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First Lady and DCF Secretary recognize Verona foster parents

(MADISON) – In recognition of Foster Care Month, First Lady Tonette Walker and Department of Children and Families Secretary Eloise Anderson honored foster parents Pam Mathias and Tammy Stodola for their incredible commitment to the children of Dane County who have needed a temporary, safe place to call home by presenting them with a *2018 Governor's Foster Care Award* during a special ceremony today at the Wisconsin State Capitol.

"Foster Care Month gives us an opportunity to thank the families who care for the vulnerable children in Wisconsin who need to be removed from their homes for their own protection," said Secretary Anderson. "Foster parents offer these children shelter, and play a critical role in helping them take the first step of their journey towards healing and recovery."

Pam Mathias and Tammy Stodola are remarkable for the fact that they simply refuse to ever give up on a child. Where others might see an insurmountable challenge, Pam and Tammy see an opportunity to prove the power that love and commitment can have on a child's life. Through their exceptional working relationships with numerous medical providers and their ability to recognize and articulate changes in a child's behavior, Tammy and Pam have optimized the quality of care the children in their home receive.

"For those times when children cannot remain at home, foster families step in to keep them safe, nurture them, and give them support," stated Secretary Anderson. "I know firsthand the joys and challenges of being a foster parent, although for me the joys far outweighed the challenges. Wisconsin is forever in the debt of foster families who are willing to welcome children into their home at the very moment of their greatest need."

Pam and Tammy were recognized with five other outstanding foster families throughout Wisconsin along with a special *Champion of Change Award* being presented to Green Bay Packer Ty

Montgomery and his mother, Lisa, for their dedication to raising awareness of the ongoing need for more foster families to offer protection and support during this difficult period in a child's life.

The ceremony today also highlighted the need for additional kind, responsible adults to step forward and care for foster children. Currently in Wisconsin there are about 8,000 children living in out-of-home care. For more information on becoming a foster parent, visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/fostercare/become>.

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