



COUNTY COURT SPOTLIGHT

Highlighting the Work of Nebraska's County Courts

November 2015

Probate Division: Adoption Paperwork Superheroes

The annual celebration of National Adoption Day always brings out many superheroes. This year volunteers in Douglas County even dressed the part as they roamed the halls and courtrooms of the Douglas County Courthouse on Saturday morning, November 21, 2015.

Juvenile Court staff members worked in the courtrooms and the front hallways where they organized snacks and activities for enthusiastic families and experienced the happiness of adoption ceremonies.

Behind the scenes, deep inside the courthouse, four County Court Probate Division staffers completed the necessary paperwork and forms. It is the job of the Probate Division to provide judicial support and work with attorneys and the public in processing complex court cases, including estates, guardianships, conservatorships and adoptions.

For the past 16 years, Probate Division Manager Cindy Vandenbroucke and members of the staff, have volunteered their time on the Saturday before Thanksgiving to help with adoption paperwork.

She remembers the first event was held in the juvenile court and three adoptions were finalized. This year 56 adoptions and one guardianship were completed. The numbers have grown so much that it has been necessary to move the hearings to the county courtrooms to accommodate the volume.

According to Judge Wadie Thomas, about 75% of the adoptions conducted at the Douglas County Courthouse on Saturday were "kinship



The 'behind the scenes' heroes of Adoption Day Omaha 2015 – Probate staffers: Terri Inzauro, Carrol Mills, Cindy Vandenbroucke, Sheli Astorino with visiting Star Wars Crew.





adoptions” or adoptions done within the same family where children must have lived with their prospective parents for at least six months.

National Adoption Day is a collective, national effort to raise awareness of the more than 100,000 children in foster care waiting for permanent and loving families.

Photos left: Volunteer probate crew unmasked (L to R): Terri Inzauro, Cindy Vandembroucke, Sheli Astorino, Carrol Mills.



Adoption attorney completes paperwork for filing.

Carrol Mills processes adoption papers.



“National Adoption Day has always been successful in Douglas County because it has provided adoptive families for a number of children. Since its inception in 1999, first under the direction of John Dougherty and now Cindy Vandembroucke and their staffs who have worked tirelessly and usually with little, if any, recognition to insure these adoptions are successful. The employees of the Douglas County Court – Probate Division are truly the unsung heroes of this event who have not only made this day special for the adoptive families but have insured the integrity of the process.”

*... Judge Thomas K. Harmon
Douglas County Court*

National Adoption Day—Omaha's 16th Annual Celebration



**Celebrating
National
Adoption Day
2015 in
Nebraska**

Columbus, Fremont, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Lincoln, Norfolk, Omaha, and Scottsbluff all held Adoption Day celebrations in November and many other communities in the state held adoption celebrations earlier in the year. North Platte has an event scheduled for December 5, 2015.

Approximately 140 children were adopted during 2015 National Adoption Day activities across Nebraska. Thus far in 2015, 384 children have been adopted. At this time last year, 458 children had been adopted.

The Department of Health and Human Services shows 350 children available for adoption and still waiting for permanency. About 100 of those children have been recently placed in adoptive homes but are not yet adopted.