

A Happy Court: Emotional morning at Madison County Courthouse for National Adoption Day

by Steven Spencer, Staff Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - It was an incredibly heart-warming scene at the the Madison County Courthouse Saturday morning with over 30 families finalizing their adoptions on National Adoption Day.

Through out the country, court houses fill up with families who are ready to complete the adoption process making their families that much more whole.

“It is very exciting,” Susan Crouse Wolk, one of the legal assistants that helped at the courthouse said. “For us it’s a phenomenal thing because last year was our first Adoption Day and we finalized 21 families and 28 children, this year we are finalizing 31 families and 45 kids, which is just wonderful.”

The court house was packed with people helping to make the day extra special for all the families present. From Wonder Woman and Captain America to face painting and balloon artist, there was plenty to make the day more memorable than it already would have been.

“Families get to have their very first legal family photo taken, it’s really very cool,” Susan said. “The really neat part about this is that we’re able to help kids secure permanency by becoming a member of a forever family. Some of these families have been together from a year to five or six years, some much longer than that, but they’re finally getting to make it legal and official today.”

Depending on the situation the adoption process can be lengthy, and seeing it be finalized means a lot of everybody involved making National Adoption Day incredibly emotional.

“It’s a great experience for the case workers who have been working so hard to help the kids get permanency, it’s great for the judge, it’s great for the attorneys that get to help put families together and the kids. It’s great for the kids. While they may have been in a family for a while, they finally have the same name,” Crouse Wolk said. “Like in my case I adopted a seven-year-old, she had been with us for several months and she had a different last name than everybody in our house. She kept asking when do I get to have your last name. That day she got to have our last name, she got to be in a position were she felt that she was really a part of something. That’s what’s going on for all of these kids here today.”

Stephanie Tesreau said it was dream come true for her and her husband, Mark, to finalize the adoption of their two sons Saturday, and they look forward to finalizing two more adoptions in the coming years.

“It’s been 1,300 days for our youngest and 1,400 days for the oldest one. We’re very excited. It’s very overwhelming but we couldn’t be happier,” Stephanie said. “It’s huge for us. It’s been something we waited and planed for, for a very a long time. Both of my parents are adopted, so it felt right to us. We got into foster care, we’ve been into it for about 11 years now, and finally this is our first set of adoptions. And they’re brothers, so it couldn’t be better.”

With the number of adoptions on National Adoption Day increasing over the year, Susan said it speaks tremendously about the county.

“We call adoption court “happy court” because it’s the only time you’re ever really going to be in front of a judge and it’s going to be just fun,” Susan said. “Madison County has a real serious commitment to helping kids find permanency.”