



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Supreme Court Hosts Reunification Day to Celebrate Michigan Families

LANSING, MI, June 11, 2018 – Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Stephen J. Markman, along with Justices Bridget M. McCormack and Elizabeth T. Clement, welcomed approximately 70 people at the Hall of Justice today to celebrate the 3rd annual Michigan Reunification Day. The goal of today’s event is to spotlight the reunification of foster children with their families, as well as acknowledge the many professionals, community members, and volunteers who work to support children in need.

Guests of honor at the celebration were two newly reunited families from Saginaw and Bay Counties who shared their personal experiences with the reunification process. Saginaw County Probate Judge Barbara L. Meter and Bay County Probate Judge Jan A. Miner were also in attendance to recognize the successfully reunified families.

“The beauty of reunification lies in the courage to recognize the potential of second chances — and as these families’ stories will demonstrate, those second chances paid off,” said Chief Justice Markman. “I also hope that today’s celebration serves as a continuing inspiration and a testament to the fact that nothing is more important than family.”

“The problems and challenges that drive families apart are formidable, and that means solving those problems and overcoming those challenges take incredible effort, passion, and hard work,” said Justice McCormack, the event’s emcee. “So, I commend all the judges, court staff, DHHS professionals, and others who support these families in their darkest hours.”

“These are families who persevered in the face of extreme hardship to reunite with their loved ones and become whole once more,” said Justice Clement. “These families deserve to be celebrated and admired, and their stories serve as a testament to their courage and resolve.”

Stacie Bladen, Deputy Director of the Children’s Services Agency at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and Seth Persky, Director of the Office of the Family Advocate at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, presented the Guy Thompson Champion for Reunification Award and Worker Achievement Award.

According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, there are approximately 13,000 children currently living in foster care. In calendar year 2017, 7,380 children were discharged from foster care. Of those, 3,961 children – or 53.7 percent – were reunified with their parents.

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Families and other guests at the event enjoyed a picnic luncheon, face painting, and a performance by Western Michigan University's "A Moment of Magic" foundation.

Today's event was sponsored by the Michigan Supreme Court, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, SCAO Child Welfare Services, the Michigan Court Improvement Program, the Michigan Federation for Children and Families, and Wellspring Lutheran Services.

Michigan is one of 27 states to hold Reunification Day festivities, which are part of the [American Bar Association's annual observance of National Reunification Month](#). Find more information and resources [here](#).

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