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Governor's Outstanding Adoptive Parent Awards presented

(MADISON) — The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) honored six special adoptive families today by presenting them with the 2016 Governor's Outstanding Adoptive Award. The awards were presented during a celebration at the State Capitol as part of Wisconsin's month long recognition of National Adoption Month.

Nominations for the awards were received from adoption workers, children's advocates, and citizens from all corners of Wisconsin who wanted to recognize the incredible families they know who have opened their hearts to provide safe and loving homes to children in need of a "forever" family. The recipients were chosen based upon their stories of exceptional dedication, commitment and sacrifice made in order to ensure their adopted children received the important family bonds that only a "forever" family can provide.

"All adoptive families are worthy of recognition," said DCF Deputy Secretary Ron Hunt. "In our state this year, hundreds of children in Wisconsin have been provided with a permanent home by families and individuals who have stepped forward and made a difference in children's lives. We appreciate the dedication of adoptive parents, as well as those who work closely with families when they go through the adoption process."

Six adoptive families who were nominated by their caseworkers received awards.

Kelly and Troy ("Bud") Booth of Boyd were recognized for not only adopting two boys and taking placement of a girl, but for having specialized skills working with children who have face complex challenges. The Booths advocate for children and parents and help others through respite care.

Tricia and Raymond Daino of Edgar were honored for bringing together five siblings who had been placed in three separate homes, and pursuing permanent placement for all five through adoption, to keep the children together. The Dainos became educated about trauma informed care and made extra efforts to ensure their adoptive children's social and academic success.

Tiffany Gaumond and James Phetteplace of Madison advocated strongly for the needs of their son for four years before they adopted him. They now also have foster placement of their son's biological sister. The couple has maintained a good relationship with the children's biological mother, and they reach out within the community to raise cultural awareness.

Jon Sturm of Two Rivers is a full-time working single father of an 11-year-old adopted boy. He has been licensed as a foster parent for 14 years. Jon and his son bonded when he provided respite care for him several times. He also helps recruit foster parents in the community.

Salita Williams of Milwaukee is a single mother, the adoptive parent of three siblings – two boys and their baby sister. Despite the fact that she did not get into treatment fostering to adopt, she chose to adopt all three children due to her desire to keep the siblings together as a family. She understands trauma informed care and has also reached out across cultures.

Mya and Scot Yohr of Sun Prairie adopted three children while still living in Milwaukee. They adopted two brothers in 2012. They then chose to add to their family when they adopted a young teenaged girl last year, despite facing a move to another city. The Yohrs also serve as foster parents and co-parent with birth parents.

Although many Wisconsin families have made the commitment to adopt children, the event highlighted the need for more families to step forward to create these unique and special families through adoption.

Two youth speakers, Chassiya Betts of Mosinee, and her brother, Abias Wilhorn of Wisconsin Rapids, spoke about their unique experience as siblings who were adopted by two separate families who were friends, which allows for a lasting relationship between them.

Hunt also recognized Jockey International and its corporate initiative, *Jockey Being Family*. The initiative provides funding, employee volunteers, and in-kind donations in support of post-adoption services in Wisconsin and throughout the United States.

For more information about adoption, please visit www.dcf.wisconsin.gov visit and click on Foster Care and Adoption.

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