

Communication Services Department

5334 South Prince Street  
Littleton, Colorado 80166-0001

Phone: 303-795-4284

Fax: 303-738-7894

[www.co.arapahoe.co.us](http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us)

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Contact:

**ERIKA SORENSEN**

*Adoption Unit Supervisor*

Human Services

Direct: 303-636-1659

E-mail: [esorensen@co.arapahoe.co.us](mailto:esorensen@co.arapahoe.co.us)

OR

**HALEY MCKEAN**

*Communication Services Specialist II*

Direct: 303-636-1945

Mobile: 303-726-6608

E-mail: [hmckean@co.arapahoe.co.us](mailto:hmckean@co.arapahoe.co.us)

## **Local children welcomed into ‘forever families’**

*Families adopt 20 Arapahoe County foster children during National Adoption Month*

**Littleton, Colo.** – With the stroke of a pen, 20 foster children were given ‘forever families’ at Arapahoe County’s adoption proceedings during National Adoption Month.

Judge Anne Ollada and Magistrate Laura Findorff of the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District signed final adoption papers on Nov. 6 for the youth, ranging in age from 10 months to 7 years, making official their places as sons and daughters in 14 local adoptive families.

Arapahoe County’s Department of Human Services sought permanent homes for the children, who had been victims of abuse or neglect. While the County makes every effort to reunify children with their parents, sometimes concerns for the children’s well-being and safety go unresolved, and they become legally free for adoption.

Rosie Lucerne of Littleton welcomed the adoption of her two great-nephews, Alex, 2, and Isaiah, 4, in advance of the holidays. Born to a woman addicted to drugs, the boys have been in Rosie’s care off and on since birth. She is one of hundreds of families providing “kinship care” to County foster children.

Rosie and County staff testified to Judge Ollada about Rosie’s enthusiasm and joy to raise Alex and Isaiah, and how she could offer them connections to their family history, a support system, stability and encouragement. Rosie’s grown son, Michael, and other relatives also attended and shared their support.

“It’s the best thing in the world to me to finally be their mom,” Rosie said. “While I’m sad to know that they couldn’t grow up with their mother, I couldn’t imagine my life without them and am so happy this is final.”

Arapahoe County Commissioner Frank Weddig commended the 14 adoptive families for their lifelong commitment. “By offering permanent, loving homes to children who have experienced trauma and loss, these gracious individuals can break the cycle of abuse and neglect, and ensure a better future for the next generation.”

Arapahoe County currently is seeking adoptive parents for 28 waiting children. In addition, there are approximately 600 children at any given time who need a temporary foster home until they can return home, be adopted or live independently.

If you would like to learn more about fostering or adopting a child in Arapahoe County, please call 303-636-1KID, or consider attending an information session at 6 p.m., Jan. 13 at Arapahoe County CentrePoint Plaza (14980 E. Alameda Dr. Aurora).

To learn about the the Arapahoe County children awaiting adoption, please visit:

[www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Departments/HS/ChildProtectionServices/adoptchildren.asp](http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Departments/HS/ChildProtectionServices/adoptchildren.asp)

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

Photo captions:

**Rosie, Boys, Judge Ollada.jpg:** It's a family affair for Rosie Lucerne of Centennial and her adopted sons Alex and Isaiah after Judge Anne Ollada finalizes the adoption in Arapahoe County District Court.

**Rosie and Alex.jpg:** Rosie Lucerne cuddles with her adopted son, Alex, whose placement was made final during National Adoption Month.