHINGTON
COURTS

Children are waiting...



...and many potential parents don't realize it. Adoptive parents may hear about the foster care system, but never learn how many foster children are legally free and in need of new families.

In Washington State in mid-2010, more than 1,530 foster children had permanently lost their parents and were waiting to be adopted.

To help shine a light on these children and their need for families, courts across Washington have begun celebrating **National Adoption Day** during the second or third week in November. Events often include finalizing one or more adoptions of foster children, visits by local officials or celebrities, invitations to adoptive families and the public to join in, and information for the media.



Adoptive fathers get ready for their adoption hearings at Pierce County Superior Court's 2006 National Adoption Day celebration.



Lewis County Superior Court Judge James Lawler (far right) celebrates National Adoption Day 2012 with all of the parents and children who started new families that day.

What's National Adoption Day?

National Adoption Day was founded in 2000 by a coalition of nationwide organizations and businesses working to improve the lives of children. The coalition wanted to highlight the thousands of foster children across the U.S. waiting for new families. The goal is to spread the word about these children.

Some Washington courts individually celebrated the day for a few years. In 2005, the Washington Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care sponsored the first statewide celebration in courts across Washington. The event is co-sponsored by the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the Superior Court Judges' Association, the Northwest Adoption Exchange and WARM 106.9.

How you can participate

Everyone can be a part of National Adoption Day. **Judges and court workers** are needed to help plan and host events. **Local officials and celebrities** can volunteer to attend or help plan. **Social service and adoption workers** can help plan local celebrations and encourage foster and adoptive families to take part. **Members of the public** can attend the events, write letters to the newspapers, and spread the word to friends and co-workers that foster children are looking for new homes.



King County Superior Court Judge Dean Lum escorts the Mariner Moose at the county's celebration in 2005. Judge Lum, who was adopted, serves as chair of the statewide National Adoption Day Steering Committee.