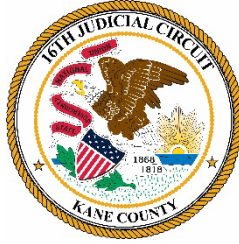

16th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT
37W777 Route 38
St. Charles, IL 60175



Office of the Chief Judge Robert K. Villa

THANKSGIVING ARRIVES EARLY FOR NINE FAMILIES DURING THE FIRST NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY EVENT HELD IN KANE COUNTY

For Immediate Release

December 2, 2025

St. Charles, IL — On November 24, 2025, nine Kane County families gathered to finalize the adoptions of ten children during an event held in honor of National Adoption Day, a collective, grassroots effort to raise awareness of the more than 100,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care in the United States. This occasion marked the first collaboration between the 16th Judicial Circuit and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), highlighting a significant milestone for all participants, as every child adopted was previously involved with DCFS.

Juvenile Division Judge, Kathryn Karayannis, who presided over the adoptions, highlighted the impact of these events: "I think that every child deserves a safe, stable, and loving home, and today was an overwhelming example that each of the families who participated has a heart for adoption and providing a loving home."

The day-long celebration included support and participation from many agencies, with special appearances from the Kane County Sheriff's Office K9, Casper and exotic sports cars provided by the Hamilton Collection. Professional photographs, treats and small gifts were provided by CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Kane County, multiple agencies and the Judiciary. The children loved petting Casper, the opportunity to sit in the amazing sports cars and walking out of court with stuffed animals and small gifts. The adults all appreciated the special attention received by the children and the photographs which captured and commemorated this special occasion.

Chief Judge Robert Villa highlighted the importance of adoption events, stating, "Truth be told, there is very little happening in courthouses that involves happiness. Adoptions are an exception. We should be proud to facilitate the building of families and the incredible opportunities adoption provides to spread a little love around."

Court Administrator Andrea O'Brien said the event's success was made possible through the collaboration of these agencies dedicated to child welfare: CASA, DCFS, Youth Service Bureau, Lutheran Child and Family Services, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, One Hope United, Our Children's Homestead, and Metropolitan Family Services.

Cook and Northern Adoption/Guardianship Regional Administrator, Eileen Runte, shared how much this special day in Kane County meant to the families involved: "It was a wonderful day, and

everyone commented on how truly special it was. The families loved being able to get all the pictures inside the courtroom, as well as all the snacks and gifts. We hope to expand next year.”

To learn more about National Adoption Day, visit www.nationaladoptionday.org.

Photo credits: James Harvey Photography

The 16th Judicial Circuit received signed permission from all subjects pictured for media distribution and publication. Names of the families, however, have been withheld from captions.



Ten children were welcomed into nine families during an Adoption Day event held at the Kane County Judicial Center during the week of Thanksgiving.



Officers from the Kane County Sheriff’s Office, along with Judge Kathryn Karayannis, celebrate the joining of families during the Adoption Event.



National Adoption Day is a collective, grassroots effort to raise awareness of the more than 100,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care in the United States. Similar adoption events were held in various Illinois courthouses across the state.



Juvenile Division Judge Kathryn Karayannis allows each child to strike her gavel, signaling their adoptions are finalized.

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