

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 E Boulevard Ave, Bismarck ND 58505-0250

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 16, 2006

Contacts: Julie Hoffman, Adoption Services Administrator, Children and Family Services Division, N.D. Dept. of Human Services, 701-328-4805; Leanne Johnson, AASK Director, Catholic Charities ND, 701-356-7986, or Heather Steffl, Public Information Officer, N.D. Dept. of Human Services, 701-328-4933.

ND Courts to hold special Adoption Day sessions

BISMARCK, N.D. – Participation in an annual event designed to build families is growing. Courts in **Bismarck**, **Fargo**, and **Minot** will hold special sessions this week to finalize the adoptions of 27 children – 25 of whom are former foster children. The events are part of National Adoption Day and activities vary by location. The public is welcome to attend the public festivities, which are intended to raise awareness about adoption. Court proceedings are closed to the public.

Personnel from the courts, the N.D. Department of Human Services, and the Adults Adopting Special Kids (AASK) program organized the events.

In 2005, 113 foster children were adopted in North Dakota – many by their foster parents. The AASK program of Catholic Charities ND and PATH ND, Inc. work to connect eligible foster children with families. Currently about a dozen North Dakota foster children are seeking adoptive placements and do not have identified families.

BISMARCK EVENT

Bismarck is hosting its second annual Adoption Day on Friday, November 17, from 1:30 to 4 p.m. at the Courthouse, 514 E. Thayer Ave., Bismarck. South Central District Judge Sonna Anderson is scheduled to preside over the adoption hearings.

FOR REPORTERS: One family has consented to be interviewed. To arrange interviews, contact Rita Weisz, Regional Supervisor of County Social Services, West Central Human Service Center, N.D. Department of Human Services, at 701-328-8880 or 87weir@nd.gov.

FARGO EVENT

The Fargo courthouse will be crowded with children and families on Saturday, November 18 from 9 a.m. to 11a.m. in honor of National Adoption Day. For the fourth year in a row, East Central District Judges John C. Irby and Wade L. Webb and court personnel are opening the court on a Saturday to finalize adoptions and raise awareness.

Thirteen children will officially become part of eight families. The public is welcome to attend a reception in the rotunda following the hearings. The judges, along with invited officials, two adoptive families, and an adopted teenager will provide brief comments at a 10:30 a.m. press conference. The event will conclude with a balloon releasing ceremony. The Cass County Courthouse is located at 211 9th St. S., Fargo.

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FOR REPORTERS: Two families and an adopted teen have consented to be interviewed at the Fargo event. Adoption hearings are usually closed, but contact Leanne Johnson, Adults Adoption Special Kids (AASK) Director, Catholic Charities ND, at 701-356-7986 to make arrangements.

MINOT EVENT

Some Minot area families will be attending a special National Adoption Day court session at the Ward County Courthouse on Friday, November 17, 1 – 4:30 p.m. During the event, seven adoptions will be finalized, most involving North Dakota foster children. A reception is scheduled from 1 to 3:30 p.m., followed by a closing ceremony at 4 p.m. on the courthouse steps. The public is invited to attend the public festivities. The courthouse is located at 315 3rd St. S.E.

FOR REPORTERS: For details, contact Maggie Hulberg, AASK-Catholic Charities ND, at 701-852-2854, or mhulberg@catholiccharitiesnd.org.

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