

NICWA News

NATIONAL INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATION
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CALENDAR

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

This years theme is "Building a Spirit of Cooperation to Protect Our Children." Deadline for submission of *call for presentations* proposals is Nov. 6, 2000.

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

National Indian Education Association (NIEA) 31st Annual Convention

October 28-November 1, 2000: Sioux Falls, SD
NIEA Indian Education Legislative Impact Week 2001
March 24-28, 2001: Washington, DC
Contact: NIEA, (703) 838-2870
www.niea.org

National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Annual Session

November 12-17, 2000: St. Paul, MN
Contact: NCAI, (202) 466-7767
www.ncai.org

The 13th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

April 23-28, 2001: Albuquerque, NM
Contact: PaL-Tech, Inc., (703) 528-0435

NATIVE AMERICAN BONE MARROW REGISTRY

Each year, more than 30,000 people are diagnosed with life-threatening blood diseases such as leukemia and aplastic anemia. For most, their only hope for a cure is a transplant of healthy marrow from someone who matches their marrow type. The National Marrow Donor Program maintains a computerized registry of volunteers willing to donate marrow to people with diseases curable with a marrow transplant. When patients cannot find a matched donor in their families, they search the NMDP registry. Because marrow type is inherited in the same way as hair and eye color, a person's best chance of finding a matched donor is with people of the same racial or ethnic background. Today, more than ever, there is an urgent need for volunteer marrow donors from the American Indian and Alaska Native communities. To become a bone marrow donor or to find out more information contact Eudora Carter, Bone Marrow Donor Registry, toll free at 1-800/266-4033 Ext. 1863.

Affairs and had earlier realty experience with the Bureau in the North Dakota and South Dakota offices. She came to us from the Portland Area Indian Health Board and we're so happy she did! Lila is a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and enjoys reading and weekend jaunts with her husband, Butch, in their RV.

Lynn DeLorme, a member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Tribe, joined the staff in September as an administrative assistant in the community development department. She has lots of administrative experience and has worked for various Indian organizations in the Portland area, most recently with the Portland Area Indian Health Board. She received a Master of Public Administration: Health Administration degree and is continuing her education by attending law school night classes at Lewis and Clark College. She hopes to specialize in health care law, Internet law or domestic violence law. When she has time, Lynn loves flower gardening, reading and being with her friends.

The last position in the research and policy department was filled when **Jody Becker-Green, MSW**, was hired as the research coordinator in September. Jody has had extensive experience coordinating research projects for the Human Services Research Institute in Salem, Oregon, as well as legislative work related to child welfare, mental health, substance abuse, TANF, and juvenile justice for the State of Utah Department of Human Services.

Gus Abeita, a Laguna Pueblo, is joining NICWA in the Community Development Specialist position effective October 16. Gus has a Master of Social Work degree and is a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor in the State of New Mexico. He is moving from Albuquerque where he is currently employed at the Albuquerque Indian Center. Gus has an extensive background in mental health and alcohol and drug programs, and he has been instrumental in brokering and linking tribal communities. Gus is active in community service work, which will be an added bonus for NICWA and the Portland community.

ICWA Video Plans Underway

A group of trainers, experienced in presenting on the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, gathered recently in Portland, Oregon to participate in a day long "think tank." They were joined by two Native American videographers, who have between them an impressive list of film and video projects on relevant Indian Country subjects.

The think tank was conducted under the aegis of the National Indian Children's Alliance; a collaborative effort of the Casey Family Program and NICWA. The video project is the centerpiece of a set of projects that have the overall goal of bringing about greater understanding of and wider compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.

In attendance were: Gary Peterson, NICWA Board of Directors; Chris Wallen, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center; Bert Hirsch, Attorney at Law; Annie Frazier-Henry, Full Regalia Productions, Ltd.; Bev Hauptli, Hauptli Productions; Robin Freedman, Casey Family Programs; Phyllis Bigpond, Denver Indian Family Resource Center; Tom Graham, Portland State University; and NICWA staff members Terry Cross, Kathy Deserly, Larry Douglas, and Mary Mc Nevins.

Three questions focused the brainstorming and deliberations. The first question was, "Training people about the ICWA—What are the universal questions, myths and issues?" The second question, "What would be the focus of this video—topics, people, groups—what would yield the most value and return?" was discussed next. The final question was: "Distribution and Marketing—how to have the greatest impact with this new tool?"

Care was taken to capture all of the ideas, suggestions, and concepts developed during the session. Several common themes emerged that will help guide the script and production work in the coming months. Current plans are to have the video available for circulation in the fall of 2001.

Permanency, continued.

- Sovereignty, Child Welfare, and Government to Government Relations—This session discussed ICWA compliance and sovereignty issues as they relate to IV-E and ASFA compliance. Strategies for improving ICWA compliance and maintaining sovereignty in the face of ‘outside’ regulations were shared.
- Historical Perspectives and ICWA—This session discussed ICWA compliance today, with facilitators brainstorming with participants strategies for improving ICWA compliance (such as training for state workers, networking between allies, and creating statewide tribal advisory boards).

Teams were also asked to create an action plan to return to their communities with. Participants identified a small issue from their plan that was exciting and immediate to them that they could achieve in a month. Then participants committed to doing it.

Through these activities and informational sessions, participants learned tools to implement the safety and permanency provisions of ASFA while successfully meeting the mandates of ICWA, built consensus on the meaning of permanency in the context of American Indian culture, and examined ICWA as a permanency policy.

NICWA CONTINUES ITS EXPANSION

In late August, NICWA finally moved into a larger space in order to accommodate the additional staff who have come on board in the last few months, as well as the following new hires whom we welcomed most recently:

Kathy Deserly started in mid-June as a community development specialist in the community development department. She will be devoting most of her time to providing technical assistance related to permanency issues in various contracts. Some

may remember Kathy working for NICWA a few years ago before she resigned in 1996 to work as the State of Montana’s ICWA Specialist. We’re so happy to have Kathy working for us again!!

Another June hire was **Celeste (CeCe) Whitewolf**, who was also recruited for a community development specialist position. CeCe comes to us with a wide range of experience from her many years as an attorney specializing in Indian law with representation in family law and probate cases and, most recently, her work with the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board’s Cancer Control Project. She is a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation and enjoys traveling, sewing and beadworking.

Several administrative positions were filled in June and July. **Kristen Potts**, a Pit River/Maidu, was hired as the logistics assistant for the community development department. Kristen came to us from the Morrison Center Child & Family Services and has also worked for the American Indian Association of Portland. She is a devoted mom, avid pow-wow participant and known for her cheerful personality and big smile! **Kevin Palme** started with NICWA as a temporary receptionist, but was soon hired as a logistics assistant in the policy and research department replacing Kelly Mitchell when she resigned in July. Besides his administrative background, Kevin is an accomplished artist who likes hiking, backpacking and enjoying life with his fiancée, Harli, and their dog, Bella. **Shannon Romero** rounded out the logistics assistant team when she was hired in July to work in the information and training department. Shannon was most recently a customer service representative for U.S. Bancorp in their online banking department and has also had secretarial experience working with various Indian programs in California. Shannon’s family is a high priority for her, especially her toddler son, Darian. She she also enjoys golfing, playing basketball and working on art projects. Shannon is Paiute and Taos Pueblo.

When Kevin Palme moved out of the receptionist position, **Lila LaDue** was hired permanently to replace him. Lila worked many years as a supervisory realty specialist for the Portland Area Bureau of Indian

ATTENTION FEDERAL EMPLOYEES!

NICWA knows federal employees make a difference to Indian children. We want you to know that you make a difference to NICWA as well. So far this year federal employees have contributed over \$20,000 to NICWA activities through payroll deductions and donations to the Combined Federal Campaign. Thank you!

Your contributions make it possible for NICWA to improve the lives of Indian children and families through training for workers, increased funding for programs and building effective community based services. The fall campaign is coming up. Please contribute by choosing NICWA to make your contribution work for Indian children.

Permanency, Continued from page 1.

Representatives of the Casey Divisions were invited as well as regional staff.

The purpose of the forums is to provide hands on assistance to tribes and states on planning to implement the safety and permanency provisions of ASFA while successfully meeting the mandates of ICWA. The forums have built a consensus on the meaning of permanency in the context of American Indian culture and examined ICWA as a permanency policy.

During the two and a half day forums, participants are led through many activities and attended informational sessions. For example, participants at the previous forums were asked to create a visual picture of their tribe's (team's) child welfare journey in the form of a river for one activity. The goal of this activity was to set the context for improving permanency outcomes for children. The activity was designed to help teams look at the history of where they've been and where they are going in the future. It also gave tribes the opportunity to share their unique experiences and goals.

Speakers at the forums also covered important information such as the history of child welfare in the

U.S., and an explanation of the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act. In addition, culturally specific issues were examined. The forums discussed permanency from an Indian cultural point of view. Speakers examined the dominant paradigm and related practice of modern social work, and examined the consequences of applying this western model to Indian families. An alternate American Indian paradigm with related practices was offered, and recommendations were made that this paradigm/practice be applied to achieve the best results for American Indian families.

Participants also attended a series of breakout sessions. These sessions were designed to give participants a range of information they could bring back and use in their communities.

Session topics are outlined below:

- Concurrent Planning—This session discussed the definition and spirit of concurrent planning, how to use concurrent planning, and the importance of policy in the concurrent planning process.
- Family Group Decision Making and Kinship Issues—This session provided an overview of the family group decision making models and discussed the logistics of family group decision making, both the steps for success and barriers to use.
- ASFA/ICWA Relationships—This session mainly discussed how tribes could structure their child welfare programs to be in compliance with ASFA and still remain committed to their own tribal practices/service delivery.
- Child Welfare Circles of Care—This session gave an overview of the circle of care models, discussed the characteristics of wrap around services, and the barriers to implementation of such models.
- Accessing IV-E—The IV-E session discussed the eligibility requirements and criteria for IV-E, how IV-E funds work, and how IV-E relates to tribes.
- Engaging Native American Families—In this session, participants discussed common barriers/frustrations around family involvement, and both participants and facilitators offered strategies for gaining family involvement.

continued next page

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.

BASIC SUBSCRIPTION (\$25-\$49)

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*Board Member

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER CONFERENCE REJOINS NICWA WITH INTERTRIBAL VOICES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND THE FEDERATION OF FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Last November over 60 Native American parents, elders and adolescents attended the Native American tract of the annual conference put on by the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. This was the first time this conference had a Native American tract. Training on developing policy and advocacy skills geared specifically towards Native parents was offered at the conference. NICWA and the Indian Health Service sponsored the Native participants attendance.

It was during this conference that the need for a national Native American voice to address the needs of Native children with mental health problems became clear. At a follow-up meeting in Portland, Oregon in April 2000, the attending group of Native parents organized themselves into the Intertribal Voices of Children and Families, and the national voice became a reality.

Intertribal Voices of Children and Families (ITV) has met several times. They have developed their mission statement, goals, and objectives. They are in the process of developing by-laws as a first step towards achieving 501(c)(3) status.

This year NICWA will sponsor the attendance of 18 Native parents and two teens at the annual Federation of Families conference. Work is being done with ITV and the Federation of Families toward bringing the Native American voice to Washington D.C. Along with the conference activities, ITV will be holding an ITV meeting.

The theme for 2000 conference is children with

mental health challenges and the juvenile justice system. If you want to be on the mailing list for this event, e-mail Kathryn Manness at katmann@nicwa.org or telephone her at the NICWA office.

For additional information on Intertribal Voices of Children and Families contact Manaja Hill, co-chairperson, at okicile@aol.com.

INDIAN CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

In June 2000 NICWA submitted written testimony to the Senate Select Committee on American Indian Affairs recommending three changes in Title VII (Behavioral Health Services) of S. 2526 – the reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. The three recommendations were:

1. Incorporate systems of care language throughout Title VII.
2. Institute a telepsychiatry program giving Indian children throughout the country access to neuropsychiatry evaluations that include, when necessary, the use of the most modern technology.
3. Revamp the mental health/social services MIS (management information system).

NICWA staff also met with Aurene Miller, the (check title) for this committee. Ms. Miller responded with interest to our information and particularly to the idea of a telepsychiatry program which would maximize access to vital services at a minimal cost.

In mid October NICWA staff will be attending the National Indian Health Board meeting in Seattle, Washington, and presenting their proposed changes to Title VII.

For the full text of the testimony go to the NICWA web site. For questions, call Kathryn Manness at the NICWA office or e-mail her at katmann@nicwa.org.

Advocacy, continued.

working in partnership, that are involved in these types of services. Specifically, the legislation authorizes the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to reserve not less than 3 percent and not more than 5 percent for direct allocation to tribal governments with approved plans.

The purpose of the legislation is to improve the capacity of child welfare and alcohol and substance abuse agencies to address the needs of families who come into the child welfare system. Currently, there are no federal funding streams that specifically address alcohol and substance abuse issues in the child welfare population, even though a majority of families in the child welfare system experience these problems. Besides providing new funding in this area, the legislation would emphasize greater collaboration between child welfare and alcohol and substance abuse treatment providers. More timely assessment, treatment and prevention would also be key themes in services supported by this legislation. At this point no hearings on the bill are scheduled, but it will be critical for tribes to voice their position on the legislation to the sponsors of the bill and tribal congressional representatives this year and next.

A copy of S. 2435 can be accessed by going to the NICWA website under the policy section at www.nicwa.org or by calling Kevin Palme at (503) 222-4044.

INDIAN HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT HEARINGS HELD

The Indian Health Care Improvement Act is being reauthorized this year. The law provides authorization and funding for a variety of health-related services for tribal governments and urban Indian health clinics. A few sections of the law relate to mental health services for Indian people, including Indian children. Hearings were held in Washington, D.C. in the Senate Russell Office Building, on July 26 and in Bismarck, North Dakota on August 4. Additional hearings may be scheduled for next year, but no dates have been set.

Children's mental health is one area of the Act that would benefit from more attention. The current reauthorization bills do not have comprehensive strategies for addressing children's mental health issues. Complications preventing further enhancements in mental health services for Indian children include a lack of base funding, poor data collection on mental health services for Indian children by the Indian Health Service, and funding requirements that make it difficult to provide culturally-appropriate services.

NICWA developed testimony for the hearings focused on the mental health needs of Indian children. It is available upon request by calling Kevin Palme at (503) 222-4044.

On September 27, 2000, The Senate Select Committee on American Indian Affairs worked with S. 2526 and incorporated several of the recommendations NICWA proffered. The Committee added systems of care language in several places. They also included: "... Shall include diagnostic services utilizing, when appropriate, neuropsychiatric assessments which include the use of the most advanced technology available; and a telepsychiatry program that uses experts in the field of pediatric psychiatry and incorporates assessment, diagnosis and treatment for children, including those with concurrent neurological disorders."

To obtain a copy of the Senate version of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act being considered for reauthorization, S. 2526, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov> and enter the bill number.

Alaska, Continued from page 1.

our children.

For more conference information please contact Kim Just, Conference Coordinator, at the National Indian Child Welfare Association, telephone number (503) 222-4044, extension 113. The deadline for submitting your call for presentations proposals is November 6, 2000.

Advocacy, continued.

coverage to youths 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, introduced as 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 offices operating the Independent Living Program to 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, and may provide models for consulting with states under this program.

NICWA will sponsor conference calls with tribal, state and federal representatives during the months of September and October. These calls will give tribes more information about: the tribal provisions of the new independent living law; how states are addressing tribal needs; and NICWA’s independent living project. The calls will be regionally based. Notice will go out to all tribal child welfare programs soon. Any questions regarding these calls can be answered by Nicole Clemens, NICWA staff person, at (503) 222-4044.

Casey Family Program published a good description of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 called “Frequently Asked Questions About the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.” To obtain a copy, call (206) 282-7300 and ask for Elena Lamont or e-mail elamont@casey.org. NICWA is also publishing a “How To” document on issues for tribes and Indian youth under this new law. The publication will be available in October on our website and as a bound document. Contact Nicole Clemens at NICWA for more information on this publication.

SENATE BILL WOULD FUND TRIBAL CHILD PROTECTION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PARTNERSHIPS

On April 13, 2000 a bill was introduced, S. 2435, that would amend Title IV-B of the Social Security Act to create a new grant that would fund partnerships and services between child welfare and substance abuse agencies. The original co-sponsors include Senators Snowe (R-ME), Rockefeller (D-WV), Dewine (R-OH) and Dodd (D-CT). The legislation authorizes funding for state and tribal programs,

continued next page.

Advocacy, continued.

have benefited, and the agreements have proven problematic in many cases, for both states and tribes.

S. 1478 contains the following provisions:

- Provides 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.
- Authorizes tribal governments to receive direct funding for the administration of the IV-E program.
- Recognizes tribal standards for foster home licensing.
- Allows 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.
- Allows 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 permits other federal and state funds to be used for any required tribal match.
- Continues 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 coming from the National Congress of American Indians, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and the United South and Eastern Tribes. The bill has also received favorable reviews from native villages in Alaska, tribes in California, Oklahoma, Montana, the Navajo Nation and many other tribes. What is needed now is for tribal governments to become 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 to passage of the bill 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.

To access a copy of S. 1478 and a description of its provisions, go to the NICWA website under the policy page at www.nicwa.org or call Kevin Palme at (503) 222-4044.

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.

The law doubles the annual funding provided for the Independent Living Program to \$140 million (a capped entitlement) and expands services to youths, 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 youths 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

ADVOCACY

NCAI HOSTS ICWA FORUM AT 2000 MID-YEAR CONFERENCE: FOLLOW-UP MEETING TO TAKE PLACE

Movement in this Congress on the ICWA amendments in S. 1213 has not occurred and likely will not occur until tribal leaders have had an opportunity to meet again and 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 uncomfortable with parts of the bill. They were asking for more time to review it. Nonetheless, resolutions did pass at the convention supporting S. 1213 and establishing a national tribal leaders task force on ICWA.

The Task Force has met via conference call and was present at a meeting hosted by NCAI in February. At the meeting, Jill Peters of Senator McCain's staff told attendees that Senator McCain would not move the bill ahead until he better understood tribal concerns with the bill. In addition, it was decided that a meeting of all the tribes should be scheduled to examine issues with S. 1213 and ICWA implementation overall. In response, an ICWA Forum was held on June 25 at the Juneau Convention Center in Juneau, Alaska in connection with NCAI's Mid-Year Conference.

At the ICWA Forum, meeting participants heard discussions on: the history of legislative attempts in Congress to correct ICWA implementation problems; the local strategies tribes have utilized for addressing ICWA implementation problems; and possible strategies for addressing issues with S. 1213 and other ICWA implementation issues. Participants also heard reports on ICWA discussions in several regions.

Meeting participants agreed to a follow-up meeting that would be sponsored by NCAI, the National Indian Child Welfare Association and the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona. The meeting date and location has yet to be decided, but it is likely to occur during the NCAI Annual Convention in Minneapolis in mid-November or in January during NCAI's Tribal Leader Legislative Strategy Session. The meeting will be open. Tribes are encouraged to hold regional discussions on S. 1213 and other ICWA implementation issues prior to attending this follow-up meeting. NCAI will forward information on the date, location and purpose of the meeting to tribal governments as it becomes available.

For a copy of S. 1213 and a description of its provisions, call NCAI or go to the National Indian Child Welfare Association's (NICWA) website under the policy page at www.nicwa.org or call NICWA staff member Kevin Palme at (503) 222-4044.

TRIBAL FOSTER CARE BILL STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION

Bill S. 1478, a bill that would allow tribes to operate federal foster care programs, is still being considered by Congress for the legislative year 2000. The program, Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, has been inaccessible to most tribal governments due to an oversight by Congress that makes them ineligible 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 for the services rendered to them provided by Title IV-E. Title IV-E provides reimbursement for a multitude of basic foster care and adoption assistance services and at over \$5 billion each year is the largest federally funded child welfare program. Some tribes have been able to tap into the program through agreements with states that operate it, but only about 50 tribes

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**NICWA News Published by
NATIONAL INDIAN CHILD
WELFARE ASSOCIATION**

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NICWA BOARD SELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP AND PREPARES FOR THE FUTURE

Eloise King, of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, was elected to a two year term as president of the NICWA Board of Directors. King was a founding board member and served as Board vice president for six years. Donne Fleagle, of The Tanana Chiefs Conference will serve as vice president. Delores Greyeyes of the Navajo Nation was elected Secretary. Dan Gargan was re-elected Treasure. Gary Peterson, who served as the Board President for 13 years, will assume the position of Chairperson for the NICWA Board's Policy Committee. "His skillful leadership has always kept us together and kept us strong," said Eloise. "We are grateful for his passion and dedication to NICWA and our children."

The new officers will gather for an orientation meeting in October which will focus on officer and board development and training. NICWA is three and a half years into its current five year plan. In November the board will adopt a process and schedule to develop the next five year plan by April 2002. In July, NICWA board members met at a joint board and staff retreat to examine the progress on NICWA's current five-year plan as well as the impact of recent growth and change. Board members expressed pleasure and gratitude for the quality of NICWA's work, the positive progress toward our goals, and the skills of the staff.

NICWA MOVES TO NEW OFFICE SPACE

By now most NICWA News readers have received a change of address card for NICWA. Staff are now settled in and appreciating the increased space. NICWA more than doubled its floor space to accommodate the recent, planned growth. Both office and meeting space is abundant. At the first staff meetings in the new location, staff laughed and joked about NICWA's old space, where someone had to leave the conference room in order for everyone to stand for a moment of prayer to begin meetings.

The move also provided an opportunity to upgrade NICWA's telephones and computer network. Despite some minor glitches, NICWA is now up and running with all systems. The executive director is pleased with the professional look of the space and is now glad he gave up the idea of bunk desks. An open house is planned for the holiday season. Watch for details.



NICWA News

service and advocacy for Indian children

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

Permanency Planning and American Indian Children: Strategic Action Forums

The Child Welfare League of American (CWLA), and the National Resource Center on Permanency Planning (NRCPP) have co-sponsored a series of strategic action forums with the theme "Renewing Our Commitment to Permanency for Children." The purpose of these forums has been to assist states in wisely implementing the permanency mandates of the Adoptions Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA). Until now, they have not focused on tribal child welfare programs or the relationship between the mandates of the Indian Child Welfare Act and ASFA. The Casey Family Program and NICWA have joined CWLA and NRCPP to sponsor a series of Strategic Action Forums specifically designed for tribal child welfare programs and state ICW specialists.

The first such forum, a two and a half day session, was held in Denver, Colorado in May 2000 and was attended by teams from two states, Montana and South Dakota. The second forum was held in Grande Ronde, Oregon, in July and was attended by teams from Oregon and Idaho. Two more forums to be held in Alaska and Arizona are scheduled for November.

The teams attending the first two forums consisted of various combinations of the child welfare directors of each tribe, a tribal leader, a tribal court representative, a local public child welfare contact person, and the state ICWA specialist.

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North to Alaska Call is Issued

"Building a Spirit of Cooperation to Protect Our Children" is the theme for the 19th Annual "Protecting Our Children" National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, which will be held in Anchorage, Alaska, from April 22-25, 2001. A call for presentations for this years conference has been mailed.

The thinking behind this years conference theme is that Indian children, families and communities all benefit when partnerships are formed between programs, agencies, tribes, and states. Successful collaborations need to be showcased so that others may learn and possibly model their achievements after these team efforts to strengthen Indian families. The "Protecting Our Children" conference is designed to: help participants learn about new approaches; showcase programs; demonstrate creative funding opportunities; celebrate successful interventions; and to rejuvenate participants with old and new friends.

Please consider sharing a bit of your knowledge and expertise by applying to be a presenter at the 19th annual conference. Through your participation we can all build a better spirit of cooperation to protect

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