

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 9, 2017

Contacts: Ronya Hoblit, Native American Training Institute, 701-255-6374 or LuWanna Lawrence, North Dakota Department of Human Services, 701-328-1892

Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference to be held in Mandan Feb. 22-24

BISMARCK, N.D. – The Native American Training Institute will host the 16th annual Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference, Feb. 22-24, at the Baymont Inn and Suites in Mandan, N.D. This year's theme is "Revitalizing Traditions in Honor of Our Children" and will focus on child welfare issues, juvenile justice, cultural and tribal relations, and health and wellness including child behavioral health.

Conference speakers will share their expertise on the Indian Child Welfare Act, play therapy for children, training qualified expert witnesses, the use of the Restorative Justice program in school settings, assisting victims of human trafficking, strengthening children's knowledge of their cultural backgrounds and enhancing cross-cultural communication styles.

Other sessions include discussion on the prevention efforts of the Coalition to Prevent Sexual Abuse in Cass and Clay counties, child welfare ethics and harmonics and prayers for healing trauma and empowering Native American youth.

The conference will also feature a panel discussion on grandparents raising grandchildren on Feb. 22 from 3:15 to 4:45 p.m.

On Feb. 23, at 6 p.m., award-winning recording artist and entertainer Rose Red Elk, also known by her Native American stage name Red Feather Woman, will perform in the Pier 7 conference room at the Baymont Inn and Suites. Her albums blend traditional spoken words with traditional mysticism of Native American stories into contemporary songs. The performance is free and open to the public.

Additional sessions are also scheduled throughout the conference. See details at www.natind.org.

Conference organizers invite social service professionals, counselors, child protection workers, judges, attorneys, juvenile justice and Tribal court personnel, foster parents, educators, behavioral health professionals and others interested in child welfare to attend.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available for licensed social workers. United Tribes Technical College Office of Extended Learning will be on-site to offer CEUs. Educational hours are also available for Wraparound Recertification from the North Dakota Department of Human Services.

Preregistration is encouraged, but people can also register at the door. Registration ranges from \$75 per day to \$200 for the full three-day conference. A student and foster parent rate of \$20 per day or \$60 for the entire conference is also available.

The Indian Child Welfare and Wellness Conference is hosted by the Native American Training Institute in partnership with the North Dakota Supreme Court and North Dakota Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division.

###