

# **NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services and Native American Training Institute**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference to be held in Mandan Feb. 19-21**

BISMARCK, N.D. – “*CELEBRATING AND HONORING OUR JOURNEY*” is this year’s theme of the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference, Feb. 19-21, 2014, at the Best Western Seven Seas Inn, Mandan, N.D. The conference will feature experts on child welfare issues, juvenile justice, cultural and tribal relations, health and wellness, child behavioral health, and the Indian Child Welfare Act. It is hosted by the Native American Training Institute with funding from the N.D. Supreme Court and N.D. Department of Human Services’ Children and Family Services Division.

“This conference is about making positive connections and finding new resources so attendees can return to their communities and their jobs with a greater understanding of Indian Child Welfare and their part in promoting these efforts,” said Sandra Bercier, Training Director for the Native American Training Institute in Bismarck. “It is all about bettering the lives of our children and their families.”

Conference sessions will include discussion on the Indian Child Welfare Act, trauma-informed care in Indian Country, psychotropic medication in the treatment of abuse and trauma, partnering to improve a child’s well-being, methods and techniques to protect women and families in their cultural traditions, ethics and values that guide professional social work practice, overcoming historical trauma, gang recognition, healing through a Native American drum beat, and more.

A movie showing of the award-winning Canadian documentary “*Reel Injun*,” which takes an insightful look at the portrayal of North American Natives on the silver screen, will take place on Thurs., Feb. 20, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Best Western Seven Seas – Pier 7 room. There will be a panel discussion following the movie. The event is free and open to the public.

Conference attendees include social service professionals, child protection workers, judges, juvenile justice personnel, tribal court personnel, foster parents, educators, mental health and substance abuse treatment professionals, and others interested in child welfare.

Continuing education units are available for licensed social workers, foster parents, and students attending United Tribes Technical College. Educational hours are also available for wrap-around re-certification offered by the Department of Human Services.

Preregistration is encouraged, but registrations will be accepted at the door. For more details or a schedule of events, go online to [www.nativeinstitute.org](http://www.nativeinstitute.org) or call 701-255-6374.

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