

Wisconsin DCF: Governor's Outstanding Adoptive Parent Awards presented

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(MADISON) — The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) honored five adoptive families today with the 2019 Governor's Outstanding Adoptive Award. The awards were presented during a special 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.

"The families honored today show us what true compassion and selflessness looks like," said DCF Secretary-designee. "They have stepped forward and made sacrifices to build supportive, loving homes for children in need. We are eternally grateful for your dedication to Wisconsin's children, youth and families and the differences you have made in our communities."

Five adoptive families received awards:

Chris and Wendy Attoe of Chippewa Falls have kept multiple sibling groups together, allowing brothers and sisters to keep strong connections intact. They have adopted six children in total and are strong advocates for their children's healthcare, educational and emotional needs to ensure that each child can continue

to thrive and have a bright future.

Abigail and Nicholas Farmer of Reedsburg have opened their hearts and home to provide a safe and stable environment for three wonderful children. They have a unique ability to work with children striving to overcome challenges.

Wendy and Steven Seifert from Greenbush have adopted 13 children through public and private adoption. The Seiferts have built a cohesive and supportive environment through their loving, kind and caring personalities and have maintained supportive relationships with their children's biological parents.

Siri Uden from Glendale has adopted three children through public adoption and is often seen going above and beyond to ensure her children are treated fairly and equally. Siri also excels at reaching out across cultures to ensure her children remain connected.

Mandy and Jeremy Van Schyndel of Kaukana are the parents of three biological children and two adopted children and are currently fostering one child. The Van Schyndels have specialized skills working with children who have medical and other special needs and strive to keep strong relationships with biological families.

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.

"Last year, 748 children received a permanent, loving home through public adoption," said DCF Secretary-designee Amundson. "While this is an amazing number, there are still children waiting for a stable home. I want to encourage families across Wisconsin to think about opening their hearts and homes so all children can have a safe and loving family to call their own."

Amundson 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 <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/-adoption> or follow [@WisDCF](https://twitter.com/WisDCF) on Twitter.

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Photo – From left: Laura Gralton, Jockey Being Family Associate Director; Jeremy and Mandy Van Schyndel; Siri Uden; Nicholas and Abigail Farmer; DCF Secretary-designee Emilie Amundson; Wendy and Chris Attoe; Wendy and Steven Seifert; and Will Waller, Jockey Being Family Program Director