



201 East Washington Avenue, Room G200
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916
Telephone: 608-266-8684
Fax: 608-261-6972

Governor Scott Walker
Secretary Eloise Anderson

Secretary's Office

Friday, July 22, 2016
Contact: Joe Scialfa or Kathleen Scholl — 608-266-9000

Foster Youth honored for academic achievement

(MADISON) – The fourth annual Foster Youth Graduation Celebration was held today at the Executive Residence to honor a special group of Wisconsin students. Hosted by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the celebration honored former foster youth who recently graduated from high school, completed milestones in post-secondary education, or who attained certain other educational achievements.

Twenty-nine graduates participated in the celebration of reaching commencement from Wisconsin high schools, technical colleges, and universities. Those attending represent the 95 foster youth who were reported as having reached commencement this year.

“These remarkable young men and women should be applauded for what they’ve accomplished,” said DCF Secretary Eloise Anderson. “Foster youth must often overcome significant educational challenges. By working through those challenges, they have placed themselves on the path towards a successful future. They are truly shining examples of the strength and endurance of the human spirit.

Nationally, only about 57% of foster youth will graduate from high school and only about 2% will go on to college. Most suffer not only the loss of their biological parents, but have had to face multiple challenges including being uprooted from friends and school.

Former foster youth Desiree Parker of LaCrosse also spoke, and inspired the graduates with the tale of her courageous journey towards academic success. Parker, who received a Governor’s Exceptional Foster Care Youth award in 2010, currently works for Lutheran Social Services as a Special Needs Adoption Social Worker.

Some of the youth at the event will be able to remain in foster care. With the enactment last August of Wisconsin Act 334, Out-of-Home Care for young adults with an Individualized Education Program may now continue in foster care until they get their high school diploma or GED, or until age 21 if they are in high school or vocational school full-time.

For more information on Wisconsin's foster care services or to find out how you can be a foster parent, please visit the Department of Children and Families website at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/fostercare/parent> or the Coalition for Children, Youth and Families website at www.fosterparentsrock.org.

(end)