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National Adoption Week, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The family, society's most fundamental unit, is part of God's design for human happiness. Belonging to a family is a natural and vital component of life, and every child deserves to be a member of a loving and nurturing family. For many children, this becomes possible through life in an adoptive family. That is good reason for all Americans to celebrate adoption and to commend and cooperate with those in the private sector and public service who work to find loving, lasting homes for waiting youngsters.

For some children, the waiting is much too long. More than 30,000 children now in foster care are in need of permanent homes. Most of these fine youngsters have special needs; some are of school age, in sibling groups, members of minorities, or affected by physical, mental, or emotional disabilities. But all of them have two things in common—they need families of their own, and they have great love to offer new parents. We can all learn much from the wonderful experiences of adoptive families already blessed with special-needs adoptive children.

We know, however, that the waiting is long for many prospective parents as well. Thousands of marriages in our country are childless, and many families are anxious to adopt. Many single people also desire to know the happiness of adoption. Adoption brings immeasurable joy to adopted children and adoptive parents alike. It also gives us cause for hope—that more youngsters will find lasting homes and that ever more Americans will find within themselves the generosity, courage, and love to make adoption their personal alternative to the cruelty of abortion. Pro-life pregnancy counseling centers exist in cities and towns across our land to help mothers choose life for their unborn infants. These mothers give their babies not only the gift of birth but also the gift of a bright future with a loving adoptive family. These brave women, and those who decide to raise their babies themselves, deserve our admiration, friendship, and help while they are expecting and after.

There is more each of us can do to encourage adoption, from making our neighbors and communities aware of this option to making room in our own homes for special-needs children and adoptive infants. As a Nation, we must continue to promote adoption and to eliminate barriers to it. We must also offer our appreciation and encouragement to the millions of our fellow citizens—such as adoption caseworkers, foster care supervisors, judges, lawyers, clergy and religious, physicians, teachers, pregnancy counselors, and countless volunteers—who help children and families with adoption. In this way we can aid more and more Americans in discovering the special joy of building a family through adoption.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week of November 20 through November 26, 1988, as National Adoption Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

Ronald Reagan