

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

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Contacts: LuWanna Lawrence, Assistant Public Information Officer, N.D. Dept. of Human Services, 701-328-1892 or Camille Driver King, Child Welfare Specialist, Native American Training Institute, 701-255-6374

Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference to be held in Bismarck

Gov. Dalrymple has proclaimed Jan. 30 – Feb. 5, 2011 Indian Child Welfare Act and Wellness Week

BISMARCK, N.D. – “*Sustaining Family Connections, While Preparing for a Healthy Future*” is this year’s theme of the 10th annual **Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference, Feb. 2-4, 2011**, at the Radisson Hotel in Bismarck. The conference will feature expert speakers on child welfare issues, juvenile justice services, cultural and tribal relations, child behavioral health, and the Indian Child Welfare Act.

“This conference is an opportunity to join in the dialogue about how we can provide better services to Native American children and families that are culturally appropriate,” said Camille Driver King, child welfare specialist for the Native American Training Institute.

Conference sessions will include discussion on the Indian Child Welfare Act, the challenges and strengths of foster care, bullying, adolescents and alcohol, tribal genealogy, gang subcultures in Indian country, resiliency strategies and more.

There will also be a panel discussion on a Native American women’s perspective on children and families, and a special presentation by the Standing Rock Community School grades K-5th, and the Brave Thunder Drum group. A premiere screening of the movie “*For the Next Seven Generations: 13 Indigenous Grandmothers Weaving a World that Works*” will be held at the North Dakota Heritage Center on Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2011, at 7 p.m. In addition, a film screening of “*Lost Sparrow*” will be held at the Radisson Hotel Ballroom on Thursday, Feb. 3, 2011, at 7 p.m. Both films are free and open to the public.

“It’s important to work toward building strong families and communities, which improve the lives of Native American children,” said Tara Muhlhauser, director of the N.D. Department of Human Services’ Children and Family Services Division. “It takes a positive collaborative effort between tribal government and the state systems to make this happen.”

Nearly 200 people are registered for the conference. Registrants include social service providers, child protection workers, judges, juvenile justice and tribal court personnel, foster parents, educators, mental health and substance abuse professionals and others interested in child welfare.

The conference 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.

Continuing education credits are available for licensed social workers. Registration will be accepted at the door. For more details or a schedule of events, go online to www.nativeinstitute.org.

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