

care into permanent adoptive homes. These recipients have reinvested their bonuses to help improve their respective adoption and child welfare programs. Americans also continue to welcome children from other countries into their homes through international adoptions. Last year, families in the United States adopted over 19,000 children from around the world.

Despite the progress we have made in increasing our adoption rate, we still have much work to do. More than 130,000 children, ranging from toddlers to teenagers, still remain in foster care awaiting adoption. While foster parents offer temporary essential care, the children for whom they care need the stability of a permanent family. It is often challenging to find families for older children and those children who have special needs. Yet they deserve a future with a nurturing family.

To help States promote adoption and support families who adopt, I signed a tax relief bill last year that permanently eases the financial burden on families that adopt children. And in January 2002, I signed into law a bill to extend and expand the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Through this legislation, we are strengthening families by promoting adoption, offering post-adoptive services to families that adopt, and providing education and training vouchers to older adopted children and foster youth.

In July 2002, my Administration launched the AdoptUSKids national campaign to increase awareness about adoption and its role in helping all children reach their full potential. We have also created the first Federal adoption photo-listing web site devoted to children awaiting adoption and families who adopt, www.AdoptUSKids.org. During its first year, the web site will feature pictures and profiles of more than 6,500 children awaiting adoption, as well as a database of approved adoptive families. This unique web site will help to connect children from across the country with loving adoptive families, and it will also serve as a great resource for all adoptive families.

On November 23, dozens of communities will gather in courtrooms across the country to celebrate National Adoption Day. On this momentous day, thousands of adoptions will

be finalized and celebrated. These efforts demonstrate our Nation's dedication to ensuring that every child can thrive in a secure, loving, and stable home.

Through adoption, Americans can forever change not only a child's life but also their own. By providing children in need with the opportunity to grow and succeed through adoption, we can help them become confident, compassionate, and successful members of society.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2002 as National Adoption Month. I call on all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities to honor adoptive families, and to participate in efforts to find permanent homes for waiting children.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., November 5, 2002]

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Proclamation 7620—National American Indian Heritage Month, 2002

November 1, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During American Indian Heritage Month, we celebrate the rich cultural traditions and proud ancestry of American Indians and Alaska Natives, and we recognize the vital contributions these groups have made to the strength and diversity of our society.

American Indians and Alaska Natives have played a central role in our history. In 1805 and 1806, Sakajawea, a Shoshone Indian woman, helped guide Lewis and Clark on their historic expedition to explore the uncharted West. This remarkable journey, known as the “Voyage of Discovery,” would not have been possible without her efforts, and today she remains a proud symbol of American Indian courage and strength.

We are also grateful to the Navajo Codetalkers for their service during World War II. Participating in every assault the U.S. Marines conducted in the Pacific from 1942–1945, the Navajo Codetalkers relayed secret messages that helped our Nation and the allies secure victory. The Congress recognized these heroes by authorizing the President to award them Congressional Gold Medals, which I was honored to present last year. These examples of our true American spirit reflect our shared history and serve as reminders of the unique heritage of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Upon its completion on the National Mall, the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of the American Indian will help educate all Americans about the lives, contributions, and culture of our Native peoples.

Education is essential to the future success of tribal communities. We will work together to ensure that our Indian education programs offer high-quality instruction and job training that contribute to the vitality of our Native American communities. We will also work to maintain the legacy of American Indians and Alaska Natives by preserving irreplaceable languages and cultural traditions.

To enhance our efforts to help Indian nations be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-reliant, my Administration will continue to honor tribal sovereignty by working on a government-to-government basis with American Indians and Alaska Natives. We will honor the rights of Indian tribes and work to protect and enhance tribal resources.

My Administration is working to increase employment and expand economic opportunities for all Native Americans. Several Federal agencies recently participated in the National Summit on Emerging Tribal Economies to help us accomplish this goal. In order to build upon this effort, my Administration

will work to promote cooperation and coordination among Federal agencies for the purpose of fostering greater economic development of tribal communities. By working together on important economic initiatives, we will strengthen America by building a future of hope and promise for all Native Americans.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2002 as National American Indian Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to commemorate this month with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

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Proclamation 7621—National Hospice Month, 2002

November 1, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Hospice organizations provide people who are near the end of their lives with family-centered, quality care, that emphasizes compassion, independence, respect, and dignity. During National Hospice Month, our Nation pays tribute to hospice care and the persons and organizations involved with it, by recognizing and honoring its value and importance for people who are dying, for their families and friends, and for our communities.