

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NOTICE TO REPORTERS AND EDITORS

WESTCHESTER COUNTY FAMILY COURT HOLDS NINTH ANNUAL ADOPTION DAY CELEBRATION

**Judges will finalize adoptions of 35 children as part of day dedicated to raising awareness
of children in need of their “forever families”**

Supervising Judge of the Family Courts for the Ninth Judicial District, the Honorable Kathie E. Davidson and other judges of the Family Court will finalize the adoptions of approximately thirty-five children who will receive their “forever families” on Friday, November 18, 2011 at the Ninth Annual Westchester County Family Court Adoption Day.

The purpose of National Adoption Day is to raise public awareness of the approximately 463,000 children currently in the foster care system across our nation, 114,000 of whom are available for immediate adoption. However, of equal importance is not only the celebration of those who have adopted, but also the encouragement of others to adopt, foster, or just to become involved in the life of a child in need of a permanent life connector.

This year, Judge Davidson has asked that the celebration focus on “what is the definition of a family?” As we have entered the twenty-first century, we must view the family, the institution that provides love and security for children with new eyes. That is, the eyes of children. Regardless of a family’s race, creed, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation, children only see a family that is opening their heart to them in love. A modern family with many diverse configurations, this new family institution consists of heterosexual couples, single parents, biracial couples, blended families and same-sex couples and has walked through the doors of the Family Court to become *forever families*.

Judge Davidson, has been recognizing and finalizing same-sex adoptions for many years and will participate with Forever Families Through Adoption, a local adoption agency and resource center as they are honored by the Human Rights Campaign’s All Children-All Families Initiative with the Seal of Recognition, signifying best practices in serving LGBT families.

Many of these diverse families will be participating in the Westchester County Family Court’s Adoption celebration which will take place on **November 18, 2011 on the 3rd floor of the Westchester County Courthouse annex building located at 111 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., White Plains, New York. The ceremonies will commence at 9:00 a.m. and end at 12:00 p.m. A special reception with entertainment for the families will follow immediately thereafter at the Thomas H. Slater Center, 2 Fisher Court, White Plains, NY.**

Take a brief look at the following families...

Ansgar and Vincent, a same-sex couple from the Netherlands will be adopting their son, Nathan. Ansgar and Vincent, both of whom grew up in large close families, reached out to a local New York agency, Forever Families Through Adoption (“FFTA”) in hopes of creating a family of their own. In June 2011, their son was born to a birth mother who was incarcerated in Westchester County. The birth mother reached out to FFTA for assistance and chose Vincent and Ansgar to adopt her son knowing she could not care for him. Rather than placing the child in foster care, she opted for adoption so that her little boy would have the opportunity to live with his forever, permanent, loving parents in a community that is known for its acceptance and diversity.

Josephine became a foster parent eleven years ago . In that time she has fostered eleven children and has adopted three of those children to date. Josephine was awarded the Unsung Heroes Award by the Westchester Task Force on Child Abuse in 2008 for her dedication to the children in her care. On Adoption Day, Josephine will be adopting eight year old Zhyedy. Zhyedy, who has a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder came into the care of Josephine’s home when her mother could no longer care for her. In three years, Zhyedy has flourished with the love and support of this family. Adoption Day has become a family event. Josephine’s adult son has seen the rewarding experience and is also going to be adopting one of the children in their care on Adoption Day.

Stephanie started the adoption process as a single person in 2005, seeking to adopt a child from the Ukraine. Along the way, she met her husband Bill and they began their adoption journey together in 2006 when they adopted then 2 year old, Peter. Their adoption of Peter encouraged Stephanie and Bill to adopt again and again as they found that adoption from the Ukraine has been an awesome way to build their family. In 2008, Stephanie and Bill adopted three siblings, William (7 ½), Patrick (4 ½), and Joseph (2). Then, in 2010, they adopted 3 ½ year old, Nicholas. After adopting the three boys in 2008, they contacted the boys’ older biological sister, Natalia, who is 18 and whom they adopted in September 2011 along with another child named, Marta (7). Stephanie and Bill have opened their home and their hearts to a total of seven children all born in the Ukraine.