



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 5, 2021

**Los Angeles, California**—On Saturday, November 20th, judicial officers from the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, with attorneys from the Alliance for Children's Rights, Public Counsel and pro bono partners, and staff of the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services will complete virtual adoption ceremonies for 150 children in Los Angeles County foster care as part of the 2021 National Adoption Day.

The event was first established 22 years ago to ensure that children being adopted from foster care in Los Angeles achieved the security of permanency.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Children's Court, the Alliance for Children's Rights, Public Counsel and DCFS worked together to develop a remote process allowing for the finalization of over 2,500 foster care adoptions to date without adoptive families risking exposure by coming to court in person. National Adoption Day this year will further allow families to appear remotely while completing their adoptions just in time for Thanksgiving.

"Despite unprecedented hardships posed by the pandemic, hundreds of families in Los Angeles have persisted in pursuing adoption and providing safety, security and permanency for the children in their care," said Cynthia J. Billey, director of the Alliance for Children's Rights adoption program. "Today, we celebrate their resilience and commitment, and congratulate them on building a family through adoption."

**Where:** Virtual press conference live streamed on November 20, 2021, 8:15 am. To view the press conference, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2D3UYcmzBs>.

**Who:** Adoptive families and children. Akemi Arakaki, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court; Alliance for Children's Rights President and CEO Jennifer L. Braun; Public Counsel President and CEO Monica Ramirez Almadani; Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services Bobby D. Cagle; Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis; U.S. Representative Karen Bass; and actress/child advocate Danica McKellar (*Wonder Years*).

Virtual adoptions are scheduled to begin at 9 am on November 20th. A pool camera will be allowed to film a family in their home, while the adoption ceremony takes place.

All children adopted during Los Angeles' National Adoption Day are receiving gift cards for their family celebrations through a generous donation from the Los Angeles Rotary Club. "The Rotary Club of Los Angeles has had the privilege of supporting the youth of Los Angeles for the past 30 years through our Children's Court endowment. We are proud to partner in this year's Adoption Day in a way that helps these families celebrate



this special moment that cements their forever bond,” says LA5 club president, Paul Ekstrand.

**Contacts:** Additional family interviews may be arranged by contacting the Alliance for Children’s Rights: [aheibel@gmail.com](mailto:aheibel@gmail.com) or 415.359.4851 (text or calls).

To interview Judge Arakaki, please email [publicinfo@lacourt.org](mailto:publicinfo@lacourt.org).

**About the Alliance for Children’s Rights:** The Alliance for Children’s Rights protects the rights of impoverished, abused, and neglected children and young adults impacted by foster care. By providing free legal representation and social services, and by advocating for broad solutions through ground-breaking child welfare policy reform, the Alliance clears barriers to stability and opportunity so that young people and families can access the support and services they need to thrive. For more information, visit [allianceforchildrensrights.org](http://allianceforchildrensrights.org)

**About National Adoption Day:** Founded in 2000 by a coalition of national partners — the Alliance for Children’s Rights, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Congressional Coalition on Adoption, and Children’s Action Network — National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the more than 122,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care in the United States and to celebrate all loving families that adopt.

The first National Adoption Day was inspired by the innovative efforts of Michael Nash, a former presiding judge of Los Angeles Juvenile Court, in collaboration with the Alliance for Children’s Rights, Public Counsel, and the Department of Children and Family Services to open the court on Saturdays and engage the volunteer efforts of pro bono attorneys to finalize large numbers of backlogged adoptions. Based on Los Angeles’ “Adoption Saturday” model, the Alliance and its national partners organized the first-ever National Adoption Day on November 18, 2000, when nine cities opened their courts on the Saturday before Thanksgiving to finalize over 1,100 foster care adoptions.

Today, judges, social workers, attorneys, adoption advocates, and policymakers collaborate to plan these annual events in over 400 cities across the United States. To date, the dreams of more than 80,000 children in foster care have come true as part of National Adoption Day.

In light of the pandemic, many participating cities are holding virtual adoption hearings similar to Los Angeles’ event while some others are holding their customary in-court celebrations. So far, over 30 events in more than 16 states are scheduled to take place on National Adoption Day. Visit [www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org) for more information.

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For inquiries, contact:

Amy McCabe Heibel with the Alliance for Children’s Rights



[aheibel@gmail.com](mailto:aheibel@gmail.com)  
415.359.4851

