

# DCFS News

Summer 2012

**Philip L. Browning**  
Director

**Brandon Nichols**  
Senior Deputy Director

**Helen Berberian**  
Executive Assistant

**DCFS EXECUTIVE TEAM**

**Cynthia McCoy-Miller**  
Administrative Deputy III  
Bureau of Finance and Administration

**Dr. Charles Sophy**  
Medical Director  
Bureau of the Medical Director

**Diane Wagner**  
Acting Deputy Director  
Service Bureau 1

**Eric Marts**  
Deputy Director  
Service Bureau 2

**Maryam Fatemi**  
Deputy Director  
Service Bureau 3

**Dawna Yokoyama**  
Acting Deputy Director  
Service Bureau 4

**Rhelda Shabazz**  
Deputy Director  
Bureau of Strategic Management



**DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE**

It has been a busy few months since our last newsletter. The state and county budgets have been completed and signed and DCFS seems in pretty good shape, but we will still need to be conservative and watch our expenditures. Much progress has been made on the Strategic Plan and a draft should be ready soon for review. We are planning for a new policy manual which will replace the current one with thousands of pages. Work continues on the IV-E Waiver renewal project and the Katie A. Panel members acknowledged recently the progress made toward implementing the Core Practice Model.

I recently sent a message to the DCFS staff introducing our newly formed Vision, Mission, and Values statements.

“Over the past two months, in addition to conducting CSW and SCSW focus groups and interviews with internal and external stakeholders, our consultant Dr. Alan Glassman has worked with the DCFS Executive Team and managers to help establish the Department’s Vision, Mission and Values. The Department’s Vision and Mission provide us with a sense of purpose, what we will do, while our Values define how we will do our work. Our Department’s Vision, Mission and Values are as follows:

- 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.
- Values: Cultural Sensitivity, Leadership, Accountability, Integrity and Responsiveness.

These statements will guide our work over the next several years. Please review them, post them in your office space, and discuss them with your colleagues. Every employee should become familiar with this information and share it with our partners and stakeholders.

We have long worked to better the outcomes for our youth and help build a supportive community where foster children know that they are loved and respected. No event exemplifies the embodiment of our Vision, Mission, and Values more than our annual foster youth high school graduation “Celebration” event which I attended on June 7, 2012. This Celebration honored 160 youth who achieved high grades, graduated from high school, and are moving on to college. Every one of these graduates had to overcome adversity that few of us experience to reach this milestone. I am thankful to our County Board of Supervisors, the Probation Department, the United Friends of the Children, the Teague Family Foundation, the Rotary Club of Los Angeles, Youth Opportunities United Inc., the Heads Up Youth Foundation, Radio Station KLOS/Cynthia Fox, the Coalition for At-Risk Youth, and to many others for making this night happen. But most of all I am, thankful to our foster parents, social workers, probation officers, and these wonderful youth for showing us that foster children can thrive when they have safe families and a supportive community. For a complete list of scholarship donors please go to:

[http://www.lacdcfs.org/news/documents/CELEBRATION\\_2012\\_PROGRAM.pdf](http://www.lacdcfs.org/news/documents/CELEBRATION_2012_PROGRAM.pdf)

**In This Issue**

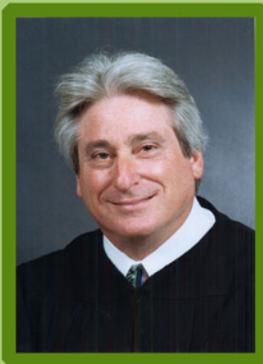
Director’s Message	1
Judge Nash Re: Psych Meds	2
Celebration 2012	2
The Story of Crystal & Ms. Jones	3
Makeover for Children’s Room	4
Children’s Trust Fund	5
The Social (Worker) Network	6
The Last Word	8

Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich and DCFS invite you to

**ALL FOR THE LOVE OF KIDS Awards Dinner & Fundraiser**

August 2, 2012 at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration.  
For tickets, call (213) 351-3207 or visit [childrenstrustfund.net](http://childrenstrustfund.net)





*Judge Michael Nash, Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles County Juvenile Court*

## Developing Protocols for Psychotropic Medication

On a recent trip to Washington, D.C., I met with members of Congress involved with the Congressional Caucus on Foster Care co-chaired by California Congresswoman Karen Bass and Minnesota Congresswoman Michelle Bachman. I also met with officials at the Administration for Children and Families. One of the big issues on their minds is the administration of psychotropic medication to foster children.

There are studies that show foster children are being administered psychotropic medication at a rate much higher than the rest of the population. Many, including folks in Washington, think these medications are over prescribed for our children. I do not know if this is the case, but I do know that we must be very vigilant in our use of the medications for the children we serve. While I do not believe that we, as a foster care system, can completely fill the shoes of a competent parent, I still think we should work as hard as we can to get as close to that standard as possible.

Here in Los Angeles, through the collaboration between our court, DCFS, DMH and others, Los Angeles County has led the way in developing protocols on the approval process and protocols to better monitor the effects of psychotropic medication on the children we serve. Yet, we need to do more.

We need to ensure that medication is not necessarily a first resort and that we have fully explored alternatives to the use of medication. We need to ensure that other forms of therapeutic treatment accompany the use of medication. We need to have social workers provide more input during the approval process. We need to make sure that we maintain the continuity of medication regimens when children change placements; that their families understand the need for the medication, and have the ability to obtain the medications and treatment when children return home. We need to be sure that the children understand what they are taking and why, and must ensure that, when our youth turn 18, they have the ability to make decisions for themselves regarding their use of psychotropic medications.

These are only some of the issues involving psychotropic medication that we need to work on .....together. If history is an indication, I am confident that Los Angeles will continue to lead the way with this all too important issue for the care of children in our system. 🍷

## Celebration 2012 Honoring the Academic Achievements of Foster Youth

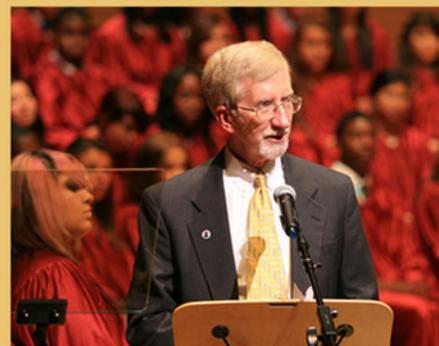
On June 7th, hundreds of friends, foster parents and family members proudly watched as 160 foster youth were honored at the 23rd annual "Celebration 2012: Honoring the Academic Achievements of Foster Youth." The event, held at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, awarded over \$1 million in scholarships to the graduates. The keynote speaker was author Reverend Darrell Armstrong, a former foster child from South Los Angeles who graduated from Stanford University and Princeton Theological Seminary. Reverend Armstrong shared with the graduates how he participated in one of the first Celebration graduation ceremonies and how one special DCFS social worker, Roberta Hawkins, remained an integral part of his life throughout the years. In a letter to DCFS Director Philip L. Browning, Ms. Hawkins stated: "Some of the lessons of love I learned in service to children, starting in the 1960's and ending in the 1990's, began in the very difficult valley of a segregated society, upheaval connected with a nation at war, ever-increasing drug culture, gang violence, family disintegration and the coining of the term 'domestic violence.' But looking back on the approximately half century that has passed since I first entered that valley and traversed its difficult pathways with my beloved Darrell and many other kids I've loved, I know that I am in their debt for tremendous richness in my life. We need to find ways to accommodate the needs of not only our most precious resource, our children, but also the needs of loving, caring people who are willing to sacrifice to meet their needs. But Darrell is our proof! Just look at where the love can lead!" 🍷



Reverend Darrell Armstrong



Roberta Hawkins



DCFS Director Philip L. Browning

# The Story of Crystal and Ms. Jones: *A Foster Care Success Story*

by Joanne Edgar,  
a communication consultant and writer who specializes in stories about social change.

Crystal is 14 years old, a bright teenager with a wry sense of humor. In foster care since age six, she had experienced every type of placement: foster homes, group homes, hospitalizations. One day, when Crystal was 13, her DCFS social worker, Anthony Cervantes, who works in a Youth Permanency Unit, got a call from Sandra Jones, who knew Crystal as a small child. Ms. Jones wondered how she was doing. Cervantes set up a visit in Crystal's group home. Shortly thereafter, Crystal went to the Jones home for a visit and shortly after that, she moved into Ms. Jones' two-bedroom apartment with a potential goal of adoption.

When asked how she felt about living with Ms. Jones and her young daughter, Crystal said she was "relieved and happy, because I didn't have to keep on bouncing back from place to place and because somebody finally found me to take me away from my misery." She added that nobody in her life had cared for her like Ms. Jones did.

The transition was not easy, however. Crystal described her own behavior as "defiant and disrespectful" and added, "I'm still working on this, eliminating my negative behaviors and my group home mentality." Ms. Jones agreed: "Crystal was not the sweet little girl I remembered. I had to refocus and do everything differently."

Doing everything differently required a lot of support from DCFS, including wraparound services for the family and therapy for Crystal. But Ms. Jones did not walk away from this young teenager. Rather, she learned to parent her. Ms. Jones explained: "I had to say, 'Crystal you can't shut down, because that's not how we deal with issues in this house. Crystal, you can't be destructive, because in life that can cause even more problems for yourself. Crystal, you can't give up, because if you give up you will never go up in life.'"

The hard work of both Crystal and Ms. Jones is paying off. Crystal is doing well in school, performing at the 11th or 12th grade level in some subjects. And she is participating in normal teenage activities. Ms. Jones signed her up for a community girls' drill team. At first Crystal didn't want to go. But Ms. Jones used her reluctance as a teachable moment about the importance of not giving up. Crystal went, even marched in a parade. "I can still see the bright lights, all the people," she said, smiling and showing off her wave.

Crystal still struggles with fear of rejection, until now a common denominator in her life. Ms. Jones explained: "When Crystal gets to a certain point and she's happy, it's almost like she takes a halt and says, 'Wait a minute, something bad is gonna happen, because I'm too happy. Let me start shutting down. Let me start being disrespectful.'" When Crystal was reminded that she's in a loving home now, she responded: "You don't know how scary that is. What if something happens here?" She added: "It's like my happiness is a jinx." But Ms. Jones and CSW Cervantes and the rest of Crystal's support team are not about to let anything jinx her happiness now.



CSW Anthony Cervantes

Crystal breaks into song from time to time in the midst of conversation. When Ms. Jones explained that one day Crystal would understand why she is sometimes hard on her, Crystal sang: "Get it right, get it right." And when the interview was concluding, Crystal was asked if there was anything else she wanted to say. She sang, "I got the power," then changed it to "We got the power."

There are many kinds of power. DCFS had the power to support this young girl and help her find a permanent family. Her new family has the power of love. And Crystal has the power to change, not only her own life, but other lives as well by sharing her story. 🍷

(note: Crystal and Sandra Jones are not the actual names of the persons in this story)

## South County and IKEA celebrate opening of newly refurbished child visitation room

On June 21st, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for a newly refurbished child visitation room at the South County office. Last December, when IKEA's Carson store issued their Life Improvement Challenge to win \$10,000 in IKEA products and supplies for a design makeover, Supervising Children's Social Worker mobilized her social work interns from Cal State Long Beach to gather the necessary votes to redesign the child visitation room at her office. Having a warm, friendly room for children to play in and sleep is important while their parents attend meetings and when staff needs to find relative or foster care placements. The DCFS interns' campaign proved successful, generating 2,800 votes, resulting in the \$10,000 award from IKEA. The DCFS application was chosen from hundreds submitted to IKEA to win the award. IKEA delivered the goods, donating new built-in cabinets, a new sink, a flat-screen TV, a new Blue Ray DVD player and DVDs, a Wii video console, games, furniture, and toys. IKEA Carson hopes to provide DCFS with 7,000 toys during the holidays. The makeover has been a huge morale booster for the staff at the South County office. The children who have already visited the new room have given it a big "thumbs up."



SCSW Roberta Thomas with CSLB Interns



New children's room refurbished by IKEA



9th Annual

DCFS



# Family Fun Day

For DCFS Employees, Their Families and Friends

Saturday, July 21st, 2012  
from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Griffith Park  
Crystal Springs Recreation Area

Eat, relax and spend the day with  
new and old DCFS friends

- Professional DJ in the House
- Face painting, bouncers and games for the kids
- Volleyball Tournament
- Dance Contest

Get ready for some serious fun!  
for info, call (213) 351-5886

**MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH**  
Los Angeles County Supervisor

&

The Department of Children and Family Services

Present

The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Dinner and Fundraiser

**"ALL FOR THE LOVE OF KIDS"**



Special Guest Stars and Honorees include:

- ❖ TIA CARRERE, Grammy Award-Winning Artist, Actress
- ❖ PATRICIA HEATON, TV Star, Actress
- ❖ BARBARA BAIN, Film & TV Actress
- ❖ FRANCE NUYN, Film & Stage Actress
- ❖ ANTWONE FISHER, Film Writer & Director
- ❖ CHRIS SCHAUBLE, Event Emcee: Co-Anchor, KTLA 5

Proceeds benefit the Children's Trust Fund. For ticket information  
call Martha Delgado at (213) 351-3207 or go to [childrenstrustfund.net](http://childrenstrustfund.net)

Thursday, August 2, 2012

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles 90012

Adults \$45 ♦ County Employees \$35 ♦ Children under 12 FREE



Children's Trust Fund Staff (L. to R.) Nelly Calabria, Secretary II; Maria Melton, Children Services Administrator II; Candice Brown, Intermediate Typist Clerk; Jackie Solomon, Children Services Administrator I; Keesee Gregory, Administrative Assistant II.

(213) 739-6202  
childrenstrustfund.net

### **Are you familiar with the Children's Trust Fund?**

It was founded in 1968 by a select group of social workers to fund the special needs of foster youth not covered by government sources. The Trust Fund ensures donors that 100% of the funds received directly benefit our youth and families, and has maintained its commitment to provide services that improve the lives of children served by our department.

The Children's Trust Fund hosts or co-hosts annual events that serve approximately 4,000 foster youth and family members, including: All for the Love of Kids, Spark of Love Toy Drive, Summer Campership, One Child At A Time Celebrity Basketball Game and a Golf Tournament.

### **Did you know?**

For the past 19 years, ABC7, the Children's Trust Fund, and Los Angeles County firefighters have joined together for the Spark of Love Toy Drive. The campaign collects new, unwrapped toys for underserved children in our communities. Our 2nd annual "Stuff the Bus" event resulted in 5 Metro buses filled with toys, increasing our total count to over 46,000 toys. All DCFS Regional Offices and 160 charity organizations received these items. In recent years, the Toy Drive has culminated with two Spark of Love Holiday Movie Parties for our foster youth sponsored by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Supervisor Don Knabe.

### **Have you bought your ticket?**

Please mark your calendars for the 17th Annual All for the Love of Kids Awards Dinner and Fundraiser hosted by Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich and our Department. The event is scheduled for August 2, 2012, at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration. Please go to our website for more details at [childrenstrustfund.net](http://childrenstrustfund.net) or go to All for the Love of Kids on Facebook.

### **Would you like to make a Donation?**

Our foster youth need your support! Consider making a donation in memory of a loved one or in lieu of a gift when celebrating birthdays and other life events for your friends and family. The Children's Trust Fund will send the individual or family a letter acknowledging how they inspired you to make a life-changing gift to help foster youth in their community. For more information, see the donation page on our website at [childrenstrustfund.net](http://childrenstrustfund.net).

## **CSW Adriana Neria commended by the Kern County Sheriff**



Donny Youngblood, the Sheriff-Coroner for Kern County, recently sent a letter of appreciation, documenting the assistance CSW Adriana Neria provided during an investigation. During the investigation, a Kern County Detective needed on scene assistance with Spanish translation in Compton. CSW Neria, who happened to be in the area, was approached and asked if she could help translate. She remained on scene for two hours and, as noted by the detective, was "gracious in her manner, provided positive assistance, and was clear and precise in the translation services she provided." CSW Neria was commended for her professional approach and her kind and helpful demeanor. Our Department is proud of CSW Neria's professionalism and joins in congratulating her.

# The Social (Worker) Network



Imagine her surprise when Vermont Corridor **CSW Glenda LeFlore** learned that Antonio Jones, a former foster youth, whose case she closed in 2002, is currently working in her office as a CAT. Antonio, who has been employed by LA County's Internal Services Department for the past eight years, said, "Being in foster care worked for me because I listened to my social workers and took advantage of all the Independent Living Program (ILP) services that DCFS offered. Today, I realize that some children see being in the "system" as a problem and consequently, do not take advantage of the many programs that can benefit them." Antonio found the ILP classes and trainings very helpful, and participated in the Transitional Housing Program. "Glenda and all of my social workers were extremely helpful, going above and beyond." Antonio is very grateful for the life-changing opportunities DCFS provided. 🍷



One of **CSW Livanya White's** clients called Philip Browning to let him know how much she appreciated the "awesome" job Livanya did investigating her case. The parents were initially distraught and devastated being the subjects of a child abuse investigation, but Livanya treated them with dignity and respect. Mr. Browning passed along this message from the parents to Livanya: "As you know, DCFS doesn't get too many letters or calls saying Thank You for all the hard work done by staff, so you should really feel special. Thanks so much for a great job." 🍷



In March, Wateridge **SCSW Renette Bertrand** flew to Haiti to provide whatever assistance she could to help Haitians still suffering the after effects of the 2010 earthquake that devastated their country. Renette worked ten hours a day for a week, providing 1,000 survivors with medical treatment and psychological support, as well as basic necessities. Renette returned with over 100 pictures of her trip, which truly captured the heart and essence of the people, and how their lives have been forever changed. 🍷



Congratulations to Adoption and Permanency Resources **CSW Carey Smith**, who worked diligently to help finalize the adoption of a youth nearing his 18th birthday. Since March 2010, CSW Smith has done everything possible to honor this youth's request to be adopted prior to his 18th birthday. Despite several roadblocks that presented themselves in the process, the adoption finalized the day before the youth's 18th birthday, so as to ensure that the termination of parental rights appeal period had expired. CSW Smith has also been working on extending Adoption Assistance Program benefits for this youth through AB12. 🍷



Recently, the Santa Fe Springs office rallied behind **Eligibility Worker Amelia Rutledge** to raise \$1,300 for the American Cancer Society. Co-workers who participated in the fundraiser were presented with daffodils in appreciation. Said Amelia, "Their generosity touched my heart since most of us have had a family member, friend, who have lost or won their battle with cancer and just to see this much money in two days was awesome." Flowers of Hope were also presented to the children in the pediatric wards at Kaiser Permanente in Downey. 🍷

This past April 26 and 27, the **Los Angeles County Management Council** held its Spring Conference in San Diego. Twenty-five DCFS managers attended along with about 200 County managers. The attendees heard speakers on the Art and Science of Foresight and the Social Styles of Managers, along with a budget update from CEO William T Fujioka and Philip Browning's presentation on his first 100 days at DCFS. At night there was a dinner dance and crazy hat contest (see picture). All managers at the CSA I level and above are encouraged to join the Council; for more information contact Armand Montiel at [amontiel@dcfs.lacounty.gov](mailto:amontiel@dcfs.lacounty.gov). 🍷



On May 9, **The Child Protection Hotline (CPHL), Emergency Response Command Post, and Metro North Office** hosted an Open House to introduce their new facility to community stake holders, law enforcement partners and other DCFS offices. The event was hosted by Regional Administrators Cleo Robinson, Dr. Stephen Sanders, and Mari-cruz Treviño with opening remarks by Acting Executive Deputy Director Jennifer Lopez followed by a welcome from DCFS Director Philip L. Browning. The new 142,360 square-foot site is located in the historic LA Mart Building at 1933 S. Broadway and houses nearly 700 staff with a state of the art call center for the CPHL on the 5th floor. 🍷



Many DCFS staff with their family members **Marched for Babies** on Saturday, April 28th. Los Angeles County Chief Executive William T Fujioka and DCFS Director Philip L. Browning took part in the opening ceremony as the USC Marching Band kicked off festivities in front of the Natural History museum. Sponsors for the three mile walk donated \$4,000 towards our \$25,000 goal. 🍷



**Public Health Nurses** working with DCFS were honored during Nurse Appreciation Month on May 3rd at the Davidson Conference Center. The day-long conference was hosted by the CSULA and UCLA Consortium. DCFS Director Philip Browning welcomed the audience and thanked the nurses for their ongoing contributions to the children served by DCFS. 🍷



## Close up: people you should know

### Xiomara Flores-Holguin

Centralized Law Enforcement Liaison  
213 700-9921 E-mail: [flores@dcfs.lacounty.gov](mailto:flores@dcfs.lacounty.gov)

*"I will assist you with joint investigations, obtaining police reports, training, and facilitate co-location of DCFS staff at law enforcement sites."*

# THE LAST WORD

## Recent Director's Employee Recognition Award Winners



Toby Iland, STC  
Bureau of the Medical Director



Rodney Loudon II, SCSW  
W. San Fernando Valley



Torrance Prevention Team



Toni Marangello, HSA  
San Fernando Valley



Rocio Pleitez, CSW III  
W. San Fernando Valley



Becky Merriweather, CSW II  
Vermont Corridor

## DCFS Workers Recently Celebrating 25 Years of County Service

### 25 Years

Martha Borunda  
Terri Doyle  
Angelica Magaña  
Annie Fultz  
Godwin Nwifo  
Amalia Garcialassalle  
Deborah Marsh  
Ninfa Lemus  
Luz Moran

### 30 years

Maria Blanco  
Carolyn Pyles  
Cynthia Rowland  
Debra Fortuna  
Tomas Cota, Jr.  
Lanette Browning

### 35 years

Noemi Ramirez  
Concepcion Jorge

### 40 years

Rosemary Osuna  
David Urias  
Lucy Gomez

### 45 years

Tonnette Caldwell  
Charles Ramirez

## Congratulations to Recent DCFS Retirees

Soledad Alday  
Meredith Barrett-Wilkins  
Thelma Cameron  
Irene Champion  
Fred Dowd, Jr.  
Vicki Enger  
Donald Eustace

Donald Gridley  
Lorraine Kaschulla  
Gloria McDaniel  
Anita Newburn  
Kenneth Prescott  
Jerry Proctor  
Paul Saur

Marla Shephard-Olive  
Joseph Thomas  
Wayne Traylor  
Sumei Tuan  
Jesse Wilder  
Shiela Weems Williams



## 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



Los Angeles County  
Department of Children  
and Family Services  
425 Shatto Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90020  
[www.lacdfs.org](http://www.lacdfs.org)

DIRECTOR  
**Philip L. Browning**

**Child Protection Hotline**  
1-800-540-4000  
Adoptions and Foster Care  
1-888-811-1121

**DCFS News Staff**  
[publicaffairs@dcfs.lacounty.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@dcfs.lacounty.gov)  
Armand Montiel  
Neil Zanville  
Dominique Robinson  
Elizabeth Orozco  
Richard Cervantes