

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Deborah Lopez
312-937-0050

Williamson County Courthouse creates forever families for 18 children during National Adoption Day celebration

November is Adoption Awareness Month in Illinois

Marion, IL – Eighteen children in foster care will have their adoptions finalized on Friday, November 18, 2022 at the Williamson County Courthouse in Marion, joining 10 youth in care at a similar event at the Richard J. Daley Center in Chicago and families at more than 400 courthouses across the country to celebrate National Adoption Day.

Williamson County Circuit Court Judge Amanda Gott, Illinois DCFS and private agency staff will come together to make the day memorable for these new families. Doors will open at 8:30 a.m. and the finalizations will begin at 9 a.m. A celebration, including refreshments for the families, will follow.

“I am excited to preside over National Adoption Day in Williamson County this year, particularly as we return this to the full celebration of this event for the first time since COVID-19. Participating in the adoption process and assisting children in finding their forever homes is the best thing we do in the legal profession, and I am proud to play a small role in the process,” said **Judge Gott**.

“Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable and loving family,” said **Illinois DCFS Director Marc D. Smith**. “Adoption Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness of the importance of adoption, encourage Illinoisans to get involved and become licensed foster and adoptive parents and celebrate the thousands of families across the state that have opened their hearts and homes to children in need.”

“National Adoption Day shines a light on the need to find loving, permanent families for our youth in care,” said **Wendy Ingersoll, DCFS southern region administrator**. “I am thankful for the collaboration with our private agency partners to make this event a success and am excited to celebrate the families that are becoming complete today.”

Last fiscal year, 1,813 Illinois children were adopted into permanent families. Today, there are over 20,600 youth in care waiting for a family and a place to call home. To learn more about some of them, visit the Heart Gallery of Illinois at <https://greenlightfamilyservices.org/heartgalleryofil/>. For more information



about becoming an adoptive parent, visit www2.Illinois.gov/dcfs and click on “Loving Homes” then on “Become a Foster or Adoptive Parent.”

Adoption is a serious and permanent commitment to a child. DCFS offers a range of supports to adoptive families, including reimbursement for attorney fees and court costs, a monthly subsidy, a medical card and other benefits which assist in defraying expenses associated with raising a child. Many considering adoption become licensed foster families first, giving them a better understanding of the needs of children from disrupted families before making a life-changing decision.

National Adoption Day, held annually on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, is a collective, national effort to raise awareness of the more than 120,000 youth in foster care who are waiting for families to call their own. National Adoption Day has made the dreams of thousands of children come true by working with courts, judges, attorneys, adoption professionals, child welfare agencies, advocates and policymakers to finalize adoptions and create and celebrate adoptive families. Since its inception in 2000, National Adoption Day has helped more than 75,000 children across the country move from foster care to forever families. To learn more about National Adoption Day, visit www.nationaladoptionday.org.

***About the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** Founded in 1964, DCFS is responsible for protecting children from abuse or neglect by responding to calls received on the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). With the goal of keeping children safe, DCFS strengthens and supports families with a wide range of services. When keeping a child safe means removing them from the home, DCFS makes every effort to reunite them with their family. When the best interest of the child makes this impossible, DCFS is committed to pursuing guardianship or adoption by loving families to provide children with a safe and permanent home. DCFS is also responsible for licensing and monitoring of all Illinois child welfare agencies.*

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