

First Michigan 'Adoption Day' hosted Nov. 25

Michigan will give thanks to adoptive families on Tuesday, November 25, during the first state Adoption Day, an event sponsored by the Michigan Supreme Court and Family Independence Agency (FIA).

With assistance from local FIA offices and private adoption agencies, courts in 33 counties will finalize adoptions for more than 200 children that day, hold celebrations for adoptive families, and provide information about the adoption process. FIA Director Nannette Bowler said this is the first time Michigan has ever held a statewide event to celebrate adoptions.

"Michigan Adoption Day will bring the adoption process to the forefront," Bowler said. "FIA staff and private agencies under contract to the state helped place 2,833 children into loving adoptive homes in fiscal year 2002. Almost 2,000 of these children were in sibling groups needing adoption."

While most of the courts participating in Michigan Adoption Day will finalize adoptions, other courts will participate by holding an "adoption open house," with handouts and other information about the adoption process.

Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura D. Corrigan said she hopes the event

will draw attention not only to the adoption process but also to the number of children available for adoption.

"Our state has thousands of children in foster care as a result of child protective proceedings," Corrigan said.

"Most of them hope to return to a home where abuse or neglect is not present, but (See ADOPTION, Page Two)



Maura D. Corrigan

ADOPTION: First Michigan 'Adoption Day' conducted November 25

(Continued from page 1)

many can never return home again. Those are the children for whom adoption is the only answer," Corrigan added.

At the end of September, there were 12,701 children who were temporary wards in Michigan – children made wards of the court as a result of child protective proceedings – and there were 19,490 children in Michigan's foster care program. For most children in the foster care program, their return home to an abuse-free home is the goal.

There are 4,584 permanent wards in care with a goal of adoption. Many of these children have a family identified and are in the process of having that adoption finalized – like the adoptions that will take place around Michigan on November 25. However, the most current Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange listing shows about 400 permanent state wards available for adoption who do not have an adoptive family identified. The FIA is actively recruiting adoptive homes for these children.

The November 25 event will help celebrate National Adoption Month in November, where November 22 has been designated National Adoption Day. Although a number of courts and other

states are participating in National Adoption Day activities, national organizers say the Michigan event appears to be the largest statewide event in the country.

To acquire an updated listing of courts participating in Michigan Adoption Day, go to <http://www.courts.michigan.gov/supremecourt/Press/MichiganAdoptionDayIndex.htm>.

For more information on children awaiting adoption, go to <http://www.mare.org>.

For more information on public adoption policies and data, go to <http://www.michigan.gov/fia> and click on "Adoption."

For more information on National Adoption Day, go to <http://www.nationaladoption-day.org/>.