



**County of Santa Barbara
Department of Social Services**

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County to Participate in National Adoption Month 2015

TWO NOVEMBER EVENTS WILL HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR FAMILIES TO ADOPT CHILDREN FROM FOSTER CARE

Over 100,000 children nationwide are in foster care and waiting to be adopted into permanent families, including over 2000 in California and over 100 in Santa Barbara County.

“Children enter foster care through no fault of their own, as a result of abuse, neglect, or abandonment,” explained Devin Drake, the deputy director overseeing Child Welfare Services (CWS) for the Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services (DSS). CWS works with the family and the courts to establish a safe environment in the home of origin, but if this proves impossible, then a new permanent home must be sought. “Adoption is the highest level of permanence,” he said, “offering love, nurturing and guidance through childhood and beyond.”

National Adoption Month is a nationwide event aimed at raising awareness of the need to adopt children from foster care. This year’s theme, “We Never Outgrow the Need for Family,” highlights older youth waiting for adoption. Creating lifelong connections for these young people is critical to helping them prepare and succeed as they enter adulthood. CWS is helping to arrange two events recognition of National Adoption Month.

On Tuesday November 3, 2015, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors will pass a resolution highlighting the need for families to adopt children from foster care, and honoring families that do so—and the many individuals and organizations that support them along the way. A local family which has adopted one child from foster care, and is in the process of adopting another, will address the Board.

On Wednesday November 18, the County will hold an Adoption Day event at the Santa Maria Juvenile Court. The Court will finalize the adoption of seven local foster children into stable, permanent, loving homes, just in time for Thanksgiving. Festivities will follow to celebrate all those who work to ensure a better life for children in our community. There will be food, children’s activities, gifts, and complimentary portraits for the new forever families. The actual adoption proceedings are closed events, but afterward there will be an opportunity for attendees, including members of the media, to speak to families who have completed their adoption process, and hear about their experience as foster and adoptive parents. This event is held in conjunction with the National Adoption Day Campaign to create and celebrate new families for foster children. The official date of National Adoption Day is the Saturday before Thanksgiving, but ours is one of the many communities which shift it to a workday to accommodate Court schedules.

At any given time, up to 450 children and youth are in foster care in Santa Barbara County, with about 90 adopted in a typical year. Over 100 children in Santa Barbara County are currently waiting in foster care for an adoptive family. For more information on Child Welfare Services, foster care or adoption, please visit www.AdoptSBC.com or call the Department of Social Services at 1-866-899-2649.

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