



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## Crow Wing County Celebrates Foster Families

May is National Foster Care Month. It's a time to recognize and celebrate the role foster homes play in enhancing the lives of children and youth in foster care. As of April 30, 2017 there were 164 kids and teens in foster care in Crow Wing County.

"You'll never get the high that you get from watching a child change." says Linda Hood who's been a foster care parent in Crow Wing and Cass Counties for 23 years. "When you work hard with the kids who come into your home and can send them back to mom and dad and it works, that's fabulous!"

There are currently 68 licensed foster families in Crow Wing County. "There is significant importance of having licensed foster homes as these homes provide a safe, stable living environment for babies to teens while their parents work towards unification." states Crow Wing County Child Protection Program Coordinator Ronda Kline. Kline adds that the need for families who can foster sibling groups is great at this time as well as crisis homes. Crisis homes are available to take children on short notice for short periods of time.

The process to become a licensed foster care provider takes about 3 to 6 months. It involves meeting with a licensing social worker, completing an application, passing a background check, training and having a home that meets the guidelines. Individuals and families who apply to be foster parents are given training and support before, during and after they are licensed. There is a monthly stipend to cover the foster child's expenses.

Setting aside a month to acknowledge foster parents, family members, volunteers and mentors is a wonderful way to celebrate the importance of all those who make a meaningful difference in the lives of young people in Crow Wing County. Although Linda Hood says for her it's always about the kids she opens her home to. "I love the success stories that come out of helping families who are going through a tough time." Hood and her husband have had more than 350 kids come through their home and adopted 9. Linda says her intention wasn't to be the mother of 11 kids. "The goal of foster families isn't to adopt them all. It's to know you've touched a child and affected their life. And it warms your heart when they come back and thank you."

Crow Wing County's Department of Community Services administers more than 70 federal and state benefit and assistance programs totaling more than 130 million dollars annually. The department is dedicated to performing its mission of promoting and protecting the health and well-being of all Crow Wing County residents.

If you're interested in becoming a foster parent or family contact Crow Wing County Community Services at 218-824-1140.

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**Our Vision:** Being Minnesota's favorite place.

**Our Mission:** Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

**Our Values:** Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

