



## 29 Children Celebrated Finding 'Forever Families' On D.C. Adoption Day

BY [JULIE STRUPP](#) IN [NEWS](#) ON NOV 21, 2016 10:35 AM



*(Photos by Julie Strupp)*

On the 30th annual D.C. Adoption Day, 29 D.C. children finalized the papers for their "forever families" Saturday morning—and got to celebrate alongside "Young and Hungry" star and adoptive mom Kym Whitley.

Children ranging in age from 18 months to 19 years-old were adopted at the Moultrie Courthouse, forming 23 new families (several siblings were adopted together.)

"This is always such a wonderful event—for the families adopting today, for those who have adopted over the past year and indeed past 30 years of DC Adoption Days," said Family Court Presiding Judge Hiram Puig-Lugo. "To see children who might otherwise have been in foster care for a number of years, or possibly aged out of the system when they turn 21 without a family, legally become part of their 'forever family,' is heartwarming."

The Adoption Day event was hosted by the Family Court of the D.C. Superior Courts and Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) to celebrate adoption and encourage Washingtonians to consider adopting or fostering a child in the District's child welfare system.

"This is just a wonderful occasion and I get a little emotional," said Barbara Nalls, who is on the CFSA adoption committee. She said she loved seeing a 15 year-old, 17 year-old, and 19 year-old among the adoptees. "I'm just hoping more people will come and open their hearts for the older youth."

Nalls said 86 children of the 1,004 children currently in foster care are available to be adopted. (The others are already matched with adopted parents or there are plans to reunite them with their biological families.)

"I can name all the movies and all the TV shows but the day Joshua came into my life—it changed my life forever," said Whitley, a comedian and actress who is known for her work in the Boondocks and Deliver Us From Eva.

Whitley unexpectedly became a mom in 2011 in under an hour, when a social worker called and asked if she would be willing to take the baby of a girl she had been mentoring. Whitley accepted. Suddenly a single parent, she asked her friends to help her raise Joshua.

Whitley's "it takes a village" approach to parenting caught the attention of Oprah Winfrey. Kym starred in an OWN network reality show about collaborative mommy life in "Raising Whitley," which ran for four seasons and ended this year.

"One thing I realized after doing a show about adoption is that a lot of people have fear," Whitley said. "I remember when a Nigerian woman came up to me and she said, 'Thank you, thank you.' I said, for what? She said, 'you made it ok for African women to adopt children.'"

Adoptive parents can be married, single, and of any race, religion or orientation. Normally around 200 adoptions are granted each year in the District; 190 have been finalized in 2016. Brenda Donald, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, thanked social workers and CFSA staff for their efforts to provide happy homes for D.C.'s children.

"Today is the day that we just get to stop and do nothing but smile and be appreciative—and then we come back on Monday and start all over again," Donald said.

As adopted 12-year-old Destany Crawford wrote in her poem showcased at the event:

"Family doesn't begin or end with blood  
Love seeps through like a flood"