

Adoption: Another word for love

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By Rachael Scarborough King, Register Staff



NEW HAVEN — The quiet waiting room at New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court on State Street quickly filled with children's excited voices Friday morning as two families celebrated their new members.

Saturday was National Adoption Day, and the day before, families across the state opened up what is normally a private occasion: the finalization of their children's adoptions. In New Haven, the McCabes and the Shoreys adopted 2-month-old Callum Elias and 4-year-old Pedro, respectively.

November is National Adoption Month.

Allyson McCabe, who officially adopted Callum Friday, said the state Department of Children and Families asked her and her partner, Megan McCabe, to participate in the events.

"Symbolically, we thought that that was a good idea, and he was born in September, so it was close to his birth date," Allyson McCabe said. Megan McCabe is Callum's biological mother, and Allyson legally adopted him to formalize her parental status.

The McCabes' attorney, Michele Parrotta, said that Connecticut has strong laws for same-sex parents. For example, both Allyson and Megan McCabe's names appear on Callum's birth certificate. But Allyson McCabe added that their civil union status does not extend to other states, and if she needed to make decisions about medical issues while outside Connecticut, she would not be recognized as Callum's parent without the adoption.

"I think a lot of people have the false impression that civil union and marriage are equivalent, but they're in no way equivalent, so this is a progressive but small step toward parity," she said.

While the McCabes, who live in New Haven, welcomed their first child, Crystal and Wayne Shorey of East Haven added to their large family. The Shoreys already have three children, who crowded into the courtroom to witness their brother's adoption.

Pedro shyly answered Judge Michael Brandt's questions about the day's events and the pets he has at home. Pedro has been living on and off with the Shoreys for about two years, they said.

"We're going to legally recognize this relationship that you have with your sister, your brothers (and) your mom and dad," Brandt said. "You already have that relationship. I couldn't create that relationship by signing a piece of paper, but legally I need to sign that piece of paper."

Brandt gave Pedro a commemorative copy of his certificate of adoption, a gift card for Friendly's restaurant and a book titled "Adoption is Another Word for Love."

"You guys have a big family and a lot of pets and a lot of love, so enjoy it," Brandt said.

As Pedro showed the certificate to his sister, Samantha, she exclaimed, "Oh, that's so cool — high five!" Afterward, everyone was treated to cake and cookies in the court's balloon-festooned waiting room.

Wayne Shorey said there are many children in Connecticut, especially older kids, who are waiting for homes. He and his wife's other children — 14-year-old Nicholas, 8-year-old Samantha and 6-year-old Alex — were all, at the youngest, in the toddler stage when they joined the family.

Crystal Shorey added that Friday was a special day for them.

"It's a beginning and it's the happy day and it just means a lot to us, and it means a lot to him," Crystal Shorey said. "Adoption is a wonderful thing. Regardless of whether they're biological or not, they're your children."

After adopting their fourth child, the Shoreys said they have not decided whether Pedro will be the last.

"I don't know — we'll see," Crystal Shorey said, laughing. "They come and they don't leave."

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