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## **“Congratulations, you’re a family!”**

### ***Arapahoe County foster children find homes during National Adoption Month***

**Littleton, Colo.** – To spectators watching an adoption hearing, the meeting seems short and sweet. You hear a lot of “yes sirs,” but the four most important words come at the end.

#### **“Congratulations, you’re a family.”**

Those four words really hit home for the children and adults standing before Judge William Sylvester on Nov. 7 where three Arapahoe County families held their adoption hearing in recognition of National Adoption Month.

To Nelly Fuentes, her daughter Olga and her two newly adoptive sons, Brian and Braydon, the words have changed their life.

“There are so many children that need our help,” says Fuentes, an apartment manger, who offered to adopt Brian and Braydon after the boy’s mom got into trouble. “They need a caring family. Brian and Braydon have become a part of ours and they recognize my extended family as their aunts, uncles and cousins. So, I’m excited to finalize our adoption and make our family official.”

Meanwhile, another family, Carolee Smith, grandmother of Anthony, age 6, and Nicholas, age 3, patiently waited their turn.

“Adopting a child is a big responsibility; you need to be sure you’re ready,” says Smith. “But the rewards are astronomical, and their unconditional love means so much.”

Smith says the support of her family has been important and thanks her grown children who offer to baby sit when needed. She and the boys enjoy their special playtime. Fuentes says she uses the time to bond with each child and gives each one the opportunity to talk about his feelings that day.

Erika Sorensen, Adoption Supervisor, says she appreciates the families’ commitment to helping the County’s abused and neglected children.

“These parents said ‘yes’ to the question, ‘Can I make a difference in the life of a child?’ and we thank them from the bottom of our hearts,” Sorensen said. “Adopting a child into a loving, permanent home greatly increases his or her chance of future success and helps build strong, healthy communities.”

These are just a few of the County's children who were waiting to be adopted by their 'forever' families. If you would like to foster or adopt a child, call 303-636-1KID to attend our free monthly orientation for more information.

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

***Photo captions:***

Carolee Smith officially adopts her two grandsons, Anthony, age 6, and Nicholas, age 3, through the Arapahoe County Embrace a Life program.

The newly formed Fuentes family poses for a family photo with Judge William Sylvester – Nelly and her fiancé Alfonso, daughter Olga and two newly adopted sons, Brian and Braydon.