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May 15, 2018

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First Lady and DCF Secretary recognize six outstanding foster families *Green Bay Packer Ty Montgomery and mother, Lisa also honored*

(MADISON) – First Lady Tonette Walker and Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Eloise Anderson honored six outstanding foster families, a foster youth, and numerous foster care advocates at a special ceremony in the Assembly Chamber of the State Capitol.

Six families received a *2018 Governor's Foster Care Awards*, recognizing the inspiring efforts of foster families throughout Wisconsin. Receiving awards were: Josh and Jamie Blau of Seymour, Pam Mathias and Tammy Stodola of Verona, Roger and Phyllis Nagel of Bruce, Bob and Nan Pieper of Sun Prairie, Janice and Raymond Stelzer of Plover, and Cary and Natalie Underwood of Menomonee Falls.

"For those times when children cannot remain at home, foster families step in to keep them safe, nurture them, and give them support," stated Secretary Anderson. "I know firsthand the joys and challenges of being a foster parent, although for me the joys far outweighed the challenges. Wisconsin is forever in the debt of foster families who are willing to welcome children into their home at the very moment of their greatest need."

A foster youth, ShawnaRae Bruch from Waukesha, received a *2018 Foster Youth Award* for using her life experience and natural leadership skills to help make positive changes in the child welfare system.

A special *Champion of Change Award* was presented to Green Bay Packer Ty Montgomery and his mother, Lisa, for their dedication to raising awareness of the ongoing need for more foster families to offer protection and support during one of the most difficult circumstances a child could ever face.

Lastly, Representatives Patrick Snyder and Steve Doyle were recognized with a *Stepping Up Award* for their leadership in co-chairing the Speaker's Task Force on Foster Care.

The ceremony today also highlighted the need for additional kind, responsible adults to step forward and care for foster children. Currently in Wisconsin there are about 8,000 children living in out-of-home care. For more information on becoming a foster parent, visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/fostercare/become>.

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