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SUPERIOR COURT JOINS IN NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY TO HELP LOCAL CHILDREN FIND PERMANENT FAMILIES

The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara is pleased to announce that it will be taking part in National Adoption Day, an annual event in which courts and communities in all fifty states come together to finalize thousands of adoptions of children and to celebrate all families that adopt. Although the official observance of National Adoption Day is Saturday, November 21, the Court has arranged to have its Adoption Day celebration during morning business hours on Friday, November 20 at the Downtown Courthouse, 191 N. 1st St., San Jose. Judges and staff have volunteered to forego their regular duties that morning in order to turn the Downtown Courthouse into "Adoption Central", as the Court hopes to finalize the placement of as many as 50 children into adoptive homes.

The Adoption Day celebration will officially start with an Opening Ceremony at 8:00 A. M. in the Jury Assembly Room on the first floor of the Downtown Courthouse, featuring speakers from the Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) and the Superior Court. The Court has arranged for refreshments for the participants and activities to keep the children entertained while awaiting the adoption hearing. Special procedures have been set up to expedite the processing of paperwork and the movement of adoptive families to and from the courtrooms in order to finalize as many adoptions as possible by the event's conclusion at noon.

The National Adoption Day Coalition estimates that there are over 510,000 foster care children in the United States, with over 129,000 of them waiting for adoption. Since 1987, the number of children in foster care has nearly doubled, and the average time a child remains in foster care has lengthened to nearly three years. Each year, approximately 26,000 children in foster care will age out of the system without ever being placed with a permanent family. The goals of National Adoption Day are to enhance public awareness of the need for adoptive parents, to educate would-be parents about the adoptive process, and to celebrate the local families who have opened their lives to children in need of permanent homes.

Although adoption proceedings are generally confidential, the Court has made allowances for media coverage in order to increase public awareness about the adoption process in Santa Clara County. The hearings themselves will be closed, but the Court will notify the participating families that there may be media representatives present after the hearings and that family members may be asked to comment about their experience for publication or broadcast. Those who agree to make themselves available to the media will be wearing tags with colored balloons

printed on them, and those who do not wish to comment will be not be wearing tags. The Court asks that any media representatives in attendance be aware of these conditions and not approach any individuals who are not wearing the balloon tags.

Media organizations requesting permission to photograph, record, or videotape this event must submit the completed forms MC-500 and MC-510 (Rule 1.150, California Rules of Court) prior to the event. Requests may be faxed to the Court's Administration Office at 408-882-2795.

Families and other interested parties can learn more about adoption by visiting the Court's website at http://www.scselfservice.org/probate/minor/adoption.htm, the DFCS website at http://www.sccgov.org/portal/site/dfcs/, or the National Adoption Day website at www.nationaladoptionday.org