

# The Washington Post

## A Family Celebration

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By Roxanne Roberts

Cynics, you can stop reading right now because Saturday's Adoption Day celebration was a lump-in-the-throat, heartwarming, tears-of-joy kind of day. To mark the 17th annual national event, the District's Superior Court and Child and Family Services Agency created 25 new families by signing final adoption decrees, and invited all who finalized adoptions this year to the courthouse. The result? Smiling children, tearful new parents, beaming judges and proud social workers. "I cried," confessed Gwen Brown. "I just couldn't stop crying. It's beyond words." Brown is the brand-new mom of 8-year-old Michael, a boy she first noticed two years ago on Channel 4's "Wednesday's Child." "He just popped out. This was love at first sight." Screenwriter Antwone Fisher, author of the eponymous movie about his life in foster care, served as keynote speaker and Channel 4's Barbara Harrison, whose birthday was Saturday, was emcee for the event. Harrison was serenaded, given roses and hugged by many of the families she helped bring together. "I can't think of anything better," she said, smiling. After the last decree was signed, the families and friends spilled into the reception room for punch, sandwiches, cake and music. The kids, dressed in their Sunday best, looked adorable. The parents looked slightly dazed. Two-year-old Jordan Christopher Joy sported a snappy suit he'll outgrow in, oh, about two months. The aptly named Karen Joy and husband Stephen adopted their son earlier this year. "Adoption is a gift from God," she said. "It teaches us how to love one another." All in all, it was a lovely way to get ready for Thanksgiving week.

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