

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services

600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck ND 58505

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 19, 2013

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Families and Individuals Honored with Adoption Awards

Display on Capitol Grounds celebrates adoptions completed in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. Dalrymple has proclaimed November as Adoption Awareness Month. To celebrate, the N.D. Department of Human Services and licensed child placing agencies have recognized individuals who have strengthened their families through adoption as well as advocates and other professionals whose work supports adoptions.

The *North Dakota Foster Care Adoptive Family Award* was presented to **Erik and Jennifer Ludlow of Horace**. The Ludlow family adopted three children from foster care including siblings in 2010. The family uses their personal experiences to encourage other families to consider adoption.

Joey Cortez, Jr. and Marco Barker Kellogg of Lisbon received the *Youth Excellence Award*, which is presented to young adults formerly in foster care who have excelled and are contributing to their communities. Their love of animals and strong desire to live life on a ranch is what motivated these brothers to seek out a ranching family to adopt them. These determined young men are involved in 4-H and have found many successes with their artwork and livestock they have entered at their county fair. The brothers were adopted in May 2013 and are enjoying country life.

Cory and Candace Schmuhl of Bismarck, and birth mother **Taylor Hornbacher of Bismarck** shared the *2013 Adoption Triad Award* for maintaining an ongoing, open relationship following their daughter's adoption as an infant. The Schmuhls felt an open adoption was right for them because they had an abundance of love to give a child. Hornbacher selected them to raise her child. They all agreed to make the child the center of their relationship and have continued to honor that commitment. Hornbacher is able to spend one day a week with her daughter and often stays with her overnight in the Schumhl's home.

Rose Vaudrin of Fargo was presented with the *Adoption Advocate Award*. Vaudrin is a family foster care licensing specialist for Cass County Social Services. She has over 20 years of experience in child welfare and adoption. She has been instrumental in working with families to help them become licensed foster care homes as they also pursue adoption through the Adults Adopting Special Kids program.

In addition to the state awards, **Sharon Maier of Fargo** and **Bobby and Courtney Williams of Dickinson** were also recognized for the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's *2013 Angels in Adoption Award*[™]. Maier was nominated by Senator John Hoeven and the Williams were nominated by Senator Heidi Heitkamp.

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In support of National Adoption Day on Sat., Nov. 23, 2013, and Adoption Awareness Month in North Dakota, there is a display on the State Capitol grounds featuring a banner and small red flags, each representing a family who adopted a child in 2012. The display is on the corner of Fourth Street and Divide Avenue in Bismarck until Nov. 24.

Last year, 322 adoptions took place in North Dakota. Of the adopted children, 117 were adoptions of children with special needs; three were from foreign countries; 40 were placed for adoption by a private licensed child placing agency; and 162 children were adopted by their stepparents.

Families and individuals interested in exploring adoption can contact one of the following licensed child placing agencies in North Dakota: Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK), All About U Adoptions, Catholic Charities ND, Lutheran Social Services of ND, The Village Family Service Center, Christian Family Life Services, God's Children Adoption Agency, Inc., and PATH ND. These agencies provide services including family recruitment, preparation and assessment, placement, and post-placement support. Agency contact information is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/adoption/agencies.html.

The Adoption Awareness Proclamation is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/adoption/.

The Department of Human Services is the lead agency that oversees adoptions and licensing of all private adoption agencies in the state. Individuals interested in adoption and foster care information, should contact the department's Children and Family Services Division at 701-328-2316, toll-free 1-800-245-3736, ND Relay TTY 1-800-366-6888, e-mail dhscfs@nd.gov or visit www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/adoption.

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