



# NICWA News

*service and advocacy for Indian children*

National Indian Child Welfare Association's Quarterly Newsletter - SPRING 2000

## NICWA and TCFP unite to serve Indian families

Just as Census 2000 is about to gather information that will ultimately affect services and programs throughout the country, the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) and The Casey Family Program (TCFP) are launching into an extensive 5-year research and practices-building project that will have far-reaching effects for Indian children and families.

In January, NICWA and The Casey Family Program created the National Indian Children's Alliance, comprising entities from diverse public and private sectors. The alliance will generate comprehensive data on the status of Indian children in America that will serve as a link to inform and effect public and tribal policy.

"The significance of this project," said Terry Cross, NICWA executive director, "lies in the fact that distinct and different voices are coming together around common strategies for the sake of Indian children and families who are at risk in complex and ever changing dual welfare systems.

"Never before has a private foundation leveraged its resources to this extent, which will result in a powerful and positive impact on the future well being of Indian children and families," Cross said, speaking of The Casey Family Program's involvement.

This project will serve all 700,000 American Indian children in the United States. The U.S. Indian population is very young—35.6 percent are under the age of 18—compared to the general population. And although there are reportedly high rates of child abuse and neglect, meaningful and current statistics

*See Casey, page 6.*

## North to Alaska!

The NICWA board of directors unanimously ratified a recommendation from its special site selection committee to hold the 2001 National "Protecting Our Children" Conference in Anchorage, Alaska. The committee was led by Vice President Eloise King and consisted of board members Judy Houck, Gloria Wilson and staff Conference Coordinator Larry Douglas.

They reported on their recent tour of Anchorage conference facilities and hotels hosted by the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau. Ms. King said in her report, "We were very impressed with how well suited Anchorage is to accommodate our needs. The strong Alaska Native influence can be seen through-out the community, and the focus of that influence is the recently opened Alaska Native Heritage Center," she continued.

The dates selected for the 2001 conference are April 23-25, with pre-conference activities and registration beginning on Sunday, April 22. The Egan Convention Center will be the site of the majority of conference events. The headquarters hotel will be

*See North, page 7.*

### ***INSIDE...***

- 2 Exec Director's Letter**
- 3 Advocacy**
- 7 Reorganization**
- 8 New Members**
- 10 Children's Mental Health**
- 11 Title IV-E Conference BIA-NICWA Packets**
- 12 Calendar**

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**Letter from the Executive Director**

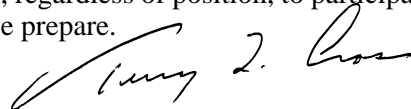
I want to take this opportunity to re-examine and recap NICWA's and our partners' efforts over the past several years to protect our children by protecting the Indian Child Welfare Act. First of all it is important to recognize our success and to give thanks for the unity that made this possible. In 1995 Congresswoman Pryce of Ohio, in reaction to an ICWA case affecting a family in her district, proposed a bill that would have gutted ICWA. Senator Glen joined her in that effort, and they had strong support from the National Council on Adoption. The support and momentum were so strong that their bill passed in the House. Only by a passionate grassroots fight did the tribes, our partner organizations and NICWA members manage to stop the legislation in the Senate.

In 1996 we faced the same fight, but this time we were more prepared. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) offered a forum for tribal leaders to gather. Our supporters in the Senate let us know that to continue to protect ICWA, the tribes would have to recognize the problems with ICWA and propose their own solutions. In response, the "Tulsa Consensus" was born. The "Tulsa Consensus" resulted in a bill that was introduced by John McCain. Its intent was to respond to the problems within ICWA in a way that satisfied critics and protected the interests of tribes. While the bill never passed, it stopped the efforts of the opponents of ICWA. The bill has been introduced each session since 1997 and continues to be under consideration as SB 1213.

Last year NICWA thought the ICWA amendments were dead, but again the bill was introduced by Senator McCain. As NICWA explored the support to move this bill through Congress, we found strong support in some areas of the country and strong opposition in others. NICWA supported SB1213. Clearly, we underestimated the difference of positions that had grown on the language of the McCain Bill. At NCAI's convention in Palm Springs in October of 1999, it became evident that the "Tulsa Consensus" had unraveled. While the body of NCAI voted to support SB1213, realistically it is not practical, possible or advisable to move such a bill forward without a true consensus and broad unity.

NICWA began its advocacy efforts on a very modest scale, reacting to issues, often at the last minute. Since then we have grown in capacity and sophistication. We recently signed a Memorandum Of Agreement formalizing our partnership with NCAI. We have recently added a policy research function and greatly expanded our policy and advocacy work. NICWA has always sought to keep tribal leaders informed and at the forefront of such issues. To date we have been successful.

Now it is time to mend fences and rebuild our unity. In the coming months NICWA will spend time listening and participating in a process that we hope will once again find the common ground on which move forward to protect ICWA and our children. Unfortunately, the threat is not over. Although things are quiet now, we fear the next sensational case could bring about a new attack. We want to be ready this time, and we need everyone, regardless of position, to participate in a dialogue about how we prepare.



# ADVOCACY

## INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENTS: NCAI TO HOST ICWA FORUM IN JUNE

Movement in this Congress on the ICWA amendments in S. 1213 has not occurred and likely will not until after tribes have an opportunity to meet again to discuss the future of the amendments. Last fall at the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Annual Convention in Palm Springs, it became apparent that some tribes were not comfortable with the bill and were asking for a new strategy to be developed. Nonetheless, resolutions did pass at the convention which supported S. 1213 and established a national tribal leaders task force on ICWA. Since last fall, NCAI, with help from the National Indian Child Welfare Association, has been working to facilitate a position on the ICWA amendments that all tribes can support. At a meeting of the task force in February, Jill Peters of Senator McCain's staff told task force members that Senator McCain was not going to move the bill ahead until he better understood what the concerns with the bill were. NCAI staff floated out the idea of holding a national meeting to work on resolving concerns with the bill and developing a new strategy. **The idea was broadly supported, and NCAI has scheduled an ICWA forum for June 24 and 25 at the Juneau Convention Center in Juneau, Alaska in connection with NCAI's Mid-Year Conference.**

While the present environment does not bode well for the passage of ICWA amendments this year, the strategy that was used in the past did provide some benefits. The first is that no anti-tribal amendments to ICWA were passed. In 1995 and 1996, there was a real fear that Congress was going to amend ICWA in ways that would have severely limited tribal involvement in state child custody proceedings involving tribal members and removed ICWA protections from countless numbers of Indian children and families throughout the country. The tribal amendments that were developed helped neutralize this threat.

A second benefit was raising the awareness of Congress to what ICWA does and does not do. Congress deals with thousands of issues and ICWA was one that few congressional members understood. Often times, the information that was available distorted the purpose of ICWA and relied on biased sources that sought to repeal portions of the ICWA. This situation created a vacuum where negative attacks on Indian families and tribes could flourish. Written materials developed by tribal sources, combined with other information that tribes and Indian organizations provided, minimized the number of congressional members who supported anti-tribal amendments to ICWA.

One other benefit was the increased awareness of the problems that Indian children and families experience when adoption agencies or professionals contact them. Many of these families live in urban areas and are disconnected from their tribal communities and/or relatives. Because there is a great demand for adoptable newborn infants, these Indian families may be persuaded to give up their children for adoption. During this process, the parents may not be identified as Indian or even told not to identify themselves as Indian. If this advice is followed, the family and child are subjected to state law rather than the ICWA, and it is doubtful the child's tribe will have an opportunity to be involved. Even when these families continue to assert their tribal affiliation, some individuals and agencies will go to great lengths to avoid applying the ICWA.

## TRIBAL FOSTER CARE BILL STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION

A bill in the Senate, S. 1478, that would allow tribes to operate a federal foster care program, is still being considered by Congress for the legislative year in 2000. The program, Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, has been out of the reach of most tribal governments based on Congress's oversight in not making them eligible to apply for and administer the program directly. Consequently, tribal children placed in foster care by tribal agencies and courts are ineligible for the federal reimbursement provided by Title IV-E for the services rendered to them. Title IV-

*continued next page*

*Advocacy, continued.*

E provides reimbursement for a multitude of basic foster care and adoption assistance services and is the largest federally funded child welfare program at over \$5 billion each year. Some tribes have been able to tap into the program through agreements with states that operate the program, but these agreements have only reached approximately 50 tribes and have been proven to be problematic in many cases, for both states and tribes.

S. 1478 contains the following provisions:

- Provide reimbursement for Title IV-E services to tribal placements of Indian children in tribal foster and adoptive homes that meet Title IV-E eligibility requirements.
- Authorize tribal governments to receive direct funding for the administration of the IV-E program.
- Recognize tribal standards for foster home licensing.
- Allow the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services the flexibility to modify the requirements of the Title IV-E law for tribes, if those requirements are not in the best interests of Indian children.
- Allow the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to modify Title IV-E matching fund requirements in recognition that tribes, unlike states, have not previously received funding to build the type of service delivery systems available to the states, and permit other federal and state funds to be used for any required tribal match.
- Continue to recognize existing tribal-state Title IV-E agreements and the development of new agreements.

S. 1478 has received broad support within Indian Country, with resolutions supporting the bill from the National Congress of American Indians, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and United South and Eastern Tribes. The bill has also received favorable reviews from Native Villages in Alaska; tribes in California, Oklahoma and Montana; the Navajo Nation and many other areas. What is needed now is for tribal governments to become more actively involved in notifying their members of Congress of their position on this legislation and how it can improve

the lives of children in their communities. The biggest challenge for passage has been finding federal funding that could offset the cost of offering the program to tribes and Indian children under their jurisdiction (approximately \$250 million over 5 years). This obstacle can be overcome if more tribes voice their support for the bill.

#### **ADOPTION AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT DOCUMENT PUBLISHED!**

After two years of work, the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), in partnership with the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement in Child Welfare and the Children's Bureau have finished publishing the document "The Adoption and Safe Families Act: Issues for Tribes and States Serving Indian Children." The document provides information and assistance in implementing the 1997 federal law with Indian children under both state and tribal jurisdiction. Information from this draft has been used in NICWA trainings on this subject throughout the United States. Copies have been mailed to all of the tribes, states and numerous other organizations that work with Indian children and families. If you did not receive a copy and would like one, please contact Kelly Mitchell at (503) 222-4044. NICWA also offers training on this topic. Training information or requests should go to Kelly Mitchell at the number above.

#### **TRIBAL OPPORTUNITY IN INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM EXPANSION**

The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-169) was enacted in December 1999. The bill includes a new requirement regarding state services to Indian youth.

The primary purpose of the Foster Care Independence Act is to reform and expand the Independent Living program which has been renamed the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, in honor of the late Senator. This program is authorized under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act and is designed to help children in foster care prepare to become independent once they transition out of foster care at age 18.

*Advocacy, continued.*

The law doubles the annual funding provided for the Independent Living Program to \$140 million (a capped entitlement) and expands services to youth ages 18 through 20 who have left foster care. Among the many services provided under the program are assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, career counseling, education and job training, living skills, preventive health activities and mentor programs. In addition, the bill offers new assistance with room and board expenses for youth between ages 18 and 21 after leaving foster care.

The law also authorizes services — education, counseling and preparation for post-secondary education — to younger children who are deemed likely to still be in foster care at age 18. The bill also gives states the option to provide Medicaid coverage to youth ages 18 through 20 when they leave foster care.

One provision of the new law deals specifically with Indian youth. The new law requires a state, as part of its plan submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services, to certify that it is serving Indian children in the Independent Living Program to the same extent as other children in the state. The bill requires the state plan to include:

A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that each Indian tribe in the State has been consulted about the programs to be carried out under the plan; that there have been efforts to coordinate the programs with such tribes; and that benefits and services under the programs will be made available to Indian children in the State on the same basis as other children in the State.

The legislation as introduced (H.R. 1802) in the House of Representatives would have required states to provide Independent Living services to Indian children, but would have only required the state to “inform” tribes of the services available under the program and allow tribes the opportunity to comment on the proposed state plan. Representative Hayworth (R-AZ) amended the bill in the House Ways and Means Committee to require that the certification not only verify that Indian children are being provided

services on the same basis as other children in the state, but also that tribes were consulted on draft plans and that efforts were made to work cooperatively on the program with tribes.

It will be very important for tribes to contact their state office that operates the Independent Living program and begin discussions on how to make the program more accessible and effective for Indian youth. Requirements similar to this have been in effect for state services under the Title IV-B programs (Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families) and welfare reform for a few years now and may be helpful in the development of an effective process for this program.

#### **FY 2002 DHHS BUDGET CONSULTATION HELD IN APRIL**

On April 10 tribal leaders and representatives from national Indian organizations met for the fiscal year 2002 budget consultation with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) representatives. This is the second year this meeting has occurred. Testimony will focus on programs across the department that serve or could serve Indian people. The National Indian Child Welfare Association was invited again to provide oral testimony and focused on child welfare and mental health related programs. To receive a copy of the written testimony, contact Kelly Mitchell at (503) 222-4044.

#### **MONTANA SUPREME COURT SUPPORTS ICWA**

A Montana State Supreme Court issued an opinion on March 16, 2000, that said a non-Indian couple could not adopt an Indian child because the case did not present good cause for deviating from the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The State Supreme Court said the lower court made a mistake when they concluded that the proposed adoptive parents presented a good cause case for not applying ICWA.

*Casey, continued from page 1*

are hard to come by on reservations. It is even more difficult to obtain solid off-reservation data, because it is recorded by the states. The project will gather this and other data.

The alliance will address three major areas. First, it will create meaningful data on Indian children and families that will give statistics to those involved in the Indian policy debate and development. It will also inform the broader range of service providers.

Very little data exists that is dedicated solely to Indian children's care, protection and advocacy. Indian childcare providers are too often forced to try to make sense out of data generated by others whose motivations are dictated by the narrow provisions of federal and state funding.

Secondly, the project will develop the capacity of tribes to access resources to allow them to run their own foster care and adoption programs in a culturally appropriate way. To do this, the project will work with 12 tribes, in geographical areas where Casey is already working. Tribes and state officials will be provided with hands-on training to enhance tribal capacity to access Title IV-E, Foster Care and Adoption Assistance monies.

Thirdly, the project will work on adoption practices and procedures in an historic and culturally defined context based upon customary law. The Casey Family Program and NICWA will embark on a social marketing campaign designed to "demystify" the Indian Child Welfare Act and develop correlating materials that will encourage Indian families to adopt Indian children.

At a meeting in Portland, Oregon early in March, researchers discussed their approach and tasks in gathering and processing the data needed to achieve the first phase of the project. Included in the meeting were Dr. Ed Brown from George Warren Brown School of Social Work, John Red Horse from the University of Minnesota Duluth, School of Social Work, Charlotte Goodluck from Northern Arizona University, Susan Paulson from United Tribes College, Indian Child and Family Institute and Kathleen Earle from the University of Southern Maine, School of Social Work.

Other partners involved in technical assistance are the Bureau of Indian Affairs Administration for Children and Families; the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement, University of Southern Maine; the National Resource Center for Permanency Planning, Hunter College; the National Resource Center for Information Technology in Child Welfare, Child Welfare League of America; and the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice, Educational Service, Inc.

Partners involved in permanency options are the American Indian Law Center, Native American Rights Fund, the National Academy of Adoption Attorneys, the North American Council on Adoptable Children and the National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption.

The impact on NICWA as an organization involves doubling the staff to take on the added workload, moving to a larger office facility to house the staff and adding a new layer of management to the internal structure.

The impact to The Casey Family Program is enhanced permanency outcomes for children, enhanced cultural competence in the child welfare system and serving more Indian children nationally.

## **NICWA PARTNERSHIP WITH FEDERATION OF FAMILIES**

NICWA continues to partner with the Federation of Families for children's Mental Health. Their most recent effort took place April 5 through April 8 in an effort to help American Indian and Alaskan Native parents develop their own autonomous voice.

Approximately 25 parents from 10 different states attended a focus group to determine the technical assistance needs of parents learning effective advocacy skills and strategies. There were unanimous decisions made on important issues, including the decision to formalize this as an organization under the auspices of the Federation of Families.

NICWA articulated their on-going commitment to this dedicated group of parents. The name of this new organization? — *Intertribal Voices of Children and Families*.

## REORGANIZATION AND STAFFING CHANGES

Due to the expansion of services in January, NICWA embarked on a major reorganization to provide a broader management structure. Because we expect to double our staff by the summer, we knew a different infrastructure was needed. With the help of a management consultant, we divided the services into the following departments:

- Operations Department-fiscal, personnel and administrative support.
- Information and Training Department-conferences, training, consultation, Web site and library
- Community Development Department provision of technical assistance and consultation to tribes, tribal programs and grantee sites
- Policy and Research Department research projects and public policy activities.

Several NICWA staff were interviewed and re-hired into new management positions due to this reorganization. **Iona Hansel** was the fiscal manager and is now the director of operations. NICWA's conference coordinator, **Larry Douglas**, is now the director of information and training and **David Simmons**, who was working as the policy analyst is now the director of policy and research.

In announcing the promotions from within, Executive Director Terry Cross said, "As we analyze our organization's ability to absorb this amount of growth, it was evident that we have a core group of very talented and dedicated people who are a strong nucleus around which we can build. They have helped create NICWA's success to date, and they provide the foundation for the future."

The fourth department director was hired from outside the organization. **Mary McNeVins** joined the staff in mid-March as our director of community development, one of the newly created management positions and she will oversee the Community Development Department. Mary comes to NICWA from the Oregon Department of Human Services, where she was the Indian Child Welfare Act manager and tribal liaison for the State Office for Services to

Children and Families. Prior to this position, Mary was the director of the Child Protective Services Department for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

She brings to her new role at NICWA more than 14 years of experience in child protective services, specializing in Indian child welfare issues. Her experience and expertise in child welfare, from both the tribal and state perspective, will make her a tremendous resource to the tribes NICWA serves.

## REASSIGNMENTS

**Lois Chilcott** was NICWA's cheerful and competent receptionist for several months before being promoted into another administrative position. She is now the cheerful and competent administrative assistant for the Operations Department. Her primary duties will be in the financial processing area where her past experience as a budget officer for the Bureau of Indian Affairs will be extremely useful.

**Kelly Mitchell** was recently reassigned into another department. She came to NICWA last July as the logistics assistant working in the area that became the Information and Training Department. Her reassignment has her now working as a Logistics Assistant in the Policy and Research Department.

*North, continued from page 1.*

Anchorage's premier hotel, The Captain Cook. "We found the people at the Captain Cook to be particularly accommodating to work with," reported Conference Coordinator Larry Douglas. "We were able to secure a room rate of \$85 per night, and the Captain Cook will extend those rates three days before and after the conference to accommodate those who wish to enjoy the many attractions in the area."

To kick off a year-long promotion of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual "Protecting Our Children" Conference, there will be a special invitation to "Come North" during the closing general session of this year's conference. An Alaskan Native delegation led by board member Donne Fleagle and Anchorage Convention and Visitor's Bureau sales director Barbara Kremer, will be on hand to encourage everyone to plan now to experience a very special "Protecting Our Children" conference in 2001.

## THANK YOU

### *NEW & RENEWING NICWA MEMBERS & DONORS*

The board of directors and staff of the National Indian Child Welfare Association extend our sincere thanks to you for your investment in NICWA's mission, goals and programs. If at any time you have questions regarding your membership, or if we can be of service to you, please call us at (503) 222-4044. Thank you for your support.

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*Listing for receipts from January 1,  
 through March 31, 2000.*



## **CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES NATIVE AMERICAN SERVICE GRANTEES**

### **RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

Tribal evaluators and staff from three children's mental health Native American project sites gave a presentation about evaluation issues in Indian Country during a research conference last month. The three sites involved in the presentation are from Passamaquoddy Nation in Indian Township, Maine; Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in Michigan; and the Sacred Child Project (four tribes in five sites) in North Dakota. In a roundtable workshop, they presented information about their individual sites, historical experience with research and evaluation, sovereignty, their experience with the evaluation instruments in the Center for Mental Health Services initiative and a number of other issues.

The research conference is sponsored annually by the University of South Florida. Cutting edge research based on building children's mental health systems of care is the focus of the conference. Tribal evaluators and other tribal representatives from all six of the Native American Center for Mental Health Services grantee sites attended the conference, March 5-8, in Clearwater Beach, Florida. Attendees included staff, family and community members from the 45 current sites who have CMHS grants, as well as collaborative partners. The 45 grantees are developing systems of care that are child centered, family focused, community based and culturally competent under this children's mental health initiative. Grants are provided through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services.

### **WRAPAROUND CONFERENCE**

Three Native American children's mental health service grantees from the Northern Plains have joined together under the facilitation of the Native American Children & Family Services Training Institute to offer a wraparound conference. The conference, "Keeping Our Families Together Through the Sacred Hoop," will be held April 26-28, in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Youths and parents will be presenting at the conference and have been major contributors to the planning process. They will also be heard from during forums at the conference. The three Native American grantee sites involved in planning the conference are the Sacred Child Project (North Dakota); Nagi Kicopi ("Calling the Spirit Back") (Oglala Sioux, South Dakota); and With Eagle's Wings (Northern Arapaho, Wind River Reservation, Wyoming). Each of the three sites is using a form of the wraparound model to provide children's mental health services through the development of a system of care.

### **AMERICAN INDIAN PARENTS TALK TOGETHER**

American Indian parents and caregivers will continue talks in April about starting an organization for Native American parents who have a child with a serious emotional disturbance. This meeting took place in Portland, Oregon, April 5 and 8, before and after the Portland State University "Building on Family Strengths" conference. Thirty-one Native parents attended and took part in the talks.

The April Indian parent meeting supported the consensus of the group that met in Washington, D.C. last November. There, more than 60 Native American parents and caregivers, along with two youths, met to discuss whether to form an organization of Indian parents who have children with serious emotional disturbances. Further, if they wanted such an organization, they were asked to consider whether it should be independent or a chapter of the Federation of Families. There was a positive response by the parents to the idea of having such an organization. They expressed a desire to take the information back to their communities, then meet again at a later date. The November 1999 meeting was held in conjunction with the annual Federation of Families conference and a Native American service grantee meeting.

Earlier in April, a steering committee of Native American parents met in Rapid City. They voted unanimously to form a Native chapter of Federation of Families. The meeting in Portland determined that decision was supported. For additional information, see the article on page 6 entitled "NICWA Partners with Federation of Families."

The Indian parents are from nine Circles of Care and six service grant communities across the country, including Alaska. Those sites are recipients of grants to build (or to plan for) a system of care to facilitate the delivery of mental health services to Indian children with serious emotional disturbance and their families. Parents attended the Portland conference under the sponsorship of the Federation of Families, Portland State University or their local grant sites. April 6-8, they attended the conference with parents, staffs and collaborative partners from other Center for Mental Health Services grant communities.

NICWA and Portland State University have collaborated to build an Indian track into the "Building on Family Strengths" agenda. There were four workshops focused on Native concerns and interests.

Currently, there are 45 CMHS service grantees and nine CMHS Circles of Care (planning) grantees. Six of the 45 service grants are being operated in Indian Country. The Circles of Care grantees are from federally acknowledged tribes, tribal organizations or urban Indian organizations that are a nonprofit corporate body situated in an urban centers and governed by a board of directors of whom at least 51 percent are American Indian/Alaska Natives and provide for the participation of all interested Indian groups and individuals.

## The BIA & NICWA Join Forces for Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. This year the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Indian Child Welfare Association have joined forces in an effort to help increase awareness and provide tools for the prevention of child abuse and neglect in Indian communities. Together the two agencies created a packet of resources, ideas and information that assist people in preventing child abuse in their community. Watch for the packet to arrive in your child welfare program, IHS clinic, Head Start program, tribal school, and tribal leader's office during April.

Target Stores gave a generous donation of \$5,000 so that a copy of our curriculum *Grassroots Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in Indian Communities* could be included in the packet. The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse, Child Neglect, and Child Welfare included their information as well.

Two forms in the packet ask for your feedback. We hope you will take a moment and fill out these forms or contact the people requesting your feedback. We want to be aware of the activities, programs and efforts that you have going in your community. These forms help us determine what information and resources are important to you and the number of people this information affects.

## NATIONAL TRIBAL TITLE IV-E FOSTER CARE CONFERENCE

*"Gaining Equal Access:  
Making IV-E Work for Our People"*

**June 7-9, 2000**

**Black Bear Casino & Hotel  
Carlton, Minnesota**

**For Registration Information  
Call (503) 222-4044**

**NATIONAL INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATION  
Portland, Oregon  
<http://www.nicwa.org>**

# NICWA News

NATIONAL INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATION  
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PORTLAND, OREGON 97201

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## *April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month*

### CALENDAR

**Health Promotion Programs, The University of Oklahoma's Wellness & Women Annual Conference, "Leading Our Children with Gentle Footsteps"**

May 8-13, 2000, Portland, OR  
Contact: (405) 325-1790

**"Empowering Tribal Families in the New Millennium," presented by Dept. of Health and Human Services**

May 16-18, 2000, Minneapolis, MN  
Contact: (703) 524-8184

**Gaining Equal Access: Making IV-E Work for Our People: A National Tribal Title IV-E Foster Care Conference**

June 7-9, 2000, Carlton, MN  
Contact: NICWA (503) 222-4044

**Reclaiming Youth International, Black Hills Seminars 2000, "Reclaiming Challenging Youth 7th Annual Conference"**

June 24-28, 2000, Sioux Falls, SD  
Contact: (800) 647-5244

**19th Annual "Protecting Our Children" National Conference On Child Abuse and Neglect**

April 22-25, 2001 Anchorage, AK  
Contact NICWA, (503) 222-4044

*Montana, continued from page 5.*

The case centered on a non-Indian couple in Bozeman, Montana who had temporary custody of a 2 year-old Indian child. The couple wanted to adopt the child whom had been in their home for two years and told the court that they were in the best position to care for the child who they claimed may be at risk for Fetal Alcohol Effect. They also claimed that removing the child from them and placing the child with an Indian relative in Oregon who was available would cause the child severe trauma.

The "good cause" exception to the ICWA has been the subject of much debate in state courts in several parts of the country. For tribal governments, the issue has been the inappropriate use of the "good cause" exception to ICWA to limit their involvement in child custody proceedings and allow non-Indian families to be foster or adoptive homes to Indian children. Experts in Indian child welfare are hopeful that the Montana Supreme Court decision will help clarify the intended use of good cause in future Indian child welfare cases. For more information on this case, contact David Simmons at (503) 222-4044 or go to the following Website for an article in the March 29, 2000 issue of Indian Country Today ( <http://www.indiancountry.com/articles/headline-2000-3-29-2.shtml> ).