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Adults honored to be called a mom and dad

Families adopt 16 Arapahoe County foster children during National Adoption Month

Littleton, Colo. – The title mom or dad is automatically bestowed upon those who bring a child into this world. But for others, the right to be called MOM or DAD means just that much more. Every year, Arapahoe County staff looks for adults to adopt abused or neglected children. During National Adoption Month, the County celebrated the adoption of 16 children by 12 families.

“It’s an honor to be deemed a mom by the Courts and by my new 11-year-old daughter Imari,” said a teary-eyed Angela Watkins after finalizing her adoption. “This experience has opened my heart and my mind to help children in need of love and nurturing.”

Watkins is moving into a bigger home so that she can foster more children. “I want to do this many more times,” she says as she looks into her daughter’s eyes. Imari had been counting down the days to her adoption. “She’s going to be a good mom because she’s nice and she understands my needs and the problems I face.”

Another finalized adoption helped three boys rest a little easier. “We know we have a home now and a second chance at living life,” said Joseph, age 15. “It feels good to be wanted by someone who accepts us, trusts us, loves us and shares with us. Our new mom is helping me and my brothers believe that we can be whatever we want.”

It may surprise some that many adoptive parents are single and begin as foster parents. Deborah Akers, understands the role of a foster parent is to first help get the children back home with their family. “I love mentoring the birth parents,” she says. When it doesn’t work, she’s ready to accept them with open arms. Akers adopted two girls last year and knew she had more space in her heart to adopt another. This time a boy.

For Arapahoe County, the goal in child welfare is to reunify parents with their children wherever possible (as long as they can provide a safe and nurturing environment). When that doesn’t happen, the County seeks adoptive parents so the children have a better chance of success in life. Akers is known for her compassion when working with birth parents, she sets up a P.O. Box so parents can write letters to their children and she sends them their artwork from school.

Arapahoe County Commissioner Rod Bockenfeld recognized adoptive families for their lifelong commitment. “These adults have earned the right to be called mom and dad and should be commended. Their love and commitment are helping break the cycle of abuse and neglect, and they are giving children a family where they would have none.”

If you would like to foster or adopt a child, call 303-636-1KID.

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To download photos click on the following link: <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/>

Photo captions:

Angela&Imari – Imari counted down the days till she would hug her new mom, Angela Watkins. Their adoption ceremony was finalized on Friday with Arapahoe County.

Hug – An emotional embrace for Scott and Margaret after they finalize their adoption of three children in Arapahoe County. “The day is finally here. We love them so much.”

KerinFamily2 – Janet Kerin and her three boys take their first family portrait with Judge William Sylvester after finalizing their Arapahoe County adoption. “God made these boys for me and we are very happy exploring, hiking, biking and skiing together.”