

Alaska Supreme Court will review foster care situation

The Alaska Supreme Court has announced that it will review the court's role in foster care placements as part of a nationwide program to improve foster care service.

Chief Justice Daniel A Moore, Jr. said that the federal government has awarded the Alaska Judicial Council \$79,051 to evaluate court compliance with federal standards for foster care hearings, and to work with a statewide advisory committee to recommend changes and improvements. The federal and state policies are designed to give every child a safe, permanent home. The policies emphasize accommodating the rights of children, foster parents, and other parties without undue delays.

Five state agencies, several citizen and Alaska Native organi-

zations, and private citizens have agreed to work with the court and the Judicial Council during the next year to look at foster care issues in Alaska.

Advisory Committee members include Judge Larry Zervos (Superior Court, Sitka), Children's Court Master William Hitchcock (Anchorage), Susan Maller (Special Projects, Alaska Courts), Division of Family and Youth Services staff Diane Worley (Juneau) and Mark Preston (Bethel), Kimberly Martus (UAA Justice Center, Anchorage), Vicki Otte (Native Justice Center, Anchorage), Kathy Craft (Family Centered Youth Services, Fairbanks), Barbara Malchik (Office of Public Advocacy, Anchorage), Linda Beecher (Public Defender Agency, Anchorage), Susan Parkes (Department of Law, An-

chorage), William Walters (Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks), Candace Wheeler (Citizens Foster Care Review Board, Anchorage), Pat Kennedy (Anchorage), Verneta Wallace (An-

chorage), Kerry Reband (Anchorage), and Angela Olson (Anchorage).

The Supreme Court encourages public comment about foster care needs and issues, espe-

cially during the next six months. Please write William T. Cotton, Executive Director, Alaska Judicial Council, 1029 West Third Avenue, Suite 201, Anchorage, Alaska 99501, (907) 279-2526.
