



CSC Social Work Students Create Materials For Foster Parent Recruitment

CHADRON — Local professionals invested in the well-being of area children met this week with Chadron State College social work students to review a comprehensive awareness program developed by the students to assist in recruiting more foster parents.

Students enrolled in professional social work 332, taught by Bruce Hoem, designed and produced brochures, print advertisements, and audio and video public service announcements for the panel to review.

Dawes County Judge Russ Harford, who contacted Hoem to request assistance with the campaign, explained to the class that Nebraska has one of the highest rates of children in out-of-home placement. This disappointing statistic prompted the Nebraska Supreme Court to initiate the "Through the Eyes of a Child" initiative to help reverse the trend.

Harford and four other professionals who work with families and children participate in "Through the Eyes of a Child" with other colleagues in a five-county region of northwest Nebraska.

"Overall, children do better when they stay in the same community and same school. Part of making that possible is recruiting more foster families in the northern Panhandle. We want to partner more with the college on this and related efforts to help kids," Harford said.

Following the presentation, Rebecca Fernau, a graduate of the CSC social work program and Child Families Services Specialist, said she felt the students did an amazing job with taking time to design and produce the

promotional materials and then to go beyond and talk to potential foster parents, giving the campaign a jump start

Student Amanda Tallman said she really became enthused about the foster parent program while doing research and contacting volunteer to be in the video. She and her husband even looked into becoming foster parents. She plans to take copies of the brochures developed by the class to area churches, schools and the CSC Child Development Center.

"So many people opened up to the idea when they realized they didn't have to go to Lincoln or Omaha for training," She said.

The students present at the meeting included Kelli Wilson, Alicia Encinas, Jennifer Burgess, Amanda Tallman and Dalton Boden. Students who contributed to the projects but were unable to travel to Chadron due to winter road conditions include Stormy Lower, Lana Stewart, Courtney Barth and Kylee Winn.

Professionals in attendance included Lynn Fitzgibbon, Resource Developer with Health and Human Resources; Autumn Calkins, Early Development Services Coordinator and Sasha Catches, Family Support Worker and Youth Transition Worker. Calkins and Catches both work with Western Community Health Resources, a branch of the Chadron Community Hospital.

The two groups will work out transfer of digital files for immediate production and distribution of the materials. At the next "Through the Eyes of a Child" meeting Jan. 24, the campaign will be rolled out to that group's membership.