



# 2012 Washington State National Adoption Day



Lewis County adoptive families and Judge James Lawler (far right) celebrate following the adoption of eight former foster children into new families during Lewis County Superior Court's 2012 National Adoption Day celebration on Nov. 16.

Final report of the Washington State  
National Adoption Day Steering Committee

# Washington State National Adoption Day 2012

## At a Glance

**173 children were adopted** during events hosted by 21 courts and Children's Administration offices.

**This brings the total** number of children adopted during National Adoption Day events in Washington state since 2005 to **1,302**.

**Two new courts joined the** celebration for 2012 — Clallam and Asotin. Several courts that had hosted events in previous years but could not host events in 2011 re-joined the statewide celebration this year.

**WARM 106.9 and its Teddy Bear Patrol program** agreed to become a permanent sponsor of National Adoption Day events in Washington courts, providing stuffed animals for the celebrations. The Teddy Bear Patrol program collects donations of stuffed animals for children in tense situations.

**Governor Chris Gregoire provided** a proclamation for reading during the celebrations, as she had done several times during her years in office.

**The National Adoption Day Web page** on AOC's Web site proved useful to courts for planning events and downloading family certificates, brochures, letters and other templates. The site also provides an information resource to refer media looking for background on the event. The site includes all annual reports and all elements of the National Adoption Day Toolkit provided to help courts with their events. The page can be found at

**Media coverage was again excellent**, with NAD stories and columns in the Everett Herald, the Centralia Chronicle, on KING TV, in the Vancouver Columbian, the News Tribune, the Olympian, the Whidbey News-Times, the Bellingham Herald, the Skagit Valley News, the Yakima Herald, the Tri-City Herald and many more outlets.

**A particularly moving column** on being a foster child waiting for adoption was written by Snohomish County Deputy Prosecutor Adam Cornell for the Everett Herald just prior to the National Adoption Day events in mid-November. You can find that column on page 9 of this report.

**Washington State  
National Adoption Day  
Steering Committee  
2012**

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Washington State Courts

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM: Lorrie Thompson  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
(360) 705-5347

**November 13, 2012**

Chris Case, Assistant Director Public Affairs  
DSHS Children’s Administration  
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## **Courts celebrating National Adoption Day 2012: Some foster children lucky, many are still waiting**

Matthew, Tatiana, John, Lorenzo, Gabrielle, Devin, Tony, Levi, Gia... These are among more than 1,600 foster children in Washington state who are waiting to be adopted into new families after the rights of their biological parents were terminated by courts, or relinquished by the parents themselves. They have no permanent parents or home.

As of Oct. 15, 2012, there were 7,847 children living in foster care in Washington, with 1,623 of those available for adoption.

Jordan, Kamiya, Jebidiah... These are also foster children, but they are no longer waiting. They will be adopted into new families during **National Adoption Day celebrations in Washington courts next week**. The public and media are invited and welcome to attend the celebrations, most of which are scheduled for Nov. 15 and 16, to talk with adoptive parents, judges, child welfare workers about the world of foster adoptions.

More than 120 foster children will join new families during the state’s eighth annual celebration of foster adoptions. More information is available at <http://www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/adoptionDay/?fa=adoptionDay.home>.

Celebrating counties include (see detailed list on Web site):

Benton/Franklin	King	Clallam	Whatcom
Skagit	Kitsap	Chelan/Douglas	Clark
Yakima	Mason	Snohomish	Jefferson
Cowlitz	Lewis	Spokane	Island
Pierce	Thurston	Asotin	

“The day a foster child is adopted into a new family is the day their lives change forever. They gain stability, support and the nurturing they need to move confidently into adulthood,” said King County Superior Court Judge Dean Lum, Chairman of the Washington State National Adoption Day Steering Committee, who was himself an adopted child. “Adoptive parents are very special. They forever change the lives of these children and the communities where we live.”

National Adoption Day was founded by a handful of courts, child welfare agencies and businesses in 2000 to raise awareness of the thousands of foster children awaiting adoption. Washington’s statewide celebration was launched in 2005 by the state Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care and is co-sponsored by the Department of Social and Health Services Children’s Administration, the Superior Court Judges’ Association, and the Administrative Office of the Courts.

WARM 106.9’s Teddy Bear Patrol program is also now a permanent sponsor of the event.

Denise Revels Robinson, Assistant Secretary, Children's Administration, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) said "I am pleased for the opportunity on National Adoption Day to celebrate with the children and families who have found one another through the adoption process. Every child deserves to have loving, caring adults who will be their forever family.

"I also want to acknowledge and thank the Children's Administration staff and our partners in the courts," Revels Robinson said. "It takes many partners and hard work by attorneys, guardians ad litem, CASAs and judges who all have important roles in achieving final adoption for the children."

**CONTACT:** King County Superior Court Judge Dean Lum, Chair, Washington State National Adoption Day Steering Committee, (206) 296-9295, dean.lum@kingcounty.gov; DSHS Children's Administration Assistant Secretary Denise Revels Robinson, (360) 902-7892; retired Supreme Court Justice Bobbe Bridge, co-chair, Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care, (and founder of the Center for Children and Youth Justice), (206) 696-7503, ext. 10.

# Washington State National Adoption Day November 16, 2012

County	Event details	Court Contact Information	Children's Administration/ CASA Contact	Adopted
<b>Asotin</b>	Thursday, Nov. 8  7 – 8:30 p.m.  Homes of Hope Nazarene Church Lewiston, ID	Judge Bill Acey <a href="mailto:bacey@co.asotin.wa.us">bacey@co.asotin.wa.us</a>		5
<b>Benton/ Franklin</b>	Friday, Nov. 16  7 <sup>th</sup> Annual  1 p.m.  Franklin County Court- house 7122 W. Okanogan P., Bldg. A ,Kennewick	Tiffany Husom <a href="mailto:Tiffany.Husom@co.benton.wa.us">Tiffany.Husom@co.benton.wa.us</a>  509-736-3071 ext. 23	Erin Haskins <a href="mailto:Erin.Haskins@dshs.wa.gov">Erin.Haskins@dshs.wa.gov</a>	5
<b>Chelan/ Douglas</b>	Saturday, Nov. 17  11:30 a.m.  Foothills Middle School, 1410 Maple Street, Wenatchee	Judge T.W. Small 509-667-6210 <a href="mailto:Chip.small@co.chelan.wa.us">Chip.small@co.chelan.wa.us</a>	Sue Baker, Chelan/Douglas CASA, 509-662-7350 <a href="mailto:cdcasa@nwi.net">cdcasa@nwi.net</a>  Arlene Grover, Chelan/ Douglas CASA, 509-662- 7350 <a href="mailto:cdcasa@nwi.net">cdcasa@nwi.net</a>	5
<b>Clallam</b>	Thursday, Nov. 15  10 a.m.  Clallam Co. Superior Court, 223 E Fourth St., Port Angeles 98362	Commissioner Brent Basden (360) 417-2386 <a href="mailto:bbasden@co.clallam.wa.us">bbasden@co.clallam.wa.us</a>		4
<b>Clark</b>	Thursday, Nov. 15  4 p.m.  Vancouver First United Methodist Church		Kelly Phillips Social worker, DSHS (360) 993-7956 <a href="mailto:Phk1300@dshs.wa.gov">Phk1300@dshs.wa.gov</a>	Cele- bration

<b>Cowlitz</b>	Friday, Nov. 2  2 p.m.  Kelso, WA	Judge Gary Bashor <a href="mailto:BashorG@co.cowlitz.wa.us">BashorG@co.cowlitz.wa.us</a>	Jeanmarie Moore Recruitment and Retention Specialist (360) 442-9605 <a href="mailto:Jean-mariemoore@hotmail.com">Jean-mariemoore@hotmail.com</a>	12
<b>Island</b>	Friday, Nov. 16  3 p.m.  Law & Justice Bldg., 101 NE 6 <sup>th</sup> St., Coupeville, WA 98239	Brooke Powell, Administrator Island Co. Superior & Juvenile 360-240-5524 <a href="mailto:Brookep@co.island.wa.us">Brookep@co.island.wa.us</a>  Judge Vickie Churchill 360-679-7361 <a href="mailto:Vickiec@co.island.wa.us">Vickiec@co.island.wa.us</a>	Carla Grau-Egerton Island Co. CASA Program Manager (360) 331-5307 <a href="mailto:CarlaGE@co.island.wa.us">CarlaGE@co.island.wa.us</a>  Jami Belieu <a href="mailto:jbel300@dshs.wa.gov">jbel300@dshs.wa.gov</a>  360-416-7200	3
<b>Jefferson</b>	Wednesday, Nov. 28  1 p.m.  Jefferson County Superior Court 1820 Jefferson St. Port Townsend 98368	Judge Craddock Verser  Jefferson County Superior Court Administrator Michelle Lorand 360-385-9360 <a href="mailto:Mlorand@co.jefferson.wa.us">Mlorand@co.jefferson.wa.us</a>		4
<b>King</b>  <i>11<sup>th</sup> Annual</i>	Friday, Nov. 16  Celebration Noon – 1 p.m.  King County Superior Court, E942 (9 <sup>th</sup> floor) 516 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave., Seattle 98104	Judge Kim Prochnau <a href="mailto:Kim.Prochnau@kingcounty.gov">Kim.Prochnau@kingcounty.gov</a>  Merle Redd-Jones, Family Court Operations Manager <a href="mailto:Merle.Redd-Jones@kingcounty.gov">Merle.Redd-Jones@kingcounty.gov</a>		20
<b>Kitsap</b>	Friday, Nov. 16  3 p.m.  Kitsap County Superior Court, 614 Division St., Port Orchard, WA	Frank Maiocco, Administrator 360-337-7140 <a href="mailto:fmaiocco@co.kitsap.wa.us">fmaiocco@co.kitsap.wa.us</a>	Ann Kaluzny 360-475-3547 <a href="mailto:Kaan300@dshs.wa.gov">Kaan300@dshs.wa.gov</a>	6
<b>Lewis</b>	Friday, Nov. 16  9 a.m.  Lewis Co. Superior Court, 345 W. Main St. Chehalis, WA 4th Floor, Courtroom	Judge James Lawler  Susie Parker, Administrator (360) 740-1333 Ext. 3 <a href="mailto:Susie.Parker@lewiscountywa.gov">Susie.Parker@lewiscountywa.gov</a>	Dawn Oster	8

<b>Mason</b>	Thursday, Nov. 15 9 a.m.  Mason County Superior Court, 419 N. 4 <sup>th</sup> , Shelton, 98584	Commissioner Robert Sauerlender  Robyn Lockwood, Administrator <a href="mailto:Rl@co.mason.wa.us">Rl@co.mason.wa.us</a>  (360) 427-9670, ext. 206	Puja Pecovsky, DCFS <a href="mailto:Pepu300@dshs.wa.gov">Pepu300@dshs.wa.gov</a>  (360) 432-2061	10
<b>Pierce</b>	Friday, Nov. 16  9:00 a.m.  Pierce County Juvenile Court, 5501 6 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Tacoma, 98406	Joni Irvin, Pierce County Juvenile Court Adoption Coordinator 253-798-7978 <a href="mailto:jirvin@co.pierce.wa.us">jirvin@co.pierce.wa.us</a>	Annie Doll 253-983-6295 <a href="mailto:Doll300@dshs.wa.gov">Doll300@dshs.wa.gov</a>	15
<b>Skagit</b>	Friday, Nov. 16  3 p.m.  Skagit County Superior Court, 205 W. Kincaid, Rm 202 Mount Vernon, 98273	Delilah George, Court Administrator 360-336-9325 <a href="mailto:delilahg@co.skagit.wa.us">delilahg@co.skagit.wa.us</a>	Jami Belieu <a href="mailto:jbel300@dshs.wa.gov">jbel300@dshs.wa.gov</a>  360-416-7200	8
<b>Snohomish</b>	Friday, Nov. 16  Adoptions 9 a.m. – Noon; Celebration starting 10:30 A.M.  Snohomish County Superior Court, 3000 Rockefeller Ave., Everett, 98201	Judge David Kurtz 425-388-3881 <a href="mailto:judge@co.snohomish.wa.us">judge@co.snohomish.wa.us</a>  Jessica Gurley, staff contact 425-388-7840 <a href="mailto:jessica.gurley@co.snohomish.wa.us">jessica.gurley@co.snohomish.wa.us</a>	Jami Belieu <a href="mailto:jbel300@dshs.wa.gov">jbel300@dshs.wa.gov</a>  360-416-7200	24
<b>Spokane</b>	Friday, Nov. 16  Noon  Spokane Superior Court, 1116 W. Broadway Ave., Spokane, 99260  Jury lounge	Commissioner Steven Grovdahl 509-477-5702 <a href="mailto:sgrovdahl@spokanecounty.org">sgrovdahl@spokanecounty.org</a>	Sharon Tanner 509-363-3460 <a href="mailto:Sharon.tanner@dshs.wa.gov">Sharon.tanner@dshs.wa.gov</a>	20

<b>Thurston</b>	Thursday, Nov. 15 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.  Thurston County Family and Juvenile Court, Tumwater	Judge Anne Hirsch  Bev Morgan 360-709-3232 <a href="mailto:Morganb@co.thurston.wa.us">Morganb@co.thurston.wa.us</a>	Jolene Bradley DSHS Social Worker (360) 725-6673 <a href="mailto:jolene.bradley@dshs.wa.gov">jolene.bradley@dshs.wa.gov</a>	4
<b>Whatcom</b>	Friday, Nov. 9  9 a.m.  Whatcom County Superior Court, 311 Grand Ave. Bellingham	David Reynolds, Administrator Whatcom Superior Court (360) 676-7688	Jami Belieu <a href="mailto:jami.belieu@dshs.wa.gov">jami.belieu@dshs.wa.gov</a>  360-416-7200	10
<b>Yakima</b>	Tuesday, Nov. 13  2 p.m.  Yakima Co. Juvenile Court, 1728 Jerome Ave., Yakima	Commissioner Robert Inouye 509-574-2710 <a href="mailto:Robert.Inouye@co.yakima.wa.us">Robert.Inouye@co.yakima.wa.us</a>	Cheri Holden, DCFS Adoptions Specialist 509-865-1650; Cell: 509-969-5254 <a href="mailto:mylc300@dshs.wa.gov">mylc300@dshs.wa.gov</a>	15

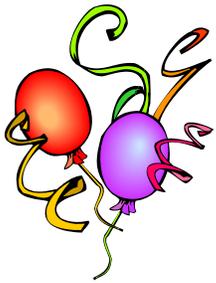
Number of celebrations: 19

Number of participating counties: 21

Number of children adopted during events: 173

# Snapshot of a celebration

Lewis County Superior Court celebrated National Adoption Day on Nov. 16, 2012, helping eight foster children join their new forever families. Judge James Lawler presided over the adoptions, and a planning team coordinated community donations of balloons, gift bags for the children, flowers, plants, snacks, photography and more for the celebration following the adoptions. Stuffed animals were provided by WARM 106.9's Teddy Bear Patrol Program.



## **Adoption shows there are many ways to make a family**

### **It's a precious gift to both the child and the new parent**

By Adam Cornell

It was really a casting call disguised as a picnic, but after five years as an orphan and many more as a foster child, it was time to make a more aggressive attempt at getting adopted--at least that is what my social worker told me. The picnic brought together families looking to adopt a child with kids hoping to be adopted. Even if I was at my 12-year-old, bad haircut, ill-behaved best, I was not going to go home with a new family, but I might get a call back and the chance to prove myself to a family who was not as distracted by the cute babies and toddlers similarly vying for the part and prize of son or daughter.

My years from age 8 to 13 had been fallow ground for finding an adoptive family. There had been tryouts with the older couple who, after a few visits were finally able to get pregnant and so immediately lost interest in me. There was the younger couple who, I found out later after the visits suddenly stopped, were beginning the process of separating soon after we began seeing each other (seriously, they thought a kid with borderline attachment disorder was going to save their marriage?), then there was a year-long tryout with a doctor and his wife, at the end of which I did not get the part. So, that picnic in the fall of my 13th year was my last chance at a permanent home--or so I thought.

While the circumstances that lead to children being put up for adoption are varied, a common thread is that a child's biological parent, or parents, are not ready, willing, or able to care for their children. Sometimes the parents are too young to support a child emotionally or financially; sometimes, as in my life, the ravages of drugs and alcohol, and their consequences -- domestic violence and neglect -- compel the state to step in long after a child's birth. Undeniably, none of these children are to be blamed or shamed for their status or station in life. Unquestionably, all of these children want and deserve an anchor to windward -- a loving family that will last a lifetime. But also something beyond a lifetime: a place in the family tree in the decades and centuries to come that will simply preserve the memory of their existence.

Today, according to the Washington State Department of Social and Health Service, 170 children remain available for adoption in Snohomish County. Almost 1,600 children are up for adoption statewide. These children need families.

Friday, Nov. 16, is National Adoption Day. On that day in Snohomish County, thanks to judges, lawyers for children and families, social workers, the Clerk's office, volunteer guardian ad litem, community partners, and most of all, loving families, there will be approximately 20 fewer orphans at the end of the day than when it started. There will be much to celebrate as families don their Sunday best to honor both their loved ones and the principle that there are many ways to make a family. While the instant reaction to all of this family-making is to exclaim "those lucky children!" the joy will also be reciprocal, because those families are also the lucky ones.

I know this to be true because my picnic casting call led to my adoption at age 14 by a single man from Woodinville. For the first time in years I had a place to call home, but more importantly, I had a person to call "father" and I was again "son." While it was just the two of us, we were a family. As a teenager, the consistency and permanency pro-

vided by my new family gave birth to my emotional, social, and academic thriving. Unfortunately, that ended when my adopted father committed suicide just before my high school graduation. Again I was an orphan.

In the fog of that loss I again faced a life without a family and no place to call home. Twice made an orphan, first by my mother's choice and then by my adopted father's death, I resigned myself to an unfinished life. I also became acutely aware that I faced what had terrified me as a child: a life as an adult without a family. There would be no place to return to at winter break, no family with which to celebrate the holidays, no place to stay during the summertime. What family would I have to offer my future wife?

This is the reality for children in our community who do not get adopted and age out of the foster care system. That was my reality in summer of 1991.

While the state would no longer be responsible for me, friends and former teachers stepped in the breach, including the Jenkinses, a family I had met during my senior year in high school. After the initial wave of grief and panic washed over me, the Jenkinses offered me a place to stay and a place to celebrate. My relationship with the Jenkinses blossomed over dinners by the fire, boating trips, and vacations abroad while I was a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer. At 23, I was legally adopted into their family. As I often say, "you're never too old to have a happy childhood." Now, at 40, that phrase still rings true.

The natural instinct to produce biological offspring is undeniable. Families sometimes spend tens of thousands of dollars to subject themselves to incredibly invasive procedures in an effort to produce a biological child. Other families travel thousands of miles to adopt children from other countries. Such decisions are not to be criticized or maligned and are undoubtedly considered and valid choices, but in the context of the reality that in our community many children of all ages remain alone, waiting to join a family, it raises the question: what shall we do to find our own orphaned children forever homes? There are many ways to make a family. Parents unable to have their own biological children could at the very least, consider adopting a child from our community. And those families who are looking to add a second or third child? How about adopting a child from our community?

Every child, bent or broken by a world beyond their control deserves a family.

I spend most of my professional life around the Snohomish County courthouse. For most people who walk its corridors, it is not a happy place. Daily, I rub shoulders with divorcing spouses whose rancor is palpable, civil litigants engaged in a fight for one advantage or another, criminal defendants facing a loss of liberty, and crime victims' who have lost their dignity at the hands of their perpetrators. These are win-lose proceedings. Adoptions are the exception.

This coming Friday, on National Adoption Day, everybody wins. And since 2006, when we began, more than 150 children and families have won on this day of celebration. Friday, the courthouse will be filled with the joy and promise of lives renewed. A child will go home with a family. There will be a newly minted son or daughter. Friday is a celebration of sacrifice, love, family, and a system that actually works for children in need. We will celebrate the wisdom of the choice of every family who chose adoption in our community over other options.

While I was made an orphan twice and felt the sting of each loss, adoption saved me. I am a stronger and more confident person because of it. And my happy childhood continues still.

*Adam Cornell is a Snohomish County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney and lives with his wife of 10 years in Edmonds. He serves on the board of trustees of the Seattle Repertory Theatre and the advisory board of the Center for Children and Youth Justice.*