

Macomb County

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Wednesday, November 21, 2007

Mount Clemens

Parents give thanks for adoptions

Michigan's annual ceremony is largest in U.S.

Christina Stolarz / The Detroit News

MOUNT CLEMENS -- After being graced with three biological daughters, Eric and Bertha Randolph were ready for a son.

But, as soon as they decided to try, plans changed: Bertha was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, making it impossible for them to conceive.

The Warren couple's dream finally came true Tuesday when they adopted Christopher, 2, who had been living with them as a foster child since he was 7 months old. They plan to adopt Christopher's biological brother, Sebastian, in the future.

Advertisement "In my mind, he was ours," said Bertha Randolph, 45, who retired as a physician when illness struck. "We're so excited, and with Thanksgiving here, we have so much to be thankful for.

"This couldn't happen at a better time."

Thanksgiving came early this year to seven Macomb County families who each welcomed a new child, ages 1 to 7, into their homes on Tuesday at Macomb County Circuit Court during Michigan's fifth annual Adoption Day. The ceremonies were among 220 adoptions finalized and celebrated Tuesday across the state.

Michigan's event is the largest Adoption Day celebration in the country, with more than 30 counties participating, said Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura D. Corrigan.

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Aimee Crellin of Clinton Township gets a kiss from her newly adopted son Eric, 3, after the adoption ceremony administered by Judge Edward Servitto in Macomb County Circuit Court on Tuesday. (Rob Widdis / Special to the Detroit News)

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Extras

"We're very proud of these efforts," she said. "In Michigan, we don't want to rest until any child who needs a home has a home."

There are about 6,200 children statewide whose birth parents' rights have been terminated; of those, about 4,300 children are hoping to be adopted. An estimated 2,500 children statewide this year were placed in adoptive homes out of the foster care system.

And emotions were on high as seven more adoptions were finalized in Macomb County.

Three-year-old Eric Christopher Crellin clapped wildly and gave a high-five to Judge Edward Servitto Jr. after he granted the adoption request by the child's great-aunt and uncle.

Mary Kuhfeldt, 57, of Eastpointe, broke down and cried as Servitto approved the adoption of her 7-year-old granddaughter, Kayla.

"It's almost like nothing changed, but everything changed," said Kuhfeldt, who raised Kayla nearly from birth. "It's very emotional."

While adoption finalization hearings are normally private, many courts opened their proceedings to the public on Tuesday to educate the public about adoption and its rewards and challenges.

"It doesn't get any more important, what (the adoptive parents) are doing. They're giving them a chance at life," Servitto said. "I see so much here. This is the most beautiful thing done in court."

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Adoption information

For information on children awaiting adoption in Michigan, call the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange at (800) 589-6273 or go online to <http://www.mare.org>. Or to learn more about adoption policies and data, go to <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs>.
Source: Michigan Supreme Court

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