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Contact: Gina Paige or Jamie Keehn, 608-422-7800 or [dcfmedia@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dcfmedia@wisconsin.gov)

## Foster Youth honored for academic achievement

MADISON – The 10th annual Foster Youth Graduation Celebration was held today at the Executive Residence to honor a special group of Wisconsin students. Governor Tony Evers and First Lady Kathy Evers joined Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Emilie Amundson in recognizing former foster youth who recently graduated from high school, completed milestones in post-secondary education, or who attained other educational achievements.

“I am extremely proud of these graduates and honored to be part of this important milestone in their lives,” said First Lady Kathy Evers. “Obtaining a degree takes a lot of hard work and dedication, especially for foster youth who often face additional challenges. These exceptional individuals deserve to be applauded for their resiliency and all that they have accomplished.”

Nationally, 57% of foster youth will graduate from high school and less than 2% will go onto college. Most suffer not only the loss of their biological family but might have also faced multiple foster home moves, changes in caseworkers and being uprooted from friends and schools.

The 37 graduates who were able to attend the celebration represented the 103 foster youth throughout Wisconsin who are known to have reached commencement in the 2021-2022 academic year.

“These young individuals have overcome so much adversity, yet they had the strength and determination to succeed in achieving their educational goals,” said DCF Secretary Emilie Amundson. “They are truly inspirational and deserve to be celebrated. I have no doubt that they will continue to do great things in this next chapter.”

Dr. Jill Underly, State Superintendent for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction also spoke and inspired graduates, as well as former Wisconsin foster youth Tina Czappa, who spoke to the graduates about her brave journey towards academic and career success.

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](http://www.fosterparentsrock.org).

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