

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Governor and First Lady to celebrate adoptions with families and advocates on November 2

BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. John Hoeven and First Lady Mikey Hoeven will join North Dakota Department of Human Services officials, adoption advocates, and children and families to celebrate National Adoption Month on November 2, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., in the Brynhild Haugland Room of the state Capitol. The public is welcome to attend.

“Every child deserves a loving, stable family and home, and an opportunity for a bright future,” Gov. Hoeven said. “This event is a great opportunity to celebrate the generosity of our adoptive and foster families and to remind the public of the many children in foster care who are waiting to join families through adoption.”

Doors will open at 3:30 p.m. and refreshments will be available along with activities and crafts for children. Awards will be presented to several families and individuals. Awards include the *2005 Special Needs Adoptive Family of the Year Award*, the *Adoption Triad Award*, which celebrates individuals involved in an open adoption; *Adoption Advocate Award*; the *Multi-cultural Family Award*; and the *Adopted Youth Excellence Award*. A representative from Senator Byron Dorgan’s office will present the *2005 Angel in Adoption Award* on behalf of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute.

In North Dakota and other states, child welfare officials try first and foremost to reunite children with their parents and relatives if children are removed from their homes. Reunifications are not always possible. The award presentation will be followed by a “calling out” segment to recognize those North Dakota children now in foster care who are ready for adoption placements but who do not have identified adoptive families.

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In 2004, 344 children were adopted in North Dakota. Of these children, 95 involved children who had been in foster care prior to their adoptions. Twenty involved adoptions of foreign-born children, and 48 involved healthy infants. One hundred eighty-one involved adoptions by stepparents.

Many children in foster care have special placement needs because they have disabilities, are part of sibling groups being placed together, are older than age seven, or are of an ethnic minority. In North Dakota, foster families often adopt the children in their care.

Private child-placing agencies must be licensed in North Dakota to facilitate adoptions. Licensed agencies include the Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) program – a collaboration involving the N.D. Department of Human Services, Catholic Charities North Dakota, and PATH ND; the Adoption Option – a collaboration involving Lutheran Social Services and The Village; Catholic Charities North Dakota; Christian Family Life Services; and LDS Family Services.

For information about adoption, 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, or go on-line to www.nd.gov/humanservices/services/childfamily/adoption/.

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