



## **MICHIGAN ADOPTION DAY**

Giving thanks for families

Tuesday, November 24, 2009

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**Contact:** Marcia McBrien, Public Information Officer  
Michigan Supreme Court  
313-300-2149

Barbara Browne, Court Relations Program Coordinator  
Michigan Supreme Court  
517-373-0714

Edward Woods III, Office of Communications Director  
Michigan Department of Human Services  
517-373-7394

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **MICHIGAN ADOPTION DAY TO BE HELD NOV. 24; STATE'S CELEBRATION OF ADOPTIVE FAMILIES NOW IN SEVENTH YEAR**

*Heart Gallery exhibit of adoptable children on display at Michigan Hall of Justice*

LANSING, MI, November 19, 2009 – This Thanksgiving, many Michigan families will have special reason to give thanks: the addition of new family members through adoption on Michigan's seventh annual Adoption Day.

Thirty Michigan counties are holding Adoption Day events on or about November 24, the date designated by the Michigan Supreme Court as "Michigan Adoption Day" when about 225 adoptions will be finalized. The event is co-sponsored by the Michigan Supreme Court, the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Child Welfare Services division of the State Court Administrative Office.

Local events include finalizing adoptions and parties for adoptive families. Some counties are holding informational open houses with speakers and information about the adoption process.

Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly said that Michigan Adoption Day provides a valuable window into the adoption process. "As a rule, adoption finalization hearings are private, but through the kindness of the participating families, courts are opening their adoption hearings to the public," Kelly said. "As a result, the public will get a look at the final stage of the adoption process, and witness the great joy of these families. We hope the experience may inspire others to consider adoption."

There are about 3,826 children in the foster care system with the goal of adoption. In fiscal year 2009, DHS and private agencies oversaw the adoptions of more than 2,700 children.

This year, a partnership that includes DHS, the Michigan Federation for Children and Families, the courts, and other public and private partners will work to increase the number of people who open their homes to foster or adopt children. The campaign includes public service announcements with the theme of “You don’t have to be perfect to be a perfect parent.” The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Ad Council and AdoptUsKids.org have launched these ads to help find families for children who are waiting for a permanent home.

“This November, remember you don’t have to be perfect to be a terrific parent,” DHS Director Ismael Ahmed said. “Consider becoming a foster or adoptive parent. And give a child something that every child deserves: A permanent, loving home.”

In addition to local court events, the Michigan Supreme Court is hosting the Heart Gallery at the Michigan Hall of Justice throughout November. The Heart Gallery, a photographic exhibit of Michigan children waiting to be adopted, is a project of the DHS’ Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE). The exhibit is located on the first and sixth floors and may be viewed Monday – Friday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Admission is free.

Anyone interested in adopting a child may call toll-free 888-200-4005 or visit <http://www.adoptuskids.org>. For Spanish, call toll-free 877-236-7831 or visit <http://www.adopte1.org>. For a complete list of Michigan Adoption Day events, visit <http://www.courts.mi.gov/adoption-day/>.

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