



# ADYC COMPLIANCE NEWSLETTER

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By Sadie Hart, ICWA Compliance Monitor

Q3 2021

## Women of Nations: Providing Safety and Shelter from Domestic Violence

In recognition of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October, we interviewed Tynielle Ziegler, Cultural Director at Women of Nations (WON) in St. Paul, Minnesota. WON is an organization that provides shelter to women and children who have experienced domestic violence. Founded in 1982 as a community advocacy program for Native American women victimized by domestic violence, WON advocated for women by assisting with orders for protection and navigating judicial and social services systems. The organization expanded in 1992 by opening the Eagle's Nest Shelter, which is Minnesota's first Native American-focused shelter for women who have experienced domestic violence and their children. Today, the organization serves between 600-700 people each year and remains one of the few culturally specific shelter programs in the United States that is not based on a reservation.



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According to the National Congress of American Indians, more than 4 in 5 Native American and Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime. This violence is a legacy of colonization and assimilation practices. Ziegler indicated that "colonization was the beginning of a lot of unfamiliar violence and abuse, domination and oppression tactics, hence, one example, the boarding school era. Families pre-colonization have always been family-oriented where mom, dad, grandparents, aunts and uncles were involved in raising a child. It was just something that was normal."

"After the government forced the children out of their homes and placed them in the schools to assimilate, they were introduced to abuse of many forms, such as physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, and mental. They were torn from cultural practices, language, and indigenous ways of living, coping, and healing. It was a violent act of assimilation that still has an effect in our community today."

"It is disheartening to hear these stories from our parents and grandparents (boarding school survivors) and to actually have that physical proof, the remains of missing children, being found in the grounds of these boarding schools is heavy." This legacy of violence necessitates healing at the individual and community levels. "Healing isn't easy," Ziegler noted.

## Women of Nations (Continued from page 1)

“Breaking intergenerational trauma is a lot of work and to see people in the community who are actively engaging in change and going back to our cultural ways is empowering. The distress our people faced is intergenerational, but I also like to keep in mind that the strength and resiliency is there in our DNA as well.”

Women of Nations’ focus on this healing relies strongly on Native American traditional practices and culture: “At WON, we believe that healing from domestic abuse and the co-occurring disorders that often come with it cannot be separated from culture and spirituality. This is why we utilize cultural practices in conjunction with evidence-based trauma informed care. Native American traditional healing practices and cultural enhancement activities are both core and complementary interventions in promoting wellness and long-term recovery and have been identified as being a protective factor for youth and adults. These practices and activities are woven throughout our program.” These practices include smudging, community healing ceremonies, moon ceremonies, pipe ceremonies, and cultural teachings. Residents pick cedar for cedar teas, baths, and medicine bundles. During the winter, residents harvest red willow for sacred tobacco and to make dream catchers.



*Youth learn to make dream catchers in cultural programs at Women of Nations.*

While Women of Nations is available to all women and children who are victims of domestic violence, it emphasizes assistance to Native American women and their families, and services are offered through a cultural lens. In addition to case management and referrals, Women of Nations offers many educational support groups to women who utilize the 44-bed Eagle’s Nest Shelter, including domestic violence, emotion regulation, parenting, financial management, and mediation.

The healing through arts group incorporates Native teaching and art, such as making dream catchers, medicine pouches, and beadwork, with evidence based DBT (dialectical behavior therapy) to create an environment to improve the health and emotional well-being of residents. Childcare is offered for residents to attend these groups as well as youth programming and activities for residents.



*The healing through arts group incorporates Native teaching and art, such as bead work and medicine pouches.*

Services continue after residents leave the shelter, with Ziegler noting that “when residents graduate successfully from WON, they receive a welcome home basket. It provides household essentials to help them start out in their new home including a food box (nonperishable items) and a medicine bundle.” They may also continue accessing support groups.

Ziegler indicated that support extends to clients who do not reside in the shelter: “Residents, whether they have graduated successfully or not, have access to outreach program to assist with resources. There is no limit to requesting resources. Typical resources are for assistance with energy bills, rent assistance, baby supplies, legal, education, kids’ summer camps, medical and mental health services.” Clients often request assistance in advocacy for their children at school or for court cases.

Women of Nations also provides outreach services to the Native American community, with a focus on prevention of both victimization and perpetration. Programs include the “FLASH (Family Life and Sexual Health) curriculum, which is suitable for middle and high school students and young adults and encompasses sexual violence prevention throughout four lesson plans that consist of undoing gender stereotypes, coercion and consent, healthy relationships, and online safety.”

## Women of Nations (Continued from page 2)



*Medicine bundles consisting of an abalone shell, sage, sweetgrass, cedar, and a tobacco tie are part of welcome home baskets.*

custody of their children. Ziegler expressed that “it is always good to have that connection where county workers are actively reaching out and utilizing resources in the community, cultural specific program/shelter to help out individuals in need, especially when they are working on trying to keep children with their mom or within the family dynamics when safe and appropriate.”

Women of Nations has also partnered with the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Department, which began when a deputy reached out for a safe place for two elderly women who were experiencing abuse. “This was only the beginning of our ongoing partnership with them today,” Ziegler noted. “After this, that is when we had the overflowing support of Halloween costume drives, clothing and supplies, self-defense and women empowerment classes that were all lead by Ramsey County Sheriff’s Department.”

Finally, Ziegler reflected on the strengths of the families Women of Nations works with: “We, as providers, look at this as an opportunity to make a difference in peoples’ lives, to be that support system because leaving and escaping an abusive situation isn’t always easy. It can be intimidating and scary for some. Some of the strengths we see vary from individual to individual, it can range from establishing a foundation of safety, seeing progress and strides to reaching goals, and working on their mental health and well-being. It is empowering to see the women and children stride in their healing process.”

Miigwech to Tynielle Ziegler and Women of Nations for answering our questions and providing domestic violence services to our families!

## ***Blood Memory: A Story of Removal and Return Free Screening and Panel***

The legacy of the federal government’s efforts to remove American Indian children from their families and cultures continues to adversely impact American Indian communities. According to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, American Indian children were 16.8 times more likely than white children to experience out-of-home care in 2019 ([Minnesota’s Out-of-Home Care and Permanency Report, 2019](#)).

Though Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 to address the high rate of removal of Indian children, they remain disproportionately represented in the foster care system. This is due in large part to a lack of compliance with ICWA. The Indian Child Welfare Act, considered the “gold standard” in child welfare practice, recognizes the damage of removing American Indian children from their families and cultures, and requires higher standards to prevent removal and to aid in reunification.





## ***Blood Memory: A Story of Removal and Return*** (Continued from page 3)

To raise awareness about the impact of American Indian child removal and the importance of ICWA, the Second Judicial District Equal Justice Committee has partnered with First Nations Repatriation Institute (FNRI), the Ain Dah Yung Center, and Twin Cities PBS (TPT) to host a free online screening of *Blood Memory: A Story of Removal and Return*. The two-hour documentary will be available online for a limited period. An online panel discussion is scheduled for Wednesday, November 3, 2021, at 6:00-7:30 p.m.

*Blood Memory* details the experiences of Sandy White Hawk, a Sicangu Lakota, who was removed from her family and placed with white missionaries more than 400 miles from her reservation when she was 18 months old. After years of abuse, White Hawk found healing by reconnecting with her culture and family, and through her people's traditional ceremonies. She learned that many other American Indian children were removed from their families and placed with white families or in boarding schools as part of the federal government's assimilation efforts. The film highlights White Hawk's efforts to help others separated from the community as children reconnect with their people, culture, traditions, and ceremonies in order to begin the healing process. It also explores the experiences of attorney Mark Fiddler, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, who opposes ICWA's preferences.

Judge Stephen Smith, ICWA Calendar judge and co-chair of the Second Judicial District Equal Justice Committee, helped set the *Blood Memory* screening and panel in motion. The event provides an opportunity for greater understanding of the issues facing American Indian communities and the unique cultural needs of American Indian families and children, which is well-suited for the Equal Justice Committee's work to eliminate bias within the court system. Judge Smith noted that "the opportunity to share this film with the public and to hear from an esteemed group of panelists, including Ms. White Hawk herself, is a great way to shed light on a very important subject."

Understanding the impacts of intergenerational trauma in the American Indian community is vital to upholding the spirit of the Indian Child Welfare Act, which continues to guide improvements to ICWA compliance in the Second Judicial District. The District strives to create better outcomes for American Indian families and to decrease disparities across the court system. Judge Smith believes that "this is an important event even for those not directly involved in child protection matters. It is important for the public to have some understanding of the history of forced removals and the 'kill the Indian, save the man' paradigm used to justify this misguided policy. One can hope that broader awareness of the issue opens the door to broader acceptance of the spirit of the Indian Child Welfare Act."

*Blood Memory* is available online for free to all registered attendees from October 29 through November 3, 2021. The panel discussion will be available online through Facebook Live and Zoom on Wednesday, November 3 at 6:00-7:30 p.m. (CST). Pre-registration to view the film and to participate in the online panel discussion is required. Visit <https://www.tpt.org/event/blood-memory-story-removal-return-virtual-discussion/> to register.

Panel moderator Sandy White Hawk is the founder and director of the First Nations Repatriation Institute (FNRI). Panelists include Judge William Thorne, a former Utah Court of Appeals judge, state district court judge, and tribal court judge, and Dr. Priscilla Day, Professor of Social Work at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. The event is sponsored by Hiway Credit Union, Minnesota Humanities Center, Minnesota Judicial Branch's Second Judicial District Equal Justice Committee, and Ramsey County Bar Foundation.

## **ICWA Calendar Featured in Barrister Newsletter**

The Second Judicial District's ICWA Calendar was recently featured in the Ramsey County Bar Association's Barrister Newsletter. Written by Attorney Amy Schroeder Ireland, the article details the District's efforts to establish the Calendar, maintain the spirit of ICWA, and improve justice for the American Indian families they serve. The article also highlights the District's collaboration with the American Indian community, including the Ain Dah Yung Center. View the article here: <https://www.mnbar.org/ramsey-county-bar-association/news/announcements/2021/09/01/ramsey-county-s-icwa-calendar>.

Miigwech to Amy Schroeder Ireland for highlighting the great work being done in the Second Judicial District!

## Liaison Lowdown: Summer Memories

By Mariah Smith

Boozhoo and Happy Autumn!

I wrote about Oyate Nawajin's summer plans for a couple of outings in the last newsletter and I'm happy to say that with precautions in place we were able to successfully hold them all! First, Dream of Wild Health



*Families harvested chamomile flowers for tea.*

(DWH) hosted our program at their 10-acre farm in Hugo, Minnesota, in July. DWH is a non-profit, Native-led organization and their mission is "to restore health and well-being in the Native community by recovering knowledge of and access to healthy Indigenous foods, medicines and lifeways." Our group started the early morning in a good way with breakfast at Lake Phalen, and caravanned to Hugo together. Shout out to our Family Advocate, Tyler, for making a nutritious wild rice egg bake for everyone!

Once we arrived at the farm we grounded ourselves in their prayers circle and thanked Creator for all they've given us during this visit and on the farm. During our visit we went on a plant walk with Hope Flanagan, helped around the corn beds and the herb garden, and learned about the medicinal properties of our plant relatives. We all felt honored to be in such a beautiful space, away from the city for bit and connecting with the land. Some of our families brought home basil that was picked and beautiful DWH cookbooks. If you want to learn more about their youth programs, Indigenous Food Share, or farmers markets, please visit <https://dreamofwildhealth.org/>.

Our most recent outing was in August at Interstate Park on the Wisconsin side. Oyate Nawajin hosted a 2-night camping trip for five families. The Ain Dah Yung Center supplied most of the camping equipment and two large group sites. On the first day families settled into the campsite, cooked dinner over the fire, and finished the night with stories around the fire along with s'mores, of course! The second day was filled with canoeing on the St. Croix River, harvesting abalone shells, fishing, swimming and we ended the night with dinner from a local restaurant.

My favorite moment shared with our families from the trip happened on our last day. After breakfast families and staff cleaned up the campsite and we all met for a tobacco tie ceremony before one last hike. One by one every child held their fabric in hand and went around the circle to each adult, who then filled their tie with tobacco and beautiful words to take with them. It was a special moment to share with parents and staff that I won't forget.

As always, I left our camping trip feeling honored to do this work with Oyate program families. I want to leave you with some favorite moments that parents shared with us in our feedback survey. Some of their favorite moments were: "canoeing, fishing, tobacco tie ceremony, swimming, being in nature, hiking on trails, fishing from the pier, food, learning about hazelnuts, and catching frogs."

Happy Fall to you all,

Mariah



*Two youth canoeing on St. Croix River.*

## ADYC Welcomes New Community Services Director

The Ain Dah Yung Center welcomes Amy Arndt (Memingwakwe) as the new Community Services Director. Amy, an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation, has 20 years of experience working with and on behalf of our relatives in the tribal and urban Native communities. She has codeveloped and facilitated an Indigenous Group Prenatal Care curriculum for Hennepin Health and has been a Location Producer for the documentary *Native Silence* with the 3generations Production company of New York City.

Amy has focused her career working within the American Indian community to empower women to create better lives for themselves, their families, and communities. Amy previously worked for the White Earth Reservation Tribal DOVE (Down On Violence Everyday) Program where she helped survivors of abuse walk on the path to a life free from violence. Most recently, Amy has been the Program Manager and Director of Family Services at the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center for the past 11 years before joining the Ain Dah Yung Center team as the new Community Services Director in August.



In the newly created role of Community Services Director, Amy will contribute to organizational strategic plans and policies and provide oversight of three programs, the Ninijanisag (Our Children) Program, the Oyate Nawajin (Stand with the People) Program, and the Zhawenimaa (They are Loved Unconditionally) Safe Harbor Program. Please join us in welcoming Amy to the Ain Dah Yung Center!

## 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 non-American Indian parent did not understand why the child's tribe was involved in placement decisions. Judge Smith explained the tribe's right to be involved under the Indian Child Welfare Act, the importance of this involvement, and the importance of the children's connection to the tribe. The parent indicated that this information was helpful in understanding the tribe's role.

**Observation:** The youth detailed the progress she had made in the group home and how much better she was doing, saying "I'm happy that I'm becoming happy again."

**Observation:** Judge Smith noted that the father had been "solid as a rock" and he is thankful that the grandmother foster parent and father work closely together to meet the children's needs.

**Observation:** Social Worker Rosa White Temple thanked the mother for being proactive in her case plan and working towards reunification. The mother appreciated the recognition but said she was doing what was best for her child. Judge Smith noted that while what she was doing was because she is a

mother, he hopes she takes to heart the praise that had been given.

**Observation:** The mother recently started inpatient treatment and said she was there to be a better parent to her children and that she was learning those skills. Judge Smith noted that sobriety is a work in progress and that she needs to take care of herself in order to be in a better place for her children - there was no question about whether or not she was a good parent.

**Observation:** Guardian ad Litem Rachel Evangelisto noted that when she first met the child, the child did not know she was American Indian. She has been very interested in learning more about her culture and they are working together to make a pair of pink moccasins with butterflies. The tribe has also supported the child with cultural resources, toys, and books about her cultural heritage.

**Observation:** Social Worker Nancy Rech and Guardian ad Litem Rachel Evangelisto commended the mother's hard work on her case plan. The mother indicated that she would "take the hardest day sober over the best day high."

## ICWA Violations

The ADYC Compliance Newsletter includes ICWA violations which may be from hearings held at court and/or from case files. We are blessed to have such a close working relationship with Ramsey County professionals and the judges who preside for our families. We are pleased to report that there were no violations observed during Quarter 3! We look forward to our continued partnership as we work together to find ways for our families to be successful!

## Tribal Attendance

The following chart indicates the tribes involved in ICWA cases in Ramsey County during Quarter 3. 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	3	3
Blackfeet Nation	1	1
Bois Forte Band of Chippewa	1	-
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	4	4
Choctaw Nation	1	1
Ho-Chunk Nation	1	1
Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians	2	1
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	6	6
Lower Sioux Indian Community	2	2
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	4	4
Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	2	2
Red Lake Nation	9	9
Rosebud Sioux Tribe	3	3
White Earth Nation	6	4
Unknown*	18	-

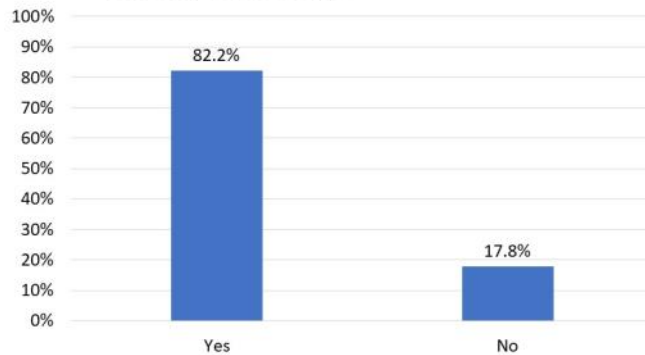
## About the Quarter 3 Data

Data was collected from July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021. 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.



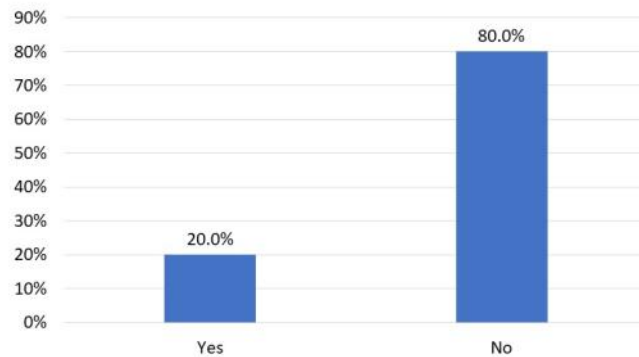
When the tribe was identified, was there discussion of how the tribe has been involved in case planning?

Yes	37	82.2%
No	8	17.8%
Grand Total	45	



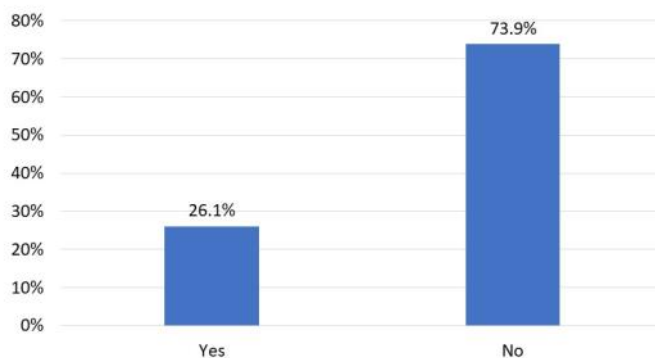
When the tribe was identified, was there discussion of culturally appropriate services for the family?

Yes	9	20.0%
No	36	80.0%
Grand Total	45	



When the tribe was identified and the child was not placed with a relative, was there discussion of how the tribe has been involved in locating relatives as a resource for the child?

Yes	6	26.1%
No	17	73.9%
Grand Total	23	



## Tribal Involvement

When the tribe was identified, there was discussion about how the agency collaborated with the tribe in case planning 82.2% of the time.

The agency regularly meets with tribal representatives and liaisons to review cases, discuss case plans, and partner to provide services to families, which is reflected in court.

However, in-court discussion about culturally appropriate services occurred only 20% of the time. When culturally appropriate services are provided they are typically indicated in the social worker report but are rarely mentioned in court.

Discussing if these services were utilized in court, or potential barriers families face in accessing them, provides a clearer understanding of families' needs and what services could benefit them.

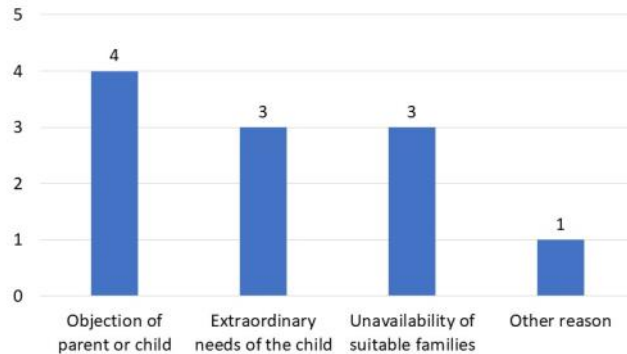
When a child was not placed with a relative there was discussion about the tribe's involvement in locating relatives 26.1% of the time.

As seen on the next page, eleven placements did not comply with ICWA's placement preferences, most often due to the preference of the parent or child. The "other reason" included a placement in which a Trial Home Visit was authorized and the child would soon be placed with the mother.



When the child was placed in a non-ICWA home, what was the reason for the court's finding of good cause to deviate from the placement preferences?

Objection of parent or child	4	36.4%
Extraordinary needs of the child	3	27.3%
Unavailability of suitable families	3	27.3%
Other reason	1	9.0%
Grand Total	11	



## Court Time

As families and justice partners adjusted to virtual hearings during the COVID-19 pandemic there was an increase in continued hearings from 11% in 2019 to 35% in 2020. However, this has now decreased to 7.9% as families and justice partners have acclimated to virtual hearings.

Continuations typically occur pre-adjudication. Reasons for continuances include ensuring that tribes and parents had received notice of the proceedings according to ICWA's requirements.

Other reasons hearings were continued include so a parent could meet with a newly-appointed attorney, waiting for a response from a tribe regarding membership eligibility, or needing more time for parties to discuss settlement options.

## Was the hearing continued?

Q3 2019		
Yes	10	11.0%
No	81	89.0%
Grand Total	91	

Q3 2020		
Yes	7	35.0%
No	13	65.0%
Grand Total	20	

Q3 2021		
Yes	5	7.9%
No	58	92.1%
Grand Total	63	

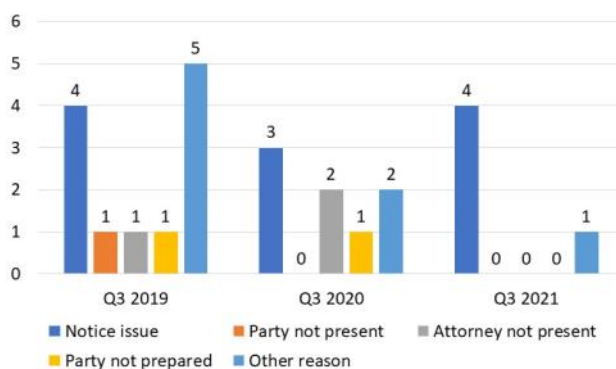


## Why was the hearing continued?

Q3 2019		
Notice issue	4	33.3%
Party not present	1	8.3%
Attorney not present	1	8.3%
Party not prepared	1	8.3%
Other reason	5	41.8%
Grand Total	12	

Q3 2020		
Notice issue	3	37.5%
Party not present	0	0.0%
Attorney not present	2	25.0%
Party not prepared	1	12.5%
Other reason	2	25.0%
Grand Total	8	

Q3 2021		
Notice issue	4	80.0%
Party not present	0	0.0%
Attorney not present	0	0.0%
Party not prepared	0	0.0%
Other reason	1	20.0%
Grand Total	5	



## Contact Information

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