

Nebraska Judicial News

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One Hundred Adoptions Finalized, Many More Celebrated Nebraska Adoption Day

*Photo: Kynleigh Mabb,
formerly of Fremont
partying at Adoption Day*



Nebraska's Adoption Day Adds Two Communities

Two new Nebraska communities participated in this year's National Adoption Day celebration:

Fremont with Judge Ken Vampola and **North Platte** with Judge Michael Piccolo. On Saturday, November 19, 2011, each of the judges attended parties within their communities designed to celebrate children who were adopted, or are scheduled for adoption, in 2011.

In an interview with the North Platte Telegraph, Judge Piccolo said attending the celebration was one of the best parts of his job. "I can't imagine the love you show these children," he told the families, "I see it in my courtroom. Day in and day out, I see what's wrong with the community from the criminal justice standpoint, so this is really refreshing for me."

In Fremont, Judge Ken Vampola took his opportunity at the podium to raise the awareness of the needs of older children. He told a group a story of one state ward, now 16, who is still longing for a permanent family. Judge Vampola also thanked



Judge Kenneth Vampola being crowned "Adoption Day King" during Fremont's first celebration, with Poppin' Penelope (left) and Deb Bales, DHHS CFS Specialist Supervisor holding adoptee Kynleigh Mabb.



Judge Robert Ide and Judge Michael Offner preparing for Adoption Day festivities in the courtroom in Hastings.



Family picture of Larry and Michele Nelson with Judge Michael Offner. The Nelson's have now adopted five children during two Adoption Days in Hastings, for a total of ten children in their family, ages 4 to 29.

the parents in the room and expressed his great appreciation for all of the local Health and Human Services workers who contribute positively to the lives of the children being celebrated. Following his remarks, the judge was named "Adoption Day King" of Fremont for his work throughout the year (photo left).

Many Children Still Looking for Adoptive Homes

According to Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services statistics, there were 264 state wards adopted in Nebraska between January 1 and the end of September 2011. There were an additional 100 children adopted during Adoption Day Celebrations with 59 in Lincoln, 32 in Omaha, 3 in Hastings, and 6 in Scottsbluff.

Additional children have been placed in adoptive homes but there are still over 250 Nebraska children who are waiting for adoptive families.

Celebration Purpose and Beginnings

Douglas County Juvenile Court was the first court in Nebraska to become involved in Adoption Day celebrations, holding one of the Nation's first events in November 1999. Omaha Juvenile Court Judge Wadie Thomas, Nebraska's Adoption Day founder, designed the project to raise community awareness of the need for permanent families for foster children looking for adoptive homes.

Judges also use the celebration as an opportunity to

thank adoption specialists, caseworkers, CASA volunteers, court employees, attorneys and others who become a part of these families during the adoption process. It is the day that the juvenile justice system sets aside to reflect on the successful completion of their work throughout the year.

The day has become a celebration of every child who has gained the permanency that all children deserve. It is the celebration of the creation of a new family and of all of those individuals within a community that work hard every day to ensure that Nebraska children have safe, permanent homes.

In the end, National Adoption Day is bigger than just the balloons, cakes, and games. It is a time for highlighting the joys of forever families, the need for foster parents, and the good work of caring people within and related to the court system.

National Adoption Day is an annual reminder that there is always a need for a loving, supportive, safe and permanent home for children.



Volunteer face-painters from Willard Sorority of Wesleyan University at Lincoln celebration. From left to right: Leslie Graves, Allison Yardley (daughter of Judge Yardley), Emalee Bartoe, and Ellen Glock.



Paul Ojeda kisses granddaughter, Sianna, after Judge James Worden granted adoption of the girl and her brother during Scottsbluff's National Adoption Day Celebration. (Photo: Scottsbluff Star Herald)



Omaha's Merritt family was featured on Channel 7 news during the coverage of National Adoption Day. Parents, Kenneth and Felicia Merritt, have adopted 10 children from the Omaha area and have participated in several Omaha Adoption Day ceremonies.



Bob Psota, 3, of Ord attempts to blow up a rubber glove with his brother, Taygan, nearby during the National Adoption Day celebration at the Grand Generation Center in Grand Island. Bob, along with his brother David (not pictured) were both adopted. (Photo: Grand Island Independent)

Nebraska Celebrations

Adoption Day Celebrations were held in nine communities throughout Nebraska. In addition to Fremont and North Platte, the following communities sponsored celebrations:



Judge Ross Stoffer and Judge Donna Taylor participating in Adoption Day at the YMCA in Norfolk.



Creating fun with Dad at the carnival in Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church at North Platte's very first celebration.



Sara Stauffer (CFS Specialist) helps a little movie-goer with a glow-in-the-dark bracelet at Cinema 8 in Kearney.

November 18, 2011:

Grand Island with Host Judge Mac Martin

November 19, 2011:

Hastings with Host Judge Michael Offner

Kearney with Host Judge Gerald Jorgensen

Lincoln with Host Judge Reggie Ryder

Norfolk with Host Judge Ross Stoffer

Omaha with Host Judge Wadie Thomas

December 3:

Scottsbluff/Gering with Host Judges

James Worden and Kris Mickey

The Judicial Branch Web site hosts an Adoption Day webpage with links to public information on the celebrations:

<http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/administrative-offices/adoption-day/adoption-day.shtml>



Nebraska Supreme Court

State Capitol

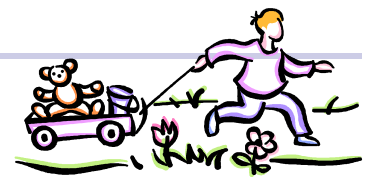
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Nebraska's Adoption Day

*Where children become what they
already know they are in their
heart — a family*