

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

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Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference to be held in Bismarck Feb. 20-22

Gov. Dalrymple has proclaimed Feb. 17-23 Indian Child Welfare Act and Wellness Week

BISMARCK, N.D. – “*Walking a Mile in THEIR Moccasins*” is this year’s theme of the 12th annual Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference, Feb. 20-22, 2013, 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, 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 enhancing cultural knowledge, brainstorming new ideas to build relationships, and to support families to meet the unique needs of Native American children,” said Sandra Bercier, training director for the Native American Training Institute in Bismarck, N.D.

Conference sessions will include discussion on the Indian Child Welfare Act, strategies for creating positive life outcomes, native foster parent curriculum and recruitment program, cultural and contemporary teachings about fatherhood, factors that influence youth violence, cognitive behavioral redirection program to treat anti-social behavioral problems in youth involved in the corrections system, and more.

There will also be presentations on an online screening tool that helps determine eligibility for public assistance programs, raising foster children in the spirit of the Indian Child Welfare Act, and cultural remedies that can help enhance a youth’s mind, body, and spirit.

A premiere screening of the feature documentary “*Dakota 38 + 2*,” which encourages native healing and reconciliation, will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 20, from 3:15 to 5 p.m. Award-winning Canadian county music singer Shy-Anne Hovorka will also perform on Thursday, Feb. 21, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Best Western Seven Seas. The musical performance is free and open to the public.

Nearly 200 people are registered for the conference. Registrants 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.

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.

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