



## 19 children adopted on Adoption Day

By VICTOR SKINNER

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TRAVERSE CITY -- Single mother Angela Bryan sat beside her recently adopted sons Corey and Daniel at a reception as the boys sipped juice drinks and munched on cake and finger foods.

The Traverse City woman was one of 13 families on Tuesday who adopted 19 children at the Robert P. Griffin Hall of Justice as part of the fifth annual Michigan Adoption Day.

"It has been a long journey and it is a chapter that is closed in our lives," Bryan said, adding that she adopted the half-brothers from a relative who struggled with drugs and other personal problems.

Bryan worked through the probate court system to gain custody of the boys and has taken care of them for years, but attended the celebration to show Corey, 5, and Daniel, 3, that their formal adoptions are "a special event that's for them and about them," she said.

"They needed a home, they needed security and they needed love," Bryan said as Daniel peeled the frosting off his cake and flashed a food-filled grin.

Grand Traverse was one of 33 counties across the state Tuesday that held events, finalized adoptions and worked to raise awareness of children in need of a home. In Traverse City, Michigan Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth Weaver was in the balloon-decorated courtroom as family court Judge David Stowe presided over adoptions.

"It is kind of two-fold today, celebrating the individual adoptions and at the same time it is an opportunity to be alert and remember we still have children that need adopting," she said. "It is particularly important for me because I was a probate judge for 12 years and it is one of the happy things we get to do. Every time I do these I wonder if that is something I should do in retirement."

Janet Kronk, case manager for the 13th Circuit Court Family Division, helped to organize the event, which formalized the second-most number of adoptions in the state.

"Many of the children have come into the court's jurisdiction as a part of a neglect or abuse case and now they are united with happy, loving families that will be a permanent situation with them; no more foster care," Kronk said, as new parents toted flower baskets and gift bags through the second floor lobby.

"There are a lot of children out there that need good, solid, permanent homes and Adoption Day is an opportunity to bring adoption to the public's front interest."

About 220 adoptions were finalized across the state as part of the national event. Over the past five years, over 13,000 Michigan children have been placed into adoptive homes out of foster care, according to a 13th Circuit Court statement.

National Adoption Day was celebrated in all 50 states in 2006 when more than 3,300 children in foster care were adopted across the country, according to [www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org).

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## Photos



Dawn Bousamra holds Thomas Bousamra during his adoption Tuesday at 13th Circuit Court in Traverse City. Record-Eagle



Angela Bryan jokes with her son Corey, 5, during a reception in the Robert P. Griffin Hall of Justice following adoption proceedings at 13th Circuit Court in Traverse City. The reception was held to celebrate Adoption Day. Record-Eagle



Michigan Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth Weaver and Judge David Stowe preside over the adoption hearing. Record-Eagle