

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Families and Individuals recognized at Adoption Celebration**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor John Hoeven and First Lady Mikey Hoeven, adoption advocates, adoption agency staff, and families honored five families and four individuals at the 2008 Adoption Celebration on November 22, in Fargo. North Dakota licensed child placing agencies and the N.D. Department of Human Services co-hosted the event to honor exemplary individuals and to raise awareness about adoption and the North Dakota foster children who are waiting to be adopted.

“Mikey and I are pleased to help honor these inspiring families and individuals for their commitment to children,” said Hoeven.

Honored event participants included **Jared and Nicole Anderson and their sons Owen, Solomon, and Abram of Fargo, N.D.** They received the *Multicultural Award* for their efforts to nurture the cultural heritage of their sons who are from African countries. The **Jeremy and Michelle Zaun** family of **Cooperstown, N.D.** received the *2008 Special Needs Adoptive Family of the Year Award*. The Zauns, who became licensed foster parents in 2005, are the parents of eight children, including five adopted from the foster care system, and are also the guardians for two other children who reside with them. They advocate for the needs of their children and appreciate the ongoing support of friends, family, and their community. The Zauns also continue to provide foster care for children in need.

The **Ron and Billie Jo Nelson** family of **West Fargo, N.D.**, received the *Foster/Adopt Family of the Year 2008 Award*. The Nelsons have two birth children and have adopted five other children. They served as foster parents for three of these children. Their adopted children include a group of four siblings.

**Brent and Carla Boen** of **Strandquist, Minn.**, and birth mother **Carissa** of **Warsaw, N.D.**, shared the *Adoption Triad Award* for their efforts to maintain an ongoing, open relationship following an infant adoption.

Event organizers also selected three individuals and one family to receive the *Adoption Advocate Award* in recognition of their dedicated work on behalf of children and families. Award recipients included **Mary Pat Jahner**, the resident director of St. Gianna's Maternity Home in **Warsaw, N.D.**, who works to provide shelter, medical care, counseling, job skills, parenting support and training, and educational support to pregnant women and their children. **Janet Gregory**, of **Grand Forks, N.D.**, an attorney and advocate for special needs adoptions, was honored for her expertise in special needs adoptions and work to bring families together.

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**Linda Kadlec**, the assistant regional supervisor for Children and Family Services at Lake Region Human Service Center in **Devils Lake, N.D.**, was honored for her team work and for her focus on advocacy, concurrent planning, and establishing permanency for children as quickly as possible. The **Colin and Shelle Moran** family of **West Fargo, N.D.**, was recognized for their advocacy of adoption and the support they provide to other adoptive families. As an adoptive family, they have formed a community support group that serves families waiting to adopt, adoptive families, and adopted children.

In addition to the state awards, **Jason and Dana Mitzel** of **West Fargo, N.D.**, and **Jefferie and Julie Hoffman** of **Bismarck, N.D.** were also recognized. The Mitzels and Hoffmans received the *2008 Angels in Adoption Award*, presented in September by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute. The Mitzels were the 2007 North Dakota Special Needs Adoptive Family of the Year, and the Hoffmans are adoptive parents, and Julie has served families as the state's adoption administrator for over a decade.

Last year in North Dakota, 100 children were adopted from the state's public foster care system; and 172 other adoptions were finalized. These involved stepchildren, healthy infants, and children from other countries. The need for foster and adoptive families is ongoing, and currently 19 foster children are waiting to be adopted in North Dakota.

Families and individuals interested in exploring adoption can contact a state-licensed child-placement agency in North Dakota. Agency information is available at [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/adoption/agencies.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/adoption/agencies.html). Placement agencies provide services including family recruitment, preparation and assessment, child preparation and placement, and post-placement support.

For adoption and foster care information, visit the Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division Web site at <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily>, or call 701-328-2316, or 1-800-245-3736, or e-mail [dhscfs@nd.gov](mailto:dhscfs@nd.gov).

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