

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
600 East Boulevard Avenue – Department 325, Bismarck ND 58505-0250**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 11, 2014**

For information, contact: LuWanna Lawrence at 701-328-1892 or Heather Steffl at 701-328-4933

**Olympic Gold Medalist to Share Story of Surviving Childhood Abuse at Children's Justice Symposium July 22-24 in Bismarck**

BISMARCK, N.D. – A survivor of childhood abuse, Frank Shorter, developed his passion for running as an escape from abuse. Shorter, an Olympic Gold Medal long-distance runner, will share his story of perseverance and stopping the cycle of violence as one of many featured speakers at the N.D. Children's Justice Symposium, July 22-24, 2014, at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck.

"The symposium is an opportunity to engage in conversation about services and to provide skill development and networking for professionals who work with children and families to support their safety, permanency, and well-being," said Supreme Court Justice Lisa Fair McEvers.

The three-day symposium will feature workshops on topics including trauma informed investigations, kinship caregivers, engaging fathers in the lives of their children, navigating the juvenile court system, making stable permanent placement decisions for youth, child welfare worker safety, helping children with early drug exposure, managing challenging behaviors in children with complex trauma, as well as other topics.

There will also be three pre-conference workshops on July 21 focusing on understanding the effects of childhood trauma on child welfare professionals, identifying potential secondary trauma risk factors, and children and family services review training.

Shorter's closing keynote presentation on overcoming childhood abuse is Thurs., July 24, at 10 a.m. The man credited with igniting the running boom in the 1970s will also lead a community run on Wed., July 23, at 6 p.m., on the Sertoma Park Loop Trail, near shelter 7. The public is invited to participate.

Law enforcement professionals, attorneys, social workers, judges, educators, therapists, and others who work with children and families and child welfare issues are encouraged to attend the symposium.

"Creating positive outcomes for children and families takes a great deal of collaboration and open communication among the many professionals participating in this training event," said Shari Doe, director of the N.D. Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division.

The Children's Justice Symposium is free and open to the public. A complete schedule including online registration is available at <http://und.edu/centers/children-and-family-services-training-center/justice-symposium/index.cfm>.

The Children's Justice Symposium is held every other year in North Dakota and is a co-sponsored by the N.D. Supreme Court, the University of North Dakota Children and Family Services Training Center, and the N.D. Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division.

###