

# MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



## *Office of Public Information*

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### **JUNE 24 IS FIRST “MICHIGAN FAMILY REUNIFICATION DAY” Event recognizes parents who overcome issues to regain custody of children**

LANSING, MI, June 23, 2010 – Families who have been reunited after the children’s placement in foster care are the focus of the first Michigan Family Reunification Day, slated for June 24.

In a resolution, the justices of the Michigan Supreme Court said the event is aimed at acknowledging “the hard work it takes to reunify a family, and to raise awareness about the importance of family reunification to children in foster care.”

About 15,400 Michigan children are in foster care as the result of abuse and neglect. Where parents can overcome their challenges – such as poor parenting skills, mental health issues, or substance abuse – reunification is the preferred option for children who have been placed in foster care, said Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly.

“The goal above all is for a child to have a safe, loving, permanent home,” Kelly said. “Sometimes the biological family cannot provide that, in which case adoption and permanent guardianship are among the options for foster children. But where it can be done safely, the objective is to be able to return foster children to their parents.”

Michigan Department of Human Services Director Ismael Ahmed said that family reunification represents a team effort that includes the parents, other relatives, foster care workers, courts, and many others.

“I commend families for their courage and hard work in doing one of the most difficult things we are called to do as human beings: To change,” Ahmed said. “We also celebrate all of the people involved in partnering with parents to make reunification possible because it’s the best outcome for children.”

“It is due in great part to their combined efforts that there were fewer children in foster care in 2009 than the previous year,” Ahmed added.

An event is planned for Wayne County Circuit Court’s juvenile division. For more information, contact Chris Vadino at 313-833-0354 or at [Chris.Vadino@3rdcc.org](mailto:Chris.Vadino@3rdcc.org).

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