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In Case You Missed It: Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno - "...I would encourage you to consider the joys of sharing your family life by adopting a child."

Tuesday, November 23, 2010 • Tags: [Other](#)

Share your family through adoption in New Jersey
Lieutenant Governor of New Jersey Kim Guadagno
Star-Ledger Guest Columnist
Tuesday, November 23, 2010

Each November for nearly a decade, New Jersey courts have joined all 49 other states and the District of Columbia in opening their doors to celebrate the adoptions of thousands of children from foster care as part of National Adoption Day.

While adoptions are often private affairs, once a year, new parents are asked to celebrate their adoption proceedings publicly so the entire community can share in their joy. This year, Allison Blake, commissioner of the state's Department of Children and Families, was in Newark on Saturday to mark National Adoption Day, an important effort to raise awareness of the children in foster care who are eligible and waiting for adoption.

Since 2000, more than 30,000 children nationally have had their adoptions finalized on National Adoption Day. Last year, more than 1,418 children were welcomed into new families throughout the Garden State. This month alone, we expect some 220 children to be given the stability of a permanent home and family, but many more still need homes.

For many, adoptions are rarely news unless they involve a celebrity traveling to a faraway exotic country. Prospective parents, however, do not need to travel thousands of miles to adopt a child.

Today, there are hundreds of children of every age, in every corner of our state, available for adoption. These children are in need of a forever family because their parents have had their parental rights terminated. Many live in foster homes, some are in group homes, but every one of these children is in need of a loving, caring permanent home.

While the number of children in foster care has significantly decreased over the past decade, the rate of adoptions has remained high. On average, children wait in foster care for just under three years before finding a permanent home through adoption. For siblings, children with special needs and adolescents, the wait can be longer.

People commonly think the adoption process takes too long, is too complicated or is too expensive. National Adoption Day works to debunk these myths. In fact, Congress streamlined the process through the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, ensuring that children who cannot be reunited with their birth parents are placed with permanent families as quickly as possible. Financial assistance is often available through the Adoption Subsidy Program, and many children adopted from foster care are eligible for federal or state aid to help offset costs associated with their adoption. In New Jersey, the Foster and Adoptive Family Services team, in coordination with the Department of Children and Families, has staff available to assist throughout the entire process of becoming an adoptive parent.

The day a family brings home a child for adoption is a day they don't ever forget. That day represents the beginning of a new life for both the child and his or her adoptive family. Each family that adopts has a unique experience, but a shared story, especially for those who participate in National Adoption Day. For me, as both a biological and adoptive mother, I can attest that an adoption day is much the same as the birth of a child, with that unforgettable mix of joy, nervousness and excitement.

...□ I leave you with the words my family used in inviting friends to attend the celebration of our son's adoption. The invitation read, "One last road to travel. One last way to go. One more day to forever. Just to let you know. The wait is finally over. The journey now is through. Announcing with greatest pleasure the final adoption of (our son)□"

So as we prepare for Thanksgiving and the holiday season, I would encourage you to consider the joys of sharing your family life by adopting a child. Together, we can ensure that children of all ages across the state celebrate the next holiday season with permanent, loving families.

There is a need you can meet by opening your family to a new child — approximately 300 children are currently eligible and waiting for a place to call home here in New Jersey.

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