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Commissioner

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Media Advisory

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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State launches 'FosterWear' clothing effort Tuesday *REI is first participant in discount clothing plan for foster youth*

(Anchorage, AK) — A press conference will be held at noon, Tuesday, Jan. 6, at REI-Recreational Equipment Inc., 1200 W. Northern Lights Blvd., to present the state's new FosterWear plan, a program to help Alaska foster youth obtain quality clothing.

Amanda Metivier, a graduate of Alaska's foster care system, began raising public awareness concerning one of the many problems faced by foster youth — that they often don't have the money needed for basic clothing. Over the last year, Metivier joined forces with Rep. Les Gara and the state Office of Children's Services to find a solution.

"Foster youth face a lot of challenges, and it doesn't help when they stand out among their peers in used or inadequate clothing," said Metivier, president of Alaska's foster care advocacy group, Facing Foster Care.

On Tuesday, Metivier and the public officials she's been working with will launch an effort to provide discount clothing to foster children called "FosterWear."

Under the new plan, licensed foster families will be offered discount clothing at local participating stores. REI helped design the plan, and is the first store to sign on.

"It is REI's sincere hope that other retailers will join us in supporting the foster youth of our communities by helping them secure quality clothing adequate for the unique challenges of our Alaskan lifestyle," said Mike Herzog with REI.

Over the next month the state will ask other Alaska stores to join in the program, which suggests a 25 percent discount on clothing items. The percentage discounted is up to individual retailers.

"REI, the Department of Health and Social Services and Governor's Office have been enthusiastic supporters of this effort, which we hope will make a difference in the lives of Alaska's foster youth," Gara said.

“This is one example of the type of community effort that can truly impact this population of Alaskan children and families,” said Health and Social Services Commissioner Bill Hogan. “It’s inspiring when a vibrant part of the community like REI is willing to step up and support the foster care system.”

For more information, contact: Amanda Metivier, 230-8237; Rep. Les Gara, 269-0106; or Mike Lesmann with the Office of Children’s Services at (907) 465-3191.

WHAT: FosterWear program launch

WHEN: Tuesday, Jan. 6, Noon

WHERE: REI, 1200 W. Northern Lights Blvd., Anchorage

WHO: Amanda Metivier, DHSS Commissioner Bill Hogan, Office of Children’s Services Director Tammy Sandoval, Rep. Les Gara

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