

NEWS RELEASE

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Local Idaho Falls Parent Educator Nominated for Home Visitor of the Year to be Recognized by PAT National in Upcoming Reception

Idaho Falls, Idaho – An Idaho Falls parent educator has been nominated as one of the nation’s top home visiting professionals for her work supporting families—including those often overlooked in traditional systems.

Wendy Welch, with Eastern Idaho Public Health, was recently nominated as a 2026 National Home Visitor of the Year for **National Home Visiting Week (April 20–24)**. A bilingual professional with more than two decades of experience, she has expanded access to home visiting for Spanish-speaking families and helped lead efforts supporting incarcerated parents and their children. Families describe her as a steady and compassionate presence, with one parent noting her support “helped guide me and my children through grief.”

The annual observance, launched in 2025 by the Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals, highlights the role of home visiting professionals in improving maternal and child health outcomes and strengthening families nationwide.

Representatives from the Parents as Teachers National Organization will be visiting Idaho Falls to recognize Wendy for her outstanding work on April 22, 2026. A reception will be held at Eastern Idaho Public Health, sponsored by Eastern Idaho Public Health, Parents as Teachers and the Institute for Family Service Professionals. This reception gives Early Childhood Professionals and community members who care about the future of young children in our state to come together and celebrate. The public is welcome to attend.

When: April 22, 2026 at 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Where: Eastern Idaho Public Health Conference Room | 1250 Hollipark Drive Idaho Falls, Idaho

"Home visiting works because of the people," said Constance Gully, President and CEO of Parents as Teachers National Center. "...Wendy represent(s) the very best of this field—(a) trusted professional who show(s) up every day to support families, build relationships, and create lasting impact."

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Wendy's work reflects a broader shift in how communities are supporting families—meeting parents where they are, whether in homes, hospitals, and even correctional settings.

Welch was selected for her demonstrated leadership amongst 179 nominations, innovation, and commitment to serving families in their communities.

Welch said, "As a home visitor I am inspired every day by how parents show up- they are doing the best they can, often in very trying circumstances. I love it when I walk through the door and they are excited to tell me the new things that have been happening- whether good or bad. One of the most thrilling parts of being a home visitor is sharing in the "a-ha" moments that happen on a home visit when parents look at me with pure joy as a child accomplishes something that they have been working on together."

Home visiting connects pregnant and parenting families with trained professionals who provide individualized support, developmental guidance, and connections to resources during a child's earliest years.

In Idaho, Home Visiting Programs are available in every region of the state. Here in Eastern Idaho, we have 7 home visitors who serve our 8-county region. The Eastern Idaho Public Health Parents as Teachers Program served 153 children with 1,134 home visits in 2025.

National Home Visiting Week is open to all home visiting and family support professionals and reflects a growing national effort to recognize the field's impact across programs and communities.

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