

## **NEWS – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Court Holding Special National Adoption Day Session To Finalize Adoptions**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Finalizing adoptions is one of the most positive experiences that judges have in the course of their official duties. It is also the final step in providing some foster children with loving permanent homes. The South Central Judicial District Judge Sonna Anderson will participate in National Adoption Day by presiding over the finalization of several adoptions this Friday, November 18, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Burleigh County Courthouse.

Parents, children, and their family members, as well as court officials and adoption advocates, will be able to enjoy refreshments at the special court proceedings, and each adopted child will receive an “adoption teddy bear.”

“This is our first experience celebrating National Adoption Day in south central North Dakota. We have chosen to celebrate all adoptions whether children are infants, formerly in foster care, or from foreign countries,” said Rita Weisz, regional supervisor of social services at West Central Human Service Center. “The special court session would not be possible without the tremendous support we have received from Judge Gail Hagerty and Judge Anderson.”

National Adoption Day was developed to raise awareness about the need for adoptive homes for those foster children who cannot be reunited with their birth parents. Since its inception in 2000, National Adoption Day has grown from events in eight jurisdictions in the United States to hundreds of events in communities across the country. Last year over 3,000 adoptions were finalized in the United States during National Adoption Day events. District courts in Fargo and Grand Forks have participated in past years, and Fargo is a special Adoption Day court session on Saturday, November 19.

In 2004, 95 foster children were adopted in North Dakota. At any given time, the Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) program, which includes the N.D. Department of Human Services, Catholic Charities North Dakota, and PATH ND, works with about 100 foster children who have an active goal of adoption. The AASK program is also involved in case planning for an additional 110 -120 foster children. Currently AASK is seeking families for about a dozen children in the state who do not have identified adoptive families.

For information about adoption or foster care, contact the Children and Family Services Division, N.D. Department of Human Services, at 701-328-2316, 1-800-245-3736, e-mail [dhscfs@state.nd.us](mailto:dhscfs@state.nd.us), or go on-line to <http://www.nd.gov/humanservices/services/childfamily/>.

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