



News

Fall 2012

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This edition of our DCFS News features an update on our strategic plan development, coverage of our recent Family Reunification Symposium, and various updates of happenings from around the Department. Our new Strategic Plan has gone through many revisions and is now ready for volunteers to help identify action plans, time lines and milestones. All staff have been sent a notice that allows them to volunteer to help work on many of the objectives which will move DCFS forward for the next three to four years. Remember if YOU want to make a difference, you can volunteer to help on the Strategic Plan.

A new Reorganization Plan has been submitted to all staff for review. This plan is designed to improve Child Safety and to help move more resources to our front lines. This new organization plan will more clearly separate “line” and “staff” functions and provide clarity and accountability.

This newsletter also highlights the shelter care operation at Children’s Court and describes the supportive atmosphere which has been created for children and youth while they are awaiting court hearings. It is amazing that almost 100,000 court filings are held each year. These hearings are critical for the children appearing in court and we need to improve our timely court reports and notices to parents who appear at these hearings. Our detailed informative reports

are used by Judges and other Judicial Officers to make “life changing” decisions and it is important for our reports to be on time and accurate.

Fifty new MSW graduates have just been employed by DCFS and are in training to become skilled social workers to assist children and families. Over 100 current DCFS workers who have completed a BA or MSW have taken the entry exam and are awaiting results. It is my expectation that 40 or 50 new social workers will be available from this exam and these interviews to assist regional offices.

We are continuing to test the 250 new iPhones and hope to be ordering more. I am pleased that “Dragon Speak” is being used by workers who say it is saving them time while updating CWS/CMS.

So many things are happening and I appreciate your ideas, suggestions and support. 🍁

Thank you



DCFS Strategic Planning

Tish Dennis, Children Services Administrator III, sleep@dcfs.lacounty.gov

The Department's Strategic Plan is here!

After an extensive strategic planning process with our consultant, Dr. Alan Glassman, that included staff, stakeholder and community involvement in numerous interviews, focus groups, large-scale meetings, surveys, and reviews of reports and other materials, the Department is pleased to announce that our Strategic Plan is complete.

Strategic plans are important tools for organizations, and our process to develop the plan has been a valuable undertaking. It has required us to define our priorities, examine what we are doing well and what we can improve, and identify how we can better integrate and coordinate the services we provide. We have established a Vision to guide us and a Mission to describe what we will do in the next three years to make progress towards our Vision:

Vision:

Children thrive in safe families and supportive communities.

Mission:

By 2015, DCFS will practice a uniform service delivery model that measurably improves: child safety, permanency and access to effective and caring services.

Our plan has three overarching goal areas that will help us meet our Mission: Emphasize Child Centered Practices, Pursue Workforce Excellence, and Strengthen Organizational Operations and Systems. Under each goal are strategies and objectives with specified timelines. In the coming weeks, Executive Team members will be assigned to each strategy, and objective team leaders will be identified to pull action teams together to implement each of our 50 objectives. As it is vital that staff contribute their experience and expertise, Director Browning will soon solicit employees throughout the Department to be a part of these action teams. Developing our plan has been an exciting process and we are eager to move forward with implementation. To view our strategic plan, please visit our website at lacdcfs.org and click on the Strategic Plan link on the homepage. 🍷



DCFS Director Philip L. Browning at the Management Conference on Strategic Planning.



Tish Dennis and Robert Wiltse discuss data at the Strategic Planning Conference.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

To help keep this Halloween safe, please share the following tips with the families we serve:

Costumes:

- Kids should wear comfortable costumes and footwear
- Choose bright colors and flame-retardant materials
- Ensure your kids' costumes aren't so long that they can trip over them
- Don't cover the face, instead of masks, have your kids wear make-up so they can see better
- Parents should make sure to test make-up on the skin before kids put any on

Street Safety:

- ALWAYS HAVE ADULT SUPERVISION
- Carry a flashlight with fresh batteries
- Use reflective tape on clothes so that drivers can see the kids easier
- Stay on sidewalks
- Cross the street at intersections only, be aware of traffic, and look both ways before crossing
- Visit houses with lights on or have some sort of Halloween decoration on the porch
- Stay outside; make sure your kids don't go inside someone's house
- Say "no" to strangers; tell your kids to never accept a ride or go anywhere with a stranger

Candy Safety:

- Check your kids' candy before they eat it; throw out any candy that is not in its original wrapper or looks like it has been tampered with
- Discard homemade candy
- Put the candy out of reach and out of sight of kids, then kids have to ask for it
- Limit your child to a small number of pieces of candy each day

Caring for Children at Court

Shelter Care at Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court is one of the best kept secrets in our Department. On any given day, a staff of thirty Transportation Workers pick up and transport foster youth to and from Children's Court for their scheduled hearings. At Court, these Transportation Workers join sixteen Group Supervisors who make sure the children are entertained, fed, comforted, and meet with their families and attorneys.

There are many kid-friendly accommodations at Shelter Care including a fully-equipped outdoor playground, computer room, air hockey, foosball, billiards and ping-pong tables, a library, dress-up clothes, miniature kitchens, stuffed animals, puzzles, and arts and crafts. The walls are decorated to reflect seasonal events.

Two staffers have strategized ways to fund the special treats for the kids. Transportation Supervisor Dorothy Witherspoon has purchased and sold candy and snacks for years, and Group Supervisor Cathy Collins collects and recycles plastic bottles and cans. As a result of their efforts, they are able to purchase gift cards for the kids who may be at court on their birthdays or in need of school supplies or graduation baskets. A recently purchased movie theater popcorn-maker and root beer floats have received a big "thumbs up" from the kids.

The court staff generously donates items for an annual silent auction, which helps pay for the special guests who entertain the kids at Shelter Care, such as the Wild Animal Guys who bring exotic animals for the kids, professional dancers, musicians, and science wonders from the Discovery Science Center. The "Bubble Man," who engulfs each child in a huge soap bubble, is a crowd favorite.

There are also generous volunteer programs, including therapeutic dogs (Lend A Paw), the Los Angeles Zoo, Peace Over Violence, (a teen domestic violence program), and, the Street Poets literacy and poetry program. The Edelman Children's Court Shelter Care is grateful to Macy's for their generous support of the Shelter Care's Literacy Program.

Being at court can be a very stressful time for children as they sometimes return from a courtroom in tears. The Shelter Care team is always there to comfort them, provide a hand to hold, a listening ear or a shoulder to cry on.

Should you wish to contribute a tax deductible donation to the Shelter Care, please contact Gloria Serrano-Corona at serrag@dcfs.lacounty.gov or (323) 526-6763. 🍷



Front Row (from left to right) Norman Goudy, GS II; Valery Coleman, ITC; Jackie Dean, GS II; Dorothy Witherspoon, STW; Cathy Collins, GS II; Glenda Estrada, GS II; Suzanne Ross, ITC; & Gloria Serrano-Corona, CSA I.

Back Row (from left to right) Eric Harris, TW; Cheryl Barnes, TW; Mable Newman, GS II.

WANTED: Foster Homes for Infants

Due to a number of socio-economic reasons, we are experiencing a shortage of foster homes available for infants. In response to this need, the DCFS Placement and Recruitment Unit (PRU) has embarked on a media campaign with the slogan "Be a Foster Parent to a Little One... Make a Big Difference." We hope many will see this slogan on billboard ads throughout the County and hear it on radio ads on stations KJLH, Que Buena, KCRW, and KPCC. TV ads have aired on local channels 34, 13, 11, 5 and on Time Warner cable channels. Our recruitment poster was posted on a Yahoo display advertisement and distributed to local businesses. Plus, we are contacting existing foster parents who might consider caring for infants and toddlers.

If you know someone who might be interested in fostering or adopting a child, please refer them to our web site www.lacdcfs.org/shareyourheartla or Facebook page [Facebook.com/shareyourheartla](https://www.facebook.com/shareyourheartla). If you would like to place some posters at your office or place of business, please e-mail Mei Wu at wum@dcfs.lacounty.gov. Whether you're a social worker, support staff or community partner, your assistance in finding loving foster homes for our most vulnerable children is greatly appreciated. 🍷



**Share Your Heart...
Share Your Home**

Become a Resource Parent
(Foster and/or Adoptive Parent)

Call 1 (888) 811-1121

CalSWEC: Providing Social Workers a Chance to Grow

Maria Camarillo, Children Services Administrator III, Education and Licensure Section camarm@dcfs.lacounty.gov

Each year, DCFS provides internships throughout the Department for approximately 100 California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) interns. These interns work with clients in programs providing direct services, such as emergency response, and in administration learning about program planning and development. As part of their internship agreement, the interns become DCFS social workers following completion of their Master's program. For more information about our internship program, please visit the Education and Licensure page on the DCFS intranet site LA Kids, or visit <http://calswec.berkeley.edu>.

Says Pasadena Supervising Children's Social Worker Laura Telles, "I am a former CalSWEC Student and have been a Field Instructor for Bachelor of Social Work students and a preceptor for Master of Social Work students. Working with students motivated me to go back and get my MSW. After working for the Department 17 years, I went back to school to receive my second masters. I knew intuitively what it took to be a good social worker and Supervising Children's Social Worker, but felt I was lacking the theoretical training. Going back to school reenergized me and I have been with the Department now for 27 years!" 🍷



(from left to right) Laura Telles, Supervising Children's Social Worker, IUC Field Instructor; Maria Camarillo, Children Services Administrator III, Program Manager; Elizabeth Romero, Supervising Children's Social Worker, DCFS CalSWEC Coordinator and Instructor; Robin Sims, Supervising Children's Social Worker; DCFS CalSWEC Field Coordinator and Instructor.

DCFS Data-Driven Decision Making Process Expands to Regional Offices



Regional Administrator Rex White and DCFS Glendora staff analyzing data with Bureau of Information Services.

In the last year, DCFS leadership has begun holding “DCFS STAT” monthly meetings for mid to upper-level managers to monitor priority outcomes for the Department by reviewing key data and statistics. The data-driven management process includes collecting, disseminating and analyzing quantitative and qualitative information on priority outcome measures to understand what is working well and what needs to be improved, and engaging in ongoing learning at all levels of the organization to craft, implement and refine strategies based on relevant and timely information.

As part of this Department-wide effort, the DCFS Glendora Regional Office has held three monthly “Office STAT” meetings. As a result of

holding Office STAT, the Glendora Regional Office was able to improve its percentage of timely Team Decision Making meetings, a success that was recognized by DCFS Director Philip Browning at the August DCFS STAT meeting.

Glendora Regional Administrator Rex White was also recognized as an early innovator, who is providing leadership on how to replicate the department-wide DCFS STAT meeting at the regional office level. Next month, two additional regional offices will hold Office STAT meetings, which will be structured and facilitated congruent with the Glendora Office STAT meeting. Plans are underway to implement Office STAT in all 18 regional offices by December 2013.

In addition to improvements in measures, Office STAT benefits include: increased teaming and collaboration, improved communication and understanding between supervisors and line workers, increased sense of shared accountability, and peer learning and coaching. 🍷



On July 21, 2012, the DCFS Family Fun Day Picnic was held at Griffith Park. About 700 employees and their families had a great time.

Pictured above are a group of our managers pleased to have a relaxing day with our staff.

On August 2, 2012, Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich hosted All for the Love of Kids. Honorees were (L. to R.) AT&T’s Dan Revetto, actress Tia Carrere, event co-chair Monica Hylande Latta, actress Barbara Bain, author Antwone Fisher, actress France Nuyen, Supervisor Antonovich, actress Victoria Rowell, singer CEEJ, actor Stephen Bishop, and KTLA’s Chris Schauble. This fundraiser raised \$28,000 for the DCFS Children’s Trust Fund.

The Social (Worker) Network



On August 18th, the **2012 LA Dragon Boat Festival** was held at Legg Lake Park in South El Monte. DCFS competed for the first time and our teams brought home the first place trophy in the Public Services “A” Division and the second place trophy in the Public Services “B” Division! Congratulations to Team A members Laura Andrade, Kristine Gay, Robbie Odom, Jason Thompson, Stanley Esperon, Lilia Gonzalez, Mayra Mijares, Saskia Gonzalez, Karla Ramirez, Monique Hernandez, Joyce Tajuna and Eddie Sosa. Congratulations to Team B members Laura Shotzbarger, Francesca LeRue, Michael Green, Denise DuFloth, Blanca Bonilla, Steve Sturm, Dion DiNome, Lupe Arredondo, David Green, and Raquel Casillas. Way to row! 🏆



Jasmine Torres, a former foster youth and a United Friends of the Children intern with DCFS Public Affairs, is grateful to her DCFS Independent Living Program coordinator **Stanley Esperon** from the Torrance office. Stanley helped Jasmine apply for the funding she needed to make an educational trip to Japan this summer. While in Japan, Jasmine conducted research on elderly homelessness and the homelessness subculture as part of her bachelor’s degree program in Sociology at USC. Jasmine has been chosen to present her research in Puerto Rico this November at the American Studies Association Annual Conference. She credits Stanley for his support and helping her meet her goals. 🏆



On September 13th, South County Children’s Social Worker **Mayra Martinez** was presented with a Board scroll by Board Deputy Lisa Mandel of Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky’s office, recognizing her as a 2012 Family Reunification Week Hero. The third annual Family Reunification Week celebrated those families that have successfully and safely reunited to emerge healthier, stronger and intact. Mayra was honored for her efforts in helping a mother resolve her chronic substance abuse and taking extraordinary measures in helping the reunited family move into their newly furnished home. DCFS Director Philip L. Browning and Judge Michael Nash were on hand to congratulate Mayra and other Family Reunification Week Heroes. 🏆



Children’s Services Administrator I **Diana Alcantara** with Kinship Care completed her Master of Social Work degree from Cal State University Long Beach this past spring and was honored with the Outstanding Thesis Award for her paper on AB12. Diana’s study delved into the problems and challenges of youth aging out of foster care. Diana received the California Social Work Education Center stipend for three years as a part-time graduate student. South County Assistant Regional Administrator Brenda Blackburn served as Diana’s Field Instructor. 🏆



On September 14th, 160 social workers, caregivers, and community partners attended the **2012 Family Reunification Week Symposium**, “Families First: The Road that Leads Back Home,” featuring (from L. to R.) Presiding Judge Michael Nash of the Los Angeles Juvenile Court, LA County Third District Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, and DCFS Director Philip L. Browning. The event included a lively panel discussion, including child attorneys, a social worker, parent, caregiver, and two former foster youth, moderated by DCFS Deputy Director Rhelda Shabazz and presentations from the Parents in Partnership program. 🍷



On September 8th, Regional Administrator **Rick Bryant**, whose Palmdale office staged the sixth annual Antelope Valley Community Resource Fair, was presented a certificate of appreciation by Norm Hickling, field representative for County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich. Said Rick, “I am extremely proud of the work the Palmdale office has accomplished in networking with community partners and promoting the annual resource fair.” 🍷



The **DCFS El Monte Office** participated in the annual LA County Softball Tournament for the first time. The El Monte team won the tournament’s second place trophy after beating the Coroner’s team Dead Heat and the LA County Trojans, but ultimately falling to the County’s Alliance team. Great job, El Monte!

Back Row (left to right): Marcos Hernandez, Jose Chavarria, Daniel Svedas (in back), Lupe Arredondo, Scott Heaslip, Leroy Cloud. Front Row (left to right): Crystal Pimentel, Monica Escobedo, Yadira Sanchez, Sandy Lau, Beatriz Rojas, Rosaura Gonzalez. 🍷

Close up: people you should know



Maria Lieras

Nurse Manager, DCFS Office of the Medical Director
(213) 351-5724 or email lieram@dcfs.lacounty.gov

“I can help you with children who have known or suspected medical conditions and are residing in home of parent.”



Julia Wood

Nurse Manager, Department of Public Health (DPH)
(626) 569-3768 or email jwood@ph.lacounty.gov

“As the nurse manager for the Health Care Program for foster care children, I supervise all the DPH Public Health Nurses assigned to DCFS and coordinate appropriate health care services.”

THE LAST WORD

Recent Director's Employee Recognition Award Winners



Karen N. Holmes
Senior Typist Clerk
Pomona Office



Xiomara Flores-Holguin
Supervising Children's Social Worker
Multi-Agency Response Team



Rosa Tang
Assistant Regional Administrator
Torrance Office



Belvedere Teen Scene
Belvedere Office
From L. to R. Monica Farias,
Veronica Sanchez, Kimberly Cardozo,
and Lilian Marmolejo



Monica Rivas
Supervising Children's Social Worker
Glendora Office



Shima D. Bell
Intermediate Typist Clerk
Torrance Office



Bernard Kuo
Intermediate Typist Clerk
Pasadena Office



Judith Cohen
Children's Social Worker III
West L.A. Office



Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

Gloria Molina
First District

Mark Ridley-Thomas
Second District

Zev Yaroslavsky
Third District

Don Knabe
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District



DCFS Workers Recently Celebrating Years of County Service

25 Years: Andy Kwong, Annetta McDonald, Barbara J. Tunstall, Barbara N. Lester, Barbara S. Hitchcock, Carlos P. Castillo, Diana V. Cousin, Donald D. Collins, Donna M. Worden, Dora Shum, Doreen E. Freeman, Doris A. Bunch, Eva E. Juhasz, Glenn Mills, Griselda Perez, Jacquelyn Steward, John E. Langstaff, Joyce D. Collins, Joyce L. Wattle, Judy L. Weintraub, Katherine L. Sanford, Kim M. Marshall, Kimberly Tran, Lamberto R. Villarroel, Linda C. Wallace, Lorraine Broniola, Louise Peterman, Lynn R. Cooper, Marilyn L. Degbor, Marshall E. West, Merika Klotz, Monica E. Airen, Nghia T. Nguyen, Nina Powell, Pamela R. Fields-Davis, Rhonda D. Williams, Roberta J. Spears-Mathews, Sandra R. Moore, Sandy H. Lee, Sherrie L. Jones, Stephen T. Gibson, Suchart Swang, Terence K. Rice, Zing J. Chang.

30 Years: Beverly Watson, Bronwynne Morris, Donna Becker, Jacqueline N. Williams, Ruby P. Llang, Yenework Alemayehu.

35 Years: Barbara Abrams, Denise Y. Rachal, Diane Fetter, Eric Marts, Frances Walker, Kristine K. Gay, LaJuana White, Marie Y. Randolph, Orenthia Woodson-Brown, Paul Gaeta, Ramaul Rush, Rick L. Bryant, Sandra P. Williams.

40 Years: Althea W. Wells, Brenda Du Brey, Cynthia Ocampo, Earline Weaver Long, Isabel Trento, Karen L. Scott, Karen Streisand, Lynn E. Robinson, Natalie E. Olive.

45 Years: Carole A. Upshur.

Congratulations to Recent DCFS Retirees

Ahiza Pinuelas, Athena Vaughns, Barbara Jones, Catherine Saei, Eleanor Johnson, Eloyce Hooper Daniels, Elvia Islas, Glenn Witt, Gloria Champ, Guadalupe Nevarez, Harold Miller, Hermes Cruz, Jaime Horta, James Wilson, Jovita Tabangay, Karolyn Lampley, Kathleen McNabb, Linda Galvan, Louis Bethley, Maria Blanco, Marti Martin, Mary Lopez, Norma Rockman, Ralph Carr, Robert Spader, Sharon O'Brien, Tonnelle Caldwell, Vicki Kay, Yvonne Mora.

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