



ADYC Compliance Newsletter

Ain Dah Yung Center

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By Sadie Hart, ICWA Compliance Monitor

Q2 2022

Welcome to the New Ramsey County ICWA Supervisor

In November 2021 the Ramsey County Social Services Department welcomed Mika Barrett as the ICWA Supervisor. Barrett is an enrolled member of the Red Lake Nation (Miskwaagamiwi-zaaga'igan) and comes to the role with a passion for the work and her community.

Barrett's work in this field stems from her love for her late Aunt Muriel Sharlow. "My aunt worked for Fond Du Lac for many years, serving her community in several ways. She was a traditional woman who taught me the Anishinaabe ways of life. She had a contagious laugh and the way she referenced me as 'My Girl' will forever be embedded in my brain. She was a huge advocate for Indian Child Welfare and was part of the upbringing of the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA). I learned a few years ago that she named MIFPA when it was passed; I carry that honor daily. There is never a day when I do not think of her. Every moment, I channel my 'inner Muriel' and remind myself why I do this work. She has been gone for nearly 17 years, but I still feel her presence daily."

Barrett knew as a young girl that she wanted to achieve at least a master's degree, thanks to her parents who brought her along on their educational journeys. Many of her early memories revolve around a classroom at Augsburg University, attending classes with her parents while they both navigated their bachelor's and master's degrees. "My parents were both first generation college graduates; my mother in Social Work and my father in Education. I have so much to be thankful for when it comes to their guidance and leadership. Without their dedication and commitment to the community and me, I would not be where I am today. My parents have their individual stories of hardships and triumphs. They have their own stories of trauma and resilience. Not only did they flip the cycle of use, abuse, and neglect for me, but they set a new lifestyle for future generations in our family." Barrett is a third-generation social worker as well as the third generation to earn a Master of Social Work degree.

She attended the University of Minnesota-Morris as a pre-pharmacy student before quickly realizing that she wanted to work for her people in the metro area. "Not only was I raised by my parents but by our people. It took a community to raise me, and they deserved my service back as a 'thank you.' I changed my major to Human Services after one week at Morris and began the path of social work. While at Morris, I found myself forming my identity as an Anishinaabekwe (Anishinaabe woman)."



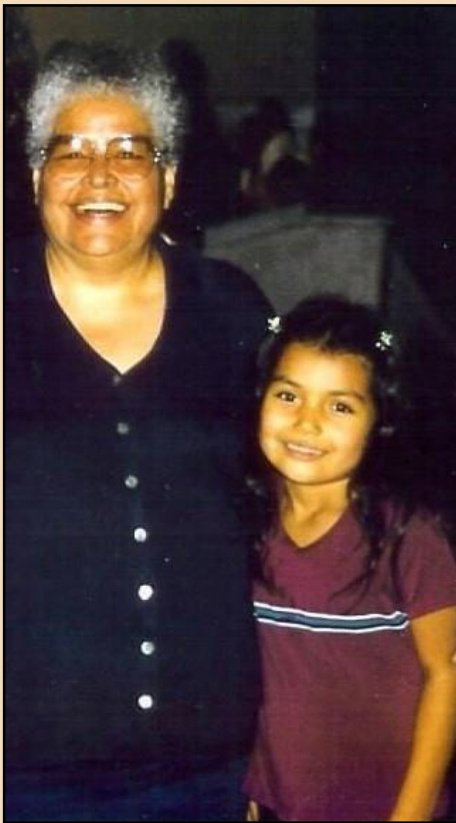
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"I was introverted and observant, but I spoke up when needed. I became independent and formed my own values. I became in tune with myself and began the process of forming my own sense of community. During this time, I had the privilege to intern and learn from Laura Newton, Kelly Morgan, and Valerie Berrard at the Minneapolis American Indian Center within the Indian Child Welfare Unit working with tribes who were out of state with ICWA cases open in the metro area."

After graduation Barrett became a first-time mother to her son, Wijiigaabaw, and was a stay-at-home mom for a few months before becoming the Division of Indian Work Be@School Case Manager located at Anishinaabe Academy. Within this program she provided prevention services for families who were experiencing educational neglect and got to practice case management skills, learn about local resources, collaboration techniques, and implement practices to keep families out of the system. During this time she had another baby, Gigizhebaa-Giizisookwe, and decided it was time to return to school to obtain a master's degree and was accepted to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities as a Child Welfare Scholar within the School of Social Work.



Mika and her Aunt Muriel, who she credits as one of the inspirations for her work.

She learned a lot from her first internship at Family Alternatives, a private foster care agency, but after leaving the community for the first time, she knew she wanted to come back. "My second internship was with Hennepin County ICWA Investigations with Joey Glassman, someone I grew to admire when I was a young adult. I knew this would be a great fit. During my time at the county, I learned how to work with our Indigenous population as a government entity. This was hard to balance. Working as a government agent within a broader government agency that has so much history involving tremendous loss and mistrust in the system, I knew it would be a challenge, but I was ready to take it head on."

"I learned how to work with families. I asked for their opinion, I asked for their guidance and most importantly I asked for their forgiveness - forgiveness for how triggering this system is, for knocking on their door alleging child abuse, for historical and generational traumas; all of it. And I asked how we can do better. I think we forget that - bringing in community and voices to help change practice."

"The practice that was in place was meant to dismantle and disrupt families; my mission was to uplift and work alongside families to build a better future for future generations, addressing historical and generational traumas to begin the process of truth and reconciliation so true change can begin."

After graduation an opportunity emerged with her tribe. "I am eternally grateful for the time I spent within Red Lake Indian Child Welfare. I rose from being a case manager to a team lead within 18 months and began the work of enhancing a one-of-a-kind program. We went from two staff

to six and had college students knocking on our door for internship opportunities. This was the first professional environment where I felt I could be authentically Indigenous. I was able to show up and show out with the values that were embedded in me as a young Anishinaabe kid and have those same values mirror the practice of Red Lake Family and Children Services."

"During my time, I had the opportunity to witness greatness and observed how to dismantle systems that simply do not work for Indian people, for our relatives. Most importantly, I learned how to use my voice to speak up and advocate for families who were being mistreated by systems. We worked in all 87 counties statewide and were part of cases nationally. Sitting at the table with lawyers and judges humbled me, I was a representative of my nation and my people."

Welcome to the New Ramsey County ICWA Supervisor (Continued from page 2)

"I had the trust of my superior and tribal council that what we were working towards would benefit our families and children at the end of the day. I wore many hats during my time all at once: case manager, prevention worker, Qualified Expert Witness - and I processed all ICWA/MIFPA notices that came through nationwide. Leaving the nation was bittersweet but I knew I had to move forward with an opportunity given to me by Ramsey County with the goal to shake up systems at the government level."

As the ICWA Supervisor, Barrett provides supervision, consultation, and support to staff who are working directly with families involved in the Child Protection System. Barrett collaborates with ICWA case managers and intake staff during weekly meetings to think outside the box on how to provide active efforts to families. "That often means trying new strategies - strategies that may not have been seen before. We have an obligation to keep families together, so expect us to exhaust our efforts and to think differently as time moves forward."

"The world of social work is changing, we will continue to be creative as long as we are keeping children and families safe. The most important duty that I participate in is ensuring our families and children receive adequate services and communication from our county staff. That takes time to build but I believe we will be able to achieve that goal once we are fully staffed and less burned out!"

Part of the role includes ensuring that staff have the opportunity to take time for self-care. "Mental health days and personal days are vital in this work and I strongly encourage it." It is also important to find a work/home life balance. "When in the community, I am simply a community member. Monday to Friday from 8:30-4:30, I am in work mode. I do my best to not blend the two. I have set firm boundaries for myself for the sake of my mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Also, for the sake of my family, most importantly my children."

Ensuring these roles remain separate is also vital when working in her own community. "I am a firm believer in confidentiality and understanding personal bias. If I am familiar with a family due to growing up in the Ramsey County community, under certain circumstances, I will sometimes choose not to supervise that specific case. I hope the community respects and understands that."

Barrett also strives to ensure that staff recognize the impacts of intergenerational and historical trauma when working with American Indian families and how they relate to families today. "The effects of colonization are relevant in every Indian person's life. It has been proven that trauma carries within DNA for many generations. Even though I have never experienced being removed from my family, I have the trauma embedded in me and I feel that every single day."

"To at one time have everything we were to be taken away with a result of abolishment, we have a lot of healing to do."

"For many who survived the awful treatment it became a cycle of what they encountered in boarding schools, causing dependency on drugs and alcohol to cope, hurting our children because that is what they knew of caregivers within institutions, forming an identity if they were adopted out, etc. It is also key to understand that these were not practices of our people. We did not use mood altering substances to cope, we did not touch our children, we had culture and identity. To at one time have everything we were to be taken away with a result of abolishment, we have a lot of healing to do."

She is focused on building trust between the county and community members, community partners, and tribal nations. "I want community organizations to trust our work and to feel that our Indigenous relatives will be taken care of if they are open within child protection. There is a lot of mistrust and that is due to several reasons. But for me, as a new leader within the county, I hope the community will give me a chance to make effective change within our unit and knowing that it takes time. This would include providing adequate training, evaluating current practices, changing practices, and involving community action and voices."

"The most important duty that I participate in is ensuring our families and children receive adequate services and communication from our county staff."

Welcome to the New Ramsey County ICWA Supervisor (Continued from page 3)

Future goals include regular meetings with community organizations to evaluate the county's progress, more collaboration with parents and families in case progress, and finding office space within the community rather than in a formal county building so families would be more comfortable working with the county.

Culture and Indigenous values are also key, and Barrett hopes to incorporate more traditional practices and community elders into cases. "Having the ability to bring the stories, morals, and values of each individual family to those who sought it would be ideal for me. I would love to have an elder in residence or fund community members in bringing these teachings or contracting with various tribes depending on where an individual is from."

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Barrett looks forward to the opportunities for growth and transformation in Ramsey County. "I would love to see our team continue to grow, a full team of case managers, intake staff, and parent mentors. I would love the capability to manage a full team of staff and to be in 100% compliance with the Department of Human Services. My goal is to build an elite ICWA program during my time here. Much of what I want to do is happening, slowly. It also comes with trial and error, but I am committed and do not see myself going anywhere in the near future!"

Miigwech to Mika Barrett for answering our questions and we look forward to continuing our collaborative work with you and Ramsey County!

Tribal Role in Child Protection Event

In June the Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors Family Preservation Subcommittee hosted the "Tribal Role in Child Protection" event for the American Indian community and child welfare partners. Tribal partners included representatives from Red Lake Nation and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Attendees learned about tribal involvement in case plans and the court process, Qualified Expert Witnesses, and how tribes advocate for the best interests of Indian children and families. A parent also shared her past experiences with the child protection system and how tribal involvement positively impacted her case. The recording of the event can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/eAgk1XSCUq8>. Previous events are available here: <https://adycenter.org/about/programs/oyate-nawajin>.

Thank you to the Family Preservation Subcommittee for providing valuable information and resources to our community!

Ain Dah Yung Center's 23rd Annual Cherish the Children Powwow



The 23rd Annual Cherish the Children Powwow was held on Harriet Island. There were over 1200 attendees and over 150 dancers. Miigwech to everyone who made the powwow a huge success! See you next year!

ADYC's 23rd Annual Cherish the Children Powwow (Continued from page 4)



University of Minnesota Social Work Training at the Ain Dah Yung Center

In April students from the University of Minnesota Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Fellowship visited Mino Oski Ain Dah Yung to learn about the impacts of historical and intergenerational trauma on American Indian child welfare today as well as the role of community and culture in healing. Students participated in an experiential exercise that walked through the process of land removal, genocide, boarding schools, and relocation. Students also learned how Ain Dah Yung Center staff advocate for youth and families and help them heal through community connections and culture. The Nokomis Circle Liaison and Family Advocates shared their experiences working within the system to improve outcomes for families and the progress families make with the support of cultural services.



Artist Joyce Arndt shared her personal experiences with the students and how she found healing in art.

Students also viewed the documentary *Native Silence*, which shares the stories of Joyce Arndt and Paulette Anderberg and their daughters, Amy Arndt and Dawn Bjoraker, who are both Ain Dah Yung Center staff members. The lives of these women reflect issues that many American Indian women face, including wide-spread foster care experiences, sexual abuse, the legacy of boarding schools, and drug addiction, as well as their efforts to reclaim their spirituality and identity as American Indians. You can view *Native Silence* here: <https://vimeo.com/75580286>

Liaison Lowdown: Navigating as a Liaison

By Laura LaPlante

Greetings, Everyone and Happy Summer. I wish for all of you to have a very sacred summer filled with lots of love, smiles, laughter and memories. In the moments where you may not feel this way, I wish you prayers of healing and strength.

As I move forward being the new Nokomis Circle Liaison, I felt compelled to take the word "liaison" and understand its meaning as it relates to the English interpretation of the definition. The significance of the word's role within the Ain Dah Yung Center, Ramsey County, the American Indian community, and communities in general. Several of the definitions and meanings defined it as an intermediary, go-between, or a person who communicates or facilitates between two parties or more.

While doing my research on the word, I realized how each of us acts as a liaison all the time. Especially in our relationships with each other, the Creator, families, friends, acquaintances, and the systems we work within. The moment became one of those "aha" moments. The depth and importance to which the Seven Grandfather teachings intrinsically wove its way into the forefront of my heart and mind reminded me once again of the importance of intention. As I grow and learn, navigating this role of "liaison," I invite the sharing of your input when my spirit circle touches with yours; standing shoulder to shoulder, embarking on this journey together touching Turtle Island.

I've enclosed an interactive pdf with the Seven Grandfather Teachings just because... Miigwech!

<https://ojibwe.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Seven-Grandfathers-Worksheet.pdf>



Court Updates

The ADYC Compliance Newsletter includes positive observations from ICWA hearings as well as highlights that demonstrate the great work happening in Ramsey County.

Observation: The grandmother foster parent shared with the court that she was able to take her grandchildren to the Ain Dah Yung Center Cherish the Children Traditional Powwow and that they were excited to learn more about their culture and spend time with their community.

Observation: Guardian ad Litem Gabby Ramos noted in her court report that the child was looking forward to his Baby Shark party for his 3rd birthday and that he has learned to sing "Happy Birthday."

Observation: Guardian ad Litem Patra Siedlecki noted that the child has many grown ups in his life that care for him and are working to do what is best for him. The mother thanked everyone who was involved in her case, including Patra and social worker Rose White Temple.

Observation: The mother thanked everyone for supporting her while she struggled to focus on her case plan, noting that she is doing well in treatment and that she hopes the changes she has been implementing are long-lasting.

Observation: The mother acknowledged that sobriety will always be an uphill battle and she is not always going to be perfect, but she will keep fighting to do what is best for her son.

Observation: The grandmother foster parent thanked the justice partners for all the support she had received in addition to the support given to the parents and child.

Observation: The father expressed his excitement for a longer weekend parenting time and that he would be able to attend his tribe's powwow with his son.

Observation: The father noted that having his son placed with him makes him complete and said he would always support a strong relationship between his son and his mother.

Observation: Children's Law Center received a donation of 25 bikes and helmets from Together We Rise. Attorney Kathi Peterson shared that she would be able to give one to her client.

About the Quarter 2 Data

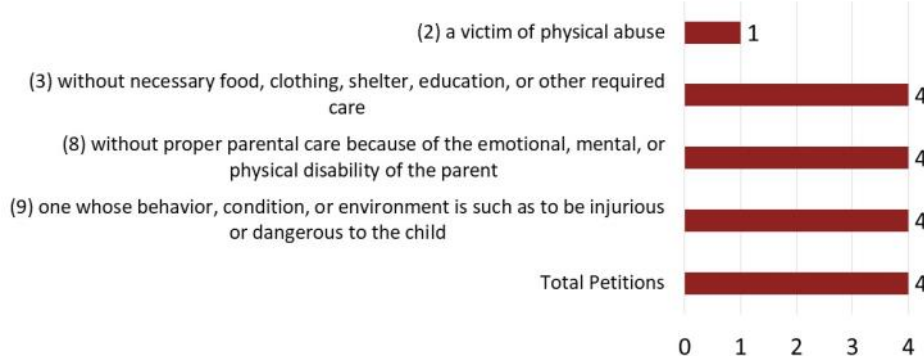
Data was collected from April 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022. This data was collected by the court monitor at hearings, talking to the parties involved, and reading case files. This data reflects hearings the court monitor attended and does not include all Ramsey County ICWA hearings.

Tribal Attendance

The following chart indicates the tribes involved in ICWA cases in Ramsey County during Quarter 2. The chart includes the tribes involved, the number of hearings that occurred, and the number of times the tribe attended hearings. This data reflects hearings the court monitor attended and does not include all Ramsey County ICWA hearings.

TRIBE	NUMBER OF HEARINGS	TRIBE PRESENT
Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians	1	1
Bois Forte Band of Chippewa	1	1
Cherokee Nation	1	0
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	2	2
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe	1	1
Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians	1	0
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	6	6
Lower Sioux Indian Community	5	5
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	5	5
Oglala Sioux Tribe	3	3
Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	1	1
Red Lake Nation	9	5
Rosebud Sioux Tribe	3	3
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	2	2
White Earth Nation	9	7
Unknown*	4	-

According to Minn. Stat. § 260C.007 Subd. 6, the child is in need of protection or services because the child is:



See Minn. Stat. § 260C.007 Subd. 6 for complete definitions.

Emergency Protective Care Hearings

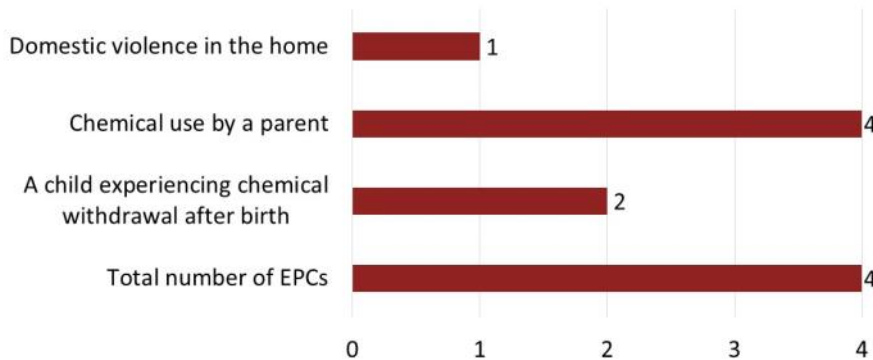
There were 4 emergency hearings during Quarter 2. Each petition indicated that the children were without necessary care, proper parental care, and were in a dangerous environment. One petition also indicated physical abuse.

Chemical use by the parent was alleged in each petition and two petitions indicated a child experiencing chemical withdrawal after birth. One family had previous child protection experience.

Findings that the emergency removal was necessary to prevent imminent physical damage or harm to the child and that active efforts to prevent the child's removal were made at 100% of emergency hearings.

When the tribe was identified they were involved before court involvement 100% of the time.

The petition included allegations of:

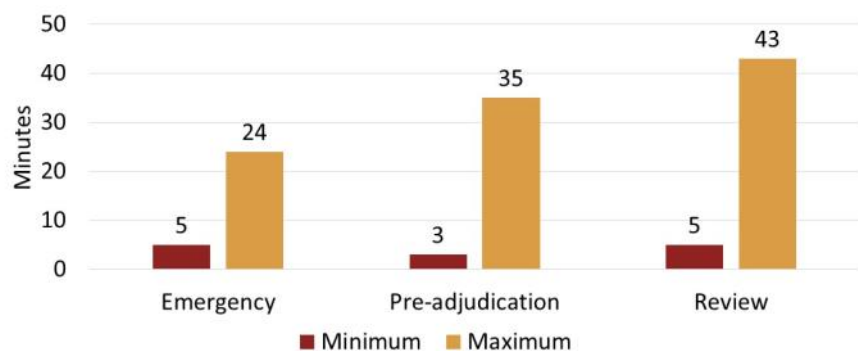


Length of Hearings

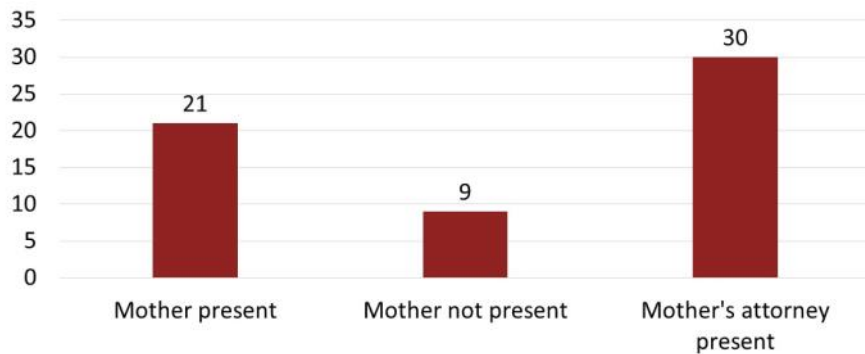
The average length of all hearings during Quarter 2 was 15 minutes. While hearings continued to a later date were typically short, there was still discussion regarding any updates or changes to the case.

There is often greater discussion at review hearings which can lengthen the hearing time.

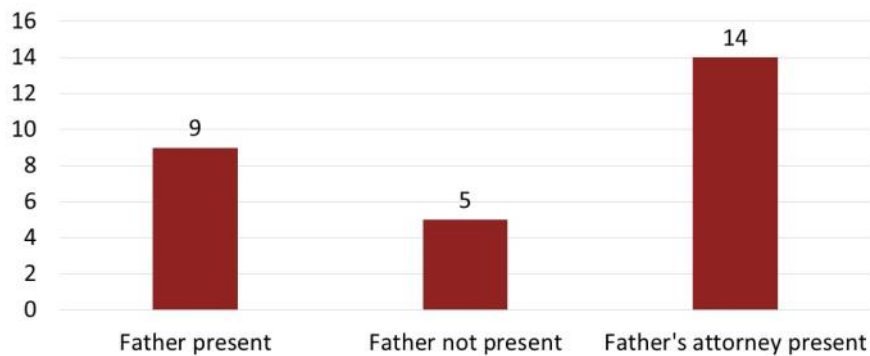
Length of Hearings



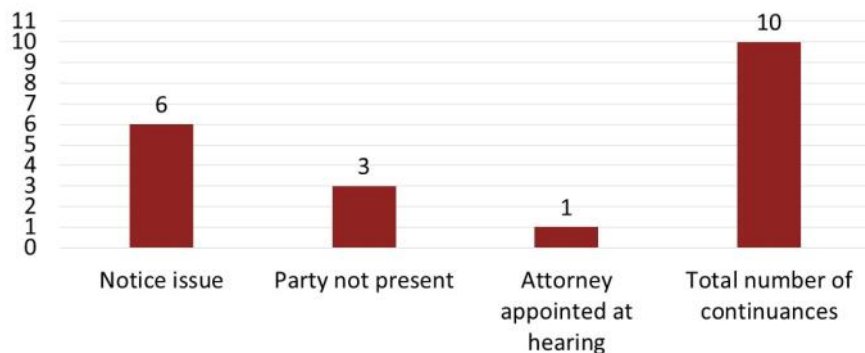
Attendance of Attorneys for Mothers



Attendance of Attorneys for Fathers



If the hearing did not occur or the hearing was continued, why?



Attorney Attendance and Hearing Continuances

Parent attorneys appeared in court at 100% of hearings in which their clients appeared. They also consistently attended hearings when their clients did not appear.

Each time a parent appeared in court without an attorney they were asked if they wanted to apply for a court-appointed attorney. Some parents did not financially qualify for a court appointed attorney and/or chose to represent themselves.

Hearings were continued 10 times during Quarter 2, typically to ensure that parents and tribes received proper notice. At one hearing a parent appeared for the first time and the hearing was continued to allow the parent to meet with their attorney.

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