



County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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Director

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PRESS RELEASE

Director of L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services to Receive Distinguished Alumna Award from Cal State University, Long Beach

Patricia S. Ploehn, the director of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), has been named the 2008 Distinguished Alumna by the California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) College of Health and Human Services. Ms. Ploehn graduated from the university in 1989 with a master's degree in social work. Each year, the CSULB Alumni Association presents the award to an alumnus from each college who is an outstanding example of accomplishment and distinction. Ms. Ploehn will be honored at the CSULB alumni awards banquet and commencement ceremony in May.

"I am truly honored by this award. As the director of DCFS, I am proud to be a part of the important work of Los Angeles County, serving our most vulnerable citizens – child victims of abuse and neglect. I thank CSULB for providing me with a strong foundation and for the excellent job they do in preparing students for careers in social work," Ploehn said.

Ms. Ploehn was appointed director of DCFS on September 20, 2006. Since that time, DCFS has shown progress in key areas including decreasing the time it takes for children to be reunified with their families or to be adopted, decreasing the number of children in temporary and long-term foster care and the amount of time children spend in out-of-home care and decreasing the number of children who ran away from care. She has also worked with staff to expand several innovative programs such as the Permanency Partners Program (P3) which helps find permanent homes for older youth who were previously destined to grow up in long-term foster care.

"Under Ms. Ploehn's superb leadership as director, her management and consensus-building skills are ensuring the momentum of improved outcomes for children and excellence in service delivery continues," noted Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, who represents the fifth district. "An adoptive mother herself, she is a shining example of one whose passionate dedication has touched the lives of countless young people in our foster care system – some of Los Angeles County's most vulnerable population."

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"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

“As director of one of the nation’s largest and most diverse child welfare departments, Ms. Ploehn has established herself as a critical player, not only in local children’s services agencies, but in national forums. We appreciate her work with our graduate students in the department of social work and is a source of pride for our alma mater,” added Marnos Lelesi, president of the CSULB Alumni Association.

Ms. Ploehn is the first director to be selected from within the department since its inception in 1984. She began her career with the department prior to its current structure in 1979 as a treatment counselor working with children and youth at the MacLaren Children’s Center. She then went on to work as a social worker and supervisor until 1989 when she was promoted to management. After serving in various administrative positions including Training and Education, Emancipation Services, Strategic Planning, Adoptions and Permanency Services, Ms. Ploehn served as Deputy Director from 2003 to 2006.

Ms. Ploehn currently directs all operations which are necessary for the administration of protective services, foster and out-of-home care, adoption and treatment for children in Los Angeles County. She frequently cites the critical key three outcomes expected for all children of Los Angeles County which include increased safety, reduced reliance on detention and out-of-home care and decreased timelines to permanency. As DCFS Director she is committed to ensuring that all Los Angeles County children have the opportunity to grow up in safe, permanent and loving families.

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Established in 1984, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services is the public agency charged with ensuring that children grow up safe, physically and emotionally healthy, educated and in permanent homes. DCFS works to ensure that all children have a connection to family, friends, schools and neighborhoods and provides services to children and their families when they are at-risk due to actual and potential child abuse, abandonment, neglect or exploitation. With an annual budget of over \$1.5 billion and a diverse staff of more than 7,000 employees, DCFS serves children and families through 17 offices located throughout Los Angeles County including Los Angeles, Lancaster, San Gabriel Valley, San Fernando Valley and the South Bay area.