

News Release

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ODHS congratulates Oregon adoption advocates for Children's Bureau Adoption Excellence Award

(Salem) – The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) congratulates adoptive parents and foster care advocates Brian and Josie Parker who received the national Adoption Excellence Award for family contributions. [The Children's Bureau at the Administration for Children and Families \(ACF\)](#) awards recognize individuals, families and organizations who have demonstrated excellence in making contributions to providing permanent homes for children formerly in foster care.

The Parkers have been resource and adoptive parents with ODHS Child Welfare since 2007. Resource parents provide foster care as well as other supports to children and biological families.

They have also written, illustrated and self-published more than 20 books reflecting their experiences. Their books, many of which focus on stories about children in foster care, include children who identify as LGBTQIA2S+ and youth who have experienced trauma. Their books are included in the [Oregon Post Adoption Resource Center](#) library and provide support for children in Child Welfare offices across the state.

“It is gratifying to see the Parkers who have helped so many children and families receive this national recognition,” said Child Welfare Director Aprille-Flint Gerner. “The Parkers bring awareness to the critical role of people of color in adoption from foster care, contributing to the local community with positive messages about adoptive families. Their books help families process their challenging circumstances and represent kids of color experiencing foster care and adoption.”

ODHS recognized the Parkers in 2018 with a Certificate of Recognition Award for their commitment to children.

After receiving the award, the Parkers provided a statement:

“We hope that our lives have served to make fostering and adoption more visible and to de-stigmatize the lives of foster/adoptive kiddos and families. People deserve to see that the fostering process can be a supportive, healing, and redemptive journey. We have made this a focus in not only our lives, but also in the books we create.”

The Children’s Bureau acknowledged the Parkers' contribution to the community through their family-owned book design and publishing company, [Believe in Wonder](#).

The Adoption Excellence awards are presented each year in Washington, D.C. during [National Adoption Month](#). The Parkers were among [eight awardees honored](#) at an event led by ACF Acting Assistant Secretary Jeff Hild, and Children’s Bureau Associate Commissioner Aysha E. Schomburg.

Resources:

[Download photos of the Parkers at the award ceremony](#)

[Children’s Bureau Adoption Excellence news release](#)

To learn more about how to support children in foster care visit:

<https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/foster-care/Pages/default.aspx#parent>

About the Oregon Department of Human Services

The mission of ODHS is to help Oregonians in their own communities achieve well-being and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity.

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