

# **Williamson County Courthouse Creates Forever Families For 23 Children During National Adoption Day Celebration**

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MARION - Twenty-three children in foster care will have their adoptions finalized on Friday, November 19, 2021, at the Williamson County Courthouse in Marion, joining eight youth in care at a similar event at the Richard J. Daley Center in Chicago and 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 participate in National Adoption Day this year in Williamson County. It is my pleasure to be a part of the adoption process and assist these children in finding their forever homes. As I often say in adoption court, adoptions are the best thing we do as judges,” said Judge Gott.

“Every child deserves to grow up surrounded by the love and support of a family,” said Illinois DCFS Director Marc D. Smith. “This month, we honor and thank the families who have made a lifelong commitment to children in need and encourage others to join them and make a positive difference in a child’s life.”

“National Adoption Day shines a light on the need to find loving, permanent homes for our youth in care,” said Wendy Ingersoll, DCFS southern region administrator. “I am pleased that we can resume this event in person this year to celebrate these children and the families who love them.”

Last fiscal year 1,786 Illinois children were adopted into permanent, loving families. Today there are over 21,000 youth in care waiting for a family and 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](http://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](http://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 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.*