Winter/Spring 2014

DCFS News

Serving Children and Families for 30 Years from 1984 to 2014

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On May 6, 2014, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors presented 30th Anniversary scrolls to the Commission for Children and Families, Commissioner Helen Kleinberg (our longest serving Commissioner) and the Department of Children and Families. From left to right, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Commissioner Susan Friedman, Commission Chair Genevra Berger, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Kleinberg, Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell, Commissioner Carol Biondi, DCFS Director Philip L. Browning and Supervisor Don Knabe.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Congratulations to all present and past staff of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services!! This year we celebrate our 30th anniversary as our own County Department. Since 1984, we have helped hundreds of thousands of children and their families. Today we serve about 150,000 children a year through our child abuse investigations and about 36,000 children per month through our continuing services. Keeping all those children safe is a tremendous responsibility and accomplishment. It is the dedication of our social workers, support staff, managers, foster parents, relative caregivers, and others that help make us a successful agency. Without all of the dedicated work of DCFS staff and others, I have no doubt that scores of children would remain in danger. What is so remarkable is that we are able to keep the majority of our children safe in their own homes or safely reunify them with their families after a time in foster care. It is worth noting that our foster homes remain the safest place for a child, for this we are in debt to our foster parents, both those who are related and unrelated to our children. Also, we continue to find adoptive homes for over 1,200 children every year. And for those who believe foster children universally experience bad outcomes, we hope they take note of our wonderful annual event at Disney Hall this June when 180 foster youth who are graduating from high school and moving on to college or trade schools will be celebrated and honored (thank you to United Friends of the Children for making this event possible). Because of the ongoing support from our Board of Supervisors, Chief Executive Officer and Commission for Children and Families, we are strong and save lives. I am very proud of you all and for your 30 year history of strengthening families and making child safety your priority. Keep up the good work.

Grand Opening of the Youth Welcome Center!

(From L. to R.) Chief Executive Officer William T Fujioka, Public Health Director Dr. Jonathon Fielding, Dr. Mark Ghaly (Health Services), Author Cornelia Funke, Dr. Astrid Heger, Supervisor Molina, DCFS Director Philip Browning, and Mental Health Director Dr. Marvin Southard

On April 10th, Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Director Philip L. Browning officially opened the newly relocated and remodeled DCFS Youth Welcome Center on the grounds of LA County/USC Medical Center. The Youth Welcome Center was created as a central location to ensure that abused or neglected youth, 12 and older, have a warm and nurturing place where their immediate needs are met while a suitable foster or relative home is located for them. Mr. Browning stated, "The Youth Welcome Center follows the successful path we established with the Children's Welcome Center in 2012. We are indebted to Supervisor Gloria Molina, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Health Services, Public Health, and Mental Health for moving this important project forward. We especially want to acknowledge and thank Dr. Astrid Heger with the Violence Intervention Program for advocating for the development of this Center and internationally acclaimed author Cornelia Funke, who generously donated funds to make this facility a reality."

Philip Browning and Supervisor Molina with DCFS social workers, (from L. to R.) William Hailey, Kaharra Harbour, Lasith Ranasinghe, Patricia Bennett-Fields, Supervisor Molina, Mr. Browning, Ayoka Chapple, Virginia Culbertson, Dannielle Locke, and Zuleyma Fuentes

DCFS social workers with Supervisor Molina, (from L. to R.) Connie Meza, Nancy Catuli, Nwanyieze Iyalomhe, Cristina Herrera, Supervisor Molina, Zuleyma Fuentes, Michelle Lucarelli, and Alejandra Carrillo

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas' March Against Child Sex Trafficking

On April 26th, about 30 persons representing DCFS joined Chief Deputy Director Fesia Davenport, Deputy Director Roberta Medina and DCFS managers Xiomara Flores-Holguin and Emilio Mendoza who participated in the March Against Child Sex Trafficking in South Los Angeles. The march was sponsored by Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas' Empowerment Congress and supported by Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey, Los Angeles City Mayor Eric Garcetti and Councilwoman Nury Martinez, plus other County department representatives and community partners. Hundreds of concerned citizens made their voices heard in a message of solidarity, expressing that children are not for sale and Los Angeles County will protect children who are victimized by predators. Said Roberta Medina, "It's great to see the community stepping forward. To be successful in stopping child sex trafficking, the community has to be actively involved."

(From L. to R.) Xiomara Flores-Holguin, Roberta Medina, and Emilio Mendoza

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

The Career Development Intern Program: A Life Changer for Foster Youth

Sheryl Negash and Michael Bowen Dural

Sheryl Negash, Volunteers and Interns Program Manager, DCFS Training Section (562) 345-6633, snegash@dcfs.lacounty.gov

The Career Development Intern (CDI) Program is a Los Ångeles County effort to improve outcomes for older youth.

The CDI Program is a two-year, job training program that was instituted by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in June 2006. Since then, the program has employed 92 former foster youth in temporary positions with 53 of these youth acquiring permanent DCFS positions. Eighteen young adults are currently participating in the training program. Through on-the-job and classroom training, interns are encouraged to practice the principles of "personal responsibility" and "self-actualization" to develop the skills, knowledge and abilities to perform successfully in entry-level clerical positions. When they complete the program, interns have the skills necessary to succeed in virtually any work setting, and, they have a career ladder to promote to higher positions.

Interns also gain tools to be successful in their personal lives. They learn to effectively manage their personal finances, resolve conflicts appropriately, and achieve personal goals, such as pursuing higher education.

Tahrael Lashley, an intern in the Torrance office stated, "The CDI program has provided me with a great opportunity to obtain employment with the County of Los Angeles. Currently, I am working on promoting as well as furthering my education to one day achieve my Master's Degree in Social Work and become a social worker."

"The CDI Program is unique because it brings former foster youth into a department that they were once a part of. We have a passion to do a good job because we have been there and know how to relate to the clients. I currently help former foster youth get into housing and obtain bus passes. Staff and management are always impressed that I never get upset when youth go off on me. I know how to calm them down because I can relate to them and do not judge them," says Michael Bowen Dural, who works with DCFS Youth Development Services.

From the Basement at Edelman Court

Jim Owens, Assistant County Counsel, Dependency Division

Editor's Note: We congratulate Jim Owens on his retirement this past March. Jim is a true friend of DCFS and our children and families. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

Our warrant operations started with me, a laptop, and a slide show in 1999. Today we are a vibrant 24 hours a day, 7 days a week operation with six full-time attorneys handling more cases in a day than I did in a year. We have more than exceeded our loftiest goals.

One reason for our current success is the tireless work of DCFS Warrant Liaisons and the County Counsel attorneys assigned to the Warrant Desk and the Intake and Detention Center (IDC). I want to thank the wonderful DCFS staff consisting of Pam Prewitt-McZeal, Jessica Brown, Elba Pinedo, Valere Baggio, Peter Ngo, and Lizette Carmona. Add another thank you to the County Counsel staff consisting of Doug Hunter, Angel Yu, Monica Romero, Raquel Ramirez, and Kirsten Andreasen.

I think perhaps the biggest thanks should go to the DCFS Bureau of Information Systems team consisting of Ron Poprosky, Catherine Dang, John Vuong, Jesse Marffil, and Jason Ly, working with Doug Hunter, Jessica Brown, Elba Pinedo, Valere Baggio, Pam Prewitt-McZeal, and Raquel Ramirez. Together they developed the Warrant Tracking System, which has enabled the same staff to nearly double their volume over the past year.

Their system has really made life simpler for everyone. The time collectively saved is now spent handling other calls, doing more investigation, handling more referrals, and making better reasoned decisions. In our world, this equates to safer and better outcomes for the children and families we protect.

At the time of the initial warrant consult, the Warrant Tracking System automatically populates the detailed case and assignment information directly from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS.) The social worker can access and complete the appropriate forms, which can be transmitted electronically.

Our warrant liaisons can search old consults and warrants via the tracking system and receive instantaneous results. The information from an old warrant request can be critical to a new referral or investigation. Previously, this would require a hand search of paper documents, which would delay the application several hours or days.

As we are a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week operation, different attorneys and social workers will work the same request. As the system retains information and collects new information in real time, it permits seamless transition between IDC and Emergency Response Command Post warrant desks, improving timeframes for follow up to the region and permits filing of warrants at all times of the day.

County Counsel can instantaneously search for prior related consults, warrants, outcomes for a specific family, and obtain additional case information that directly populates from CWS/CMS (i.e. court numbers, upcoming court date, dates of prior cases, names and dates of birth of related siblings), which reduces the time required to complete a thorough review and completion of the Warrant Packet.

The social workers, supervisors, and administrators are able to log in and track the status of a current warrant consult, access county counsel recommendations, and assess the current situation at the individual, section, office, and regional level remotely. No longer will the field need to call the warrant desk and wait for a return call after a manual review is done to determine what is happening on a case, which really speeds up the process for everyone involved in the warrant consult.

For those of us who create reports, it has been wonderful. We can count the different warrants and removal orders by any timeframe or any office, and generate monthly warrant statistics in real time. It can be searched using numerous parameters, including date range, office, social worker, even the child's initials, rather than being restricted to a specific month and office, and then being required to complete a manual search. What used to be a hand search through hard copies can be accomplished with a few clicks of a mouse.

The Advantages of Alternative Fuel Vehicles

Robert Curtis, Children Services Administrator I, Public Inquiry (213) 351-5602 curtir @dcfs.lacounty.gov. Robert is shown with his NGV.

Alternative fuel vehicles have many advantages, including being better for the environment and more economical to refuel. There are a select few motor vehicles, powered by electricity and natural gas, which are certified as clean air vehicles by the California Air Resources Board. These vehicles qualify for clean air vehicle decals, issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles, and can drive as a single occupant vehicle in the carpool or High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and use the 'Metro Express Lanes FasTrak' or High-Occupancy Toll Lanes (HOT) without paying tolls. This would greatly benefit social workers who spend much of their time driving on the freeways. For a list of vehicles that qualify for solo access to HOV and free HOT lanes, go to: http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/carpool/carpool.htm

There are two types of federal Environmental Protection Agency Inherently Low Emission Vehicles: Electric Vehicles (EV), cars powered by electricity and Natural Gas Vehicles, (NGV), fueled by natural gas. Natural gas vehicles can be either fueled by Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) or Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). Of these two, CNG, a gas at room temperature, is the most common. LNG must be maintained at –260 degrees Fahrenheit. For this reason, LNG is very unstable, difficult to maintain and may revert back to CNG. However, LNG allows for more fuel to be stored, improving driving distance. Many public buses run on CNG or LNG.

Natural gas comes out of the ground requiring less refining and is cleaner-burning than gasoline or diesel. The combustion of natural gas fuel makes for far fewer tail-pipe emissions. Natural gas is safer than gasoline. Natural gas combusts at 1,652 degrees Fahrenheit; gasoline at about 495 degrees Fahrenheit. Natural gas fuel tanks are very strong and have withstood ballistics testing without leaking. In the unlikely event of a natural gas leak, its lighter-than-air properties cause it to dissipate very quickly. Higher octane means cleaner-burning fuel resulting in less pollution. Typically, gasoline is rated from 87 to 91 octane. Natural gas is rated from 120 to 130. CNG currently costs $2.80 per gasoline-gallon-equivalent (GGE) and while cruising on the freeway can go 35 miles on one GGE.

NGV
NATURAL GAS VEHICLE

DCFS and Korean Community Promote Foster Care Awareness

On January 21, 2014, Korean American Family Services hosted a press conference at the Los Angeles County Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration to raise awareness about the need for more foster homes, particularly Korean family foster homes. Department of Children and Family Services Director Philip L. Browning spoke about the DCFS Asian Pacific Program and how important it is to provide specialized cultural and linguistic services for all children, including those in the Asian and Pacific Islander community. Mr. Browning was interviewed by various media outlets, as was DCFS Asian Pacific Program social worker Michael Oh and adoptions social worker Julie Haw-Lee. Since the press conference and daily airing of a public service announcement, over 40 Asian American adults have completed orientations to become foster parents.

The Impact of Wellness at DCFS

(From L. to R.) Office of Health and Safety Manangement Team

Marina Janofsky, Administrative Services Manager II, (213) 351-3285, janofm@dcfs.lacounty.gov

Carmen Abbott, Children's Services Administrator III, (213) 351-5727, abbotc@dcfs.lacounty.gov

Sandra Nuñez, Senior Clerk, (213) 351-3274, nunezsb@dcfs.lacounty.gov

Maintaining a healthy workforce and having a strong workplace health and wellness program is fundamental for both the physical and mental well-being of employees. The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has made great strides in raising the awareness of staff and encouraging them in pursuing a healthier lifestyle.

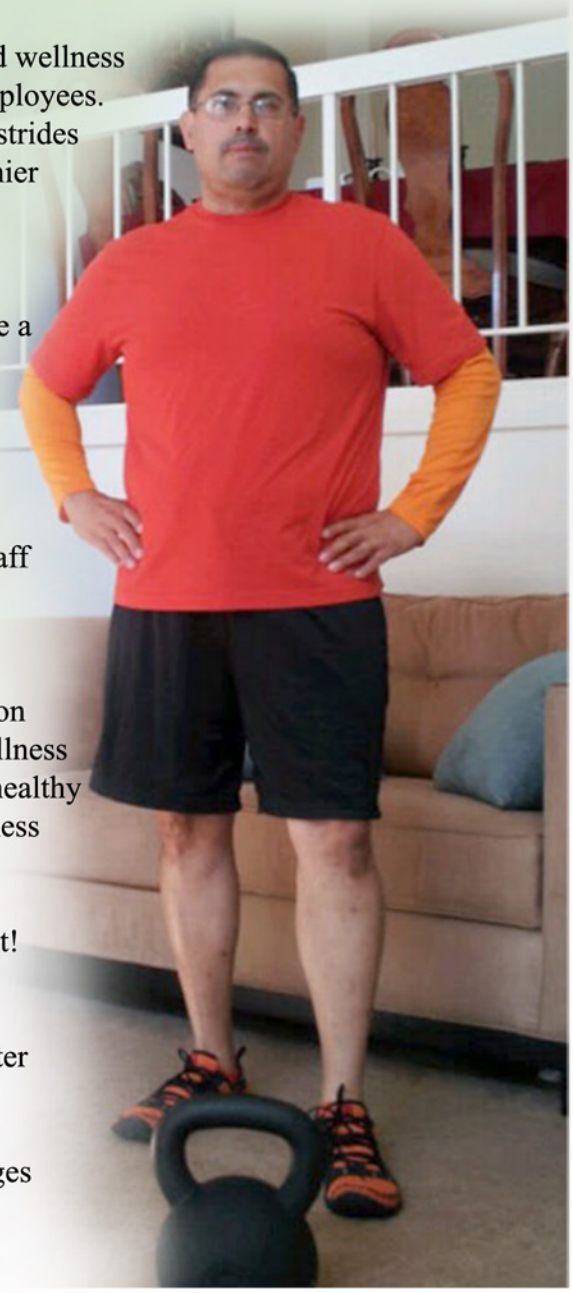
DCFS Director Philip Browning has made this message to staff a priority. Something as simple as each employee taking time out of every day to take a 10-minute break to participate in some form of wellness activity can pay great dividends.

Wellness program success stories reported from our regional offices have been inspirational. Staff are eating healthier. The Risk Management Section has implemented "Salad Wednesday," with the majority of their staff contributing to a healthy potluck at which they share variations on healthy salads together during their lunch break.

Otto Astorga, the Wellness Coordinator for the DCFS Bureau of Information Services, has been very active sending out emails to staff in promoting wellness and health. He keeps a running blog on his own personal quest to reach a healthy lifestyle and weight. Otto has achieved great success and credits the wellness plan at his office for allowing him to do this with more support from his fellow workers pursuing healthier lifestyle choices. To date, Otto has lost an amazing 80-plus pounds. Congratulations on a remarkable achievement!

Maria, a Lakewood Dependency Investigator Assistant, signed up to participate in the DCFS Wellness Program and, through walking and smarter eating, has lost over 10 pounds.

We commend the great efforts of all DCFS staff in pursuing positive changes and healthier lifestyles and encourage all to keep up the great work!



Otto Astorga, after losing 80 lbs.

How Can Your Employee Assistance Program Help You?

Carmen Abbott, Manager, Health and Safety/Classification & Compensation,
(213) 351-5727, abbotc@dcfs.lacounty.gov (See Carmen's photo on page 5)

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a workplace program designed to assist: (1) work organizations in addressing productivity issues, and (2) "employee clients" in identifying and resolving personal concerns, including health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal issues that may affect job performance.

Employees may request permission from their supervisors to see their EAP for assistance for themselves or a family member prior to the issue/concern impacting their performance. Employees may be referred by their supervisors to EAP for assistance when there are issues impacting their job performance. In my tens years working as a Certified Employee Assistance Professional (CEAP), I saw employees that self-referred and those that were referred because of job performance issues. I am pleased to report that whether the problem was for substance abuse, mental health issues, emotional or other personal issues, not one employee was terminated as a result of seeking assistance from the EAP. Management and the Union work as a team to ensure employees receive help and return to being productive members of the workforce. The EAP is an advocate and serves as a sounding board for employees to express themselves in a non-judgmental setting and receive the best referral, if needed, to assist with their presenting concerns. The EAP is knowledgeable and familiar with resources throughout Los Angeles County. While working as a CEAP in Los Angeles, I had opportunities to meet with both mental health treatment center personnel, substance abuse treatment program personnel, marriage and family therapists, licensed clinical social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists to ensure the services they were providing met the needs of the employees we served. At the time, we were serving more than 86,000 employees to provide the best care available for our employees. As we all know, problems do not discriminate. At any given time, you or someone you know is experiencing some kind of life problem for which EAP can help. Early intervention can save an individual's job and, in some cases, their life or the life of a family member.

As your Health and Safety Manager and a former EAP Manager, I encourage employees to seek out the services of EAP before being referred by a supervisor. The services are free. To learn more about the LA County Employee Assistance Program, call (213) 738-4200

A Message from Father Boyle

Father Boyle, Jesuit Priest, is the founder and Director of Homeboy Industries.

A reporter asked me recently, as he ended his interview, "So…how's does it feel to have saved thousands and thousands of lives?" I told him that I didn't mean to be cute or coy, but "I don't know what you're talking about." I told him that I thought "saving lives" was for the Coast Guard. All I know for sure is that my life is saved every single day that I show up at Homeboy Industries. When I lack patience, the homies save me from my impatience. When I need courage, the homies rescue me from my cowardice. When I am utterly convinced of the "rightness of my position," the homies douse me with a big 'ol bucket of humility. The only thing of which I am certain, is that my life is saved everyday here.

Volunteers who wish to cast their lot at Homeboy Industries, the largest gang intervention, rehab and reentry program in the world, often ask, "But what will I do here?" I always tell them that the right question is "What will happen to you here?" A woman once insisted on volunteering because "I feel that I have a message these young people need to hear." I told her that the minute she lost this message, she could give me a call.

The poet Mary Oliver writes, "There are some things we can't reach…but we can reach out to them…and all day long." What we reach for is not the task of "saving lives" but the simple act of receiving people in all their goodness and beauty. And the grace of that gift is that we all end up returned to ourselves in the process. "…and all day long."

DCFS MART Recognized by FBI for Combating International Terrorism

(From L. to R.) DCFS Director, Philip L. Browning, MART Program Manager, Emilio Mendoza, Marc Williams, Heather Stephens, Special Agent Ben Virtue, Special Agent Nick Vicencia, Supervisory Special Agent Mark Broihier

On August 21, 2013, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Homeland Security Investigation Joint Terrorism Task Force executed a Search and Arrest Warrant for a suspect/mother who was providing thousands of dollars to a covert terrorism organization in the U.S. funneling monies to terrorist groups. The mother traveled to the U.S. with her two children after the Ronald McDonald Charity Foundation offered to provide specialized treatment for her severely burned daughter. The mother promoted her daughter's situation on multiple social media sites with a plea for monies to pay for her ill and disfigured daughter's medical bills. The mother then turned over the donated funds to the terrorist organization. When both minors were taken into protective custody, the DCFS Multi-Agency Response Team (MART) located foster parents trained to provide the necessary medical treatments, while also ensuring that their cultural needs were being met. MART worked closely to maintain the integrity of the confidential high-profile federal investigation monitored by the U.S. Department of Justice and the White House. Arrangements were made through diplomatic channels for MART social workers to accompany the minors on their 18-hour flight back to their home country to reunify with their non-offending father. For their assistance with the children's successful rescue, continuity of services provided by DCFS in the U.S., and the return of the children home, the FBI formally recognized the DCFS-MART Team for "…superb cooperation…in combating international terrorism."

Chatsworth DCFS Office Receives a Special Holiday Delivery of Toys from Postal Workers

The staff from the Chatsworth office is thankful for the mountain of toys for children donated by United States Postal Service workers. Gifts were distributed to the children at their annual Christmas party.

The Social (Worker) Network

Social workers (from L. to R.) Laura Coronel, Trinh Huynh, Monica Hicks, Robert Escamilla

Tribal Customary Adoption (TCA) is a unique permanency option for court dependent Native American Indian children that became law in 2010, allowing youth to be adopted "through the customs, laws and traditions of the child's tribe without termination of parental rights." The Indian tribe participates in the process and provides their consent. Adoption social workers Laura Coronel and Trinh Huynh, together with American Indian Unit social workers Robert Escamilla and Monica Hicks, have utilized the tribal option with four children on their caseloads. Since this is a new kind of adoption, the tribes, attorneys, Juvenile Dependency Court, social workers and even the California Department of Social Services were unfamiliar with the process. Starting in early 2011, TCA adoptions were finalized in April, October and November 2013. These social workers pioneered the first TCA in Los Angeles County and are to be congratulated for their great team work and diligence!

Fox-11 and Wednesday's Child's reporter Christine Devine interviews Adoptions social worker April Do and case-carrying social worker Aymee Rosas, whose youth, featured on Wednesday's Child 3 years ago, had their adoptions finalized.

On November 22nd at Children's Court, everyone was all smiles for the 2013 National Adoption Day celebration as nearly 150 foster children were adopted by loving families. Among the adopted youth were 20 sets of siblings; 7 sets of 3 siblings; 3 sets of 4 siblings and 1 set of 6 siblings! DCFS Director Philip Browning, referencing that this celebration coincided with the 50th anniversary of President John Kennedy's death, stated "Many people remember where they were on that day. The families and children who were part of this National Adoption Day, on November 22, 2013, will surely remember where they were today in years to come." During 2013, nearly 1,200 children became part of "forever families" thanks to the efforts of DCFS, the court and the attorneys representing children and parents. During the past 5 years, almost 9,000 adoptions have been finalized in Los Angeles County.

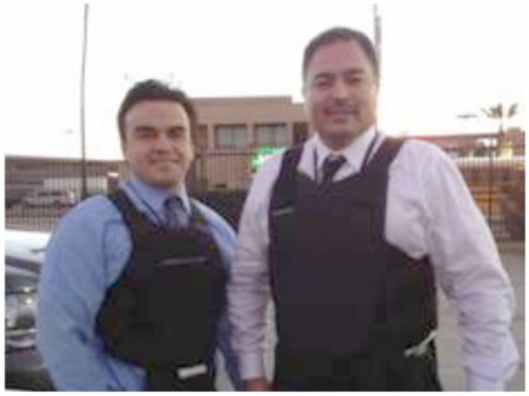
Philip Browning (center) with DCFS employees and family. (From L. to R.) Regina Bell, Charitable Giving Coordinator Tricia Denson, Riana Berry (Regina's daughter), Faye Canada, Tamara Canada, Summer Little

On November 23rd, DCFS Director Philip Browning joined DCFS, other Los Angeles County employees and philanthropic organizations for the 2013 5k Homeless Walk at Exposition Park to raise awareness and money to end homelessness in Los Angeles. Over 30 DCFS employees followed Mr. Browning's lead as he ran the course with several children in tow, promoting exercise and wellness as a daily routine for all. Kobe Bryant, Laker superstar and spokesman for Homewalk 2013, was on hand to get the thousands of participants moving in the right direction.

Social Worker Monique Cooley (middle) with Daryl Chamberlain (left), and Sherry Hughes (right), of Ralphs/ Food 4 Less

In 2010, Pastor Robert Jessie at Challenge of Faith Church of God in Christ joined his daughter, South County's social worker Monique Cooley, and management at Ralphs to deliver holiday clothes, toys, groceries, diapers, gift cards, and food baskets totaling well over $1,000 for an unsuspecting family of five. In 2012, The Ralphs Team provided a mother of four, who had fallen on hard times, with Christmas presents for her whole family. This past winter, Ralphs Talent Manager Sherry Hughes and her team again reached out to DCFS families in need by providing Christmas presents to three families. The local Food 4 Less Supermarket followed suit in what hopefully will become a long-lasting partnership with the South County (Lakewood) office that will help our families for years to come.

The Social (Worker) Network *Continued from page 9*



(From L. to R.) Frank Ramos and Emilio Mendoza

In the early hours of the morning on February 12th, DCFS Command Post Regional Administrator Frank Ramos and Emilio Mendoza, manager of the DCFS Multi-Agency Response Team (MART), huddled with the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and State and local law enforcement officials on a planned operation targeting 28 suspects. Wearing their flak jackets, the DCFS team hit the streets running. Once law enforcement and the DEA safely contained the scene, the MART Team interviewed 3 adults and 4 children. "This experience provided me with unique insight into the risks and partnerships involved with MART responses. A big thanks to Emilio and the MART Team as I now have a first-hand account of the courageous and vital actions they undertake on a daily basis," said Frank Ramos.

(From L. to R.) Laurie Miller and Donna Larson

After receiving multiple allegations that a baby was being shaken and left screaming for hours, DCFS Santa Clarita social worker Tamara Pennington and Emergency Response (ER) social worker Donna Larson secured the necessary court warrant and then contacted the DCFS co-located Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) ER social worker Laurie Miller. A Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team was assigned to investigate. The family was located within a gang and drug compound. Using bolt cutters to open a locked fence, the SWAT Team then broke down doors to confront armed gang members. After law enforcement secured the premises, social workers Larson and Miller located the baby who was taken into custody. Congratulations on the successful partnership between DCFS Santa Clarita and Mission Station LAPD in rescuing this infant from a potentially life threatening situation.

Erica Betnun

Chatsworth's social worker Erica Betnun is close to receiving her Master of Social Work (MSW) degree at California State University, Northridge. While interning at a foster family agency, she began planning her "Bags of Hope" campaign for her MSW macro-level project. With the support of her field instructor Erika Kim, the "Bags of Hope" luggage drive was launched at the Chatsworth office in January. Savinar Luggage hosted the donation site and with support from family and friends, donations from all over Los Angeles County started to trickle in. To date, nearly 80 pieces of luggage have been donated. Many foster youth have already received their "Bags of Hope," helping make their adjustments to new situations a bit easier. Great job, Erica!

(From L. to R.) Linda Garcia, Center for Social Welfare; Joan Cochran, Hathaway-Sycamores; Donna Fernandez, and Michael Durfee, M.D., ICAN

At the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) Tenth Annual Conference on Childhood Grief and Traumatic Loss, Donna Fernandez, Children Services Administrator III with the DCFS Child Welfare Health Services Section, was honored with the Dr. Michael Durfee Award for "Outstanding Selfless Service to Children." This award recognized Donna for her work as the chair of the DCFS Workgroup on Grief, Mourning and Loss which provided useful information and resources to assist our children and families. Her workgroup implemented two in-service trainings; one on compassion fatigue and one on assisting families and children with grief and loss.

The Social (Worker) Network *Continued from page 10*

Philip Browning with DCFS San Fernando and Santa Clarita social workers and managers (from L. to R.) Shauna Blakely, Kimberley Melton-Johnson, Liana Suwandi, Carol Kim, Roxanna Flores-Aguilar, Sandra Mendoza, Veteran Intern Dario E. Grant

On April 26th, nearly 40 DCFS employees joined DCFS Director Philip Browning and Senior Deputy Director Cynthia McCoy-Miller for the March of Dimes March for Babies 5K Walk at Exposition Park. There were many first time participants enjoying themselves, bringing their family members and children. At the event, DCFS staffers manned a table selling items to raise additional funds and recruit foster and adoptive parents and prospective social workers. According to DCFS Charitable Giving Coordinator Tricia Denson, nearly $6,000 was raised from participants' efforts.

(From L. to R.) Nkem Anene, Verlinda Ginn, Rachel Telles, Patti Metzger, Laura Shotzbarger, Gerardo Ibarra, Sal Acevedo, Tatiana Melendez, Sarah Mungaray and Wendy Tashiro-Kojima

On the night of April 18th, DCFS employees from the Palmdale and Lancaster offices showed their appreciation to their Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project community partner Grace Resource Center. Staffers from the two offices donated all the food and served meals at Grace's nightly dinner for needy families in the Antelope Valley. Nearly 200 people enjoyed the early Easter feast including ham with all the trimmings. So much food was donated by our employees that Grace Resource Center was able to provide dinners to the community on Saturday and Sunday nights as well!

(From L. to R.) DCFS Managers Virpi Sidler, Denise Lytle, Neil Zanville, Michelle Victor, Wendy Jones, Tish Dennis

On December 5th, DCFS managers ushered in the holidays at the Los Angeles County Management Council's Annual Holiday Party held at the California Science Museum. Managers from all county departments enjoyed a rare opportunity to network and relax with each other. It was a special treat to dine on Lucille's BBQ beneath the enormous wingspan of the real star of the evening- the space shuttle Endeavor.

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DCFS Staff with Harut Harry Yedalyan, Executive Board Member of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 721 Armenian Caucus and Founding President of Armenian American Public Service Employees Association, (from L. to R.) Zoya Jahangirian, Susanna Kirakosyan, Hermineh Keshishian, Adrineh Aghayani, Mr. Yedalyan, Theresa Rupel, Sona Balian, Kathee Saito, Anna Ohanian, Juliet Sardarian, Roza Alexandrian, and Yervand Grigoryan.

Recently, a commemoration of the 99th anniversary of the Armenian genocide was held in the DCFS San Fernando Valley office. The Armenian genocide was the systematic extermination of minority Armenians from their historic homeland in the territory constituting the present-day Republic of Turkey. The genocide resulted in the death of over 1 million Armenians and took place before, during and after World War I. In his future-oriented presentation, Supervising Children's Social Worker Dr. Yervand Grigoryan emphasized the importance of recognizing past atrocities and preventing the occurrence of future genocides. The Ten Stages of Genocide by Dr. Gregory Stanton was introduced as a means of stopping genocides in their early stages. The presentation concluded with a call for tolerance for diversity among all nations and ethnic groups. Armenian songs and poems added a unique flavor to this important memorial.

DCFS managers and social workers (from L. to R.) Larry Golan, Bill Mairs, Connie Amstone, Elizabeth Penalver-Vasquez, and the fabulous girls of Troop 1154.

Special thanks go out to the Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles Troop 1154 in West Covina, who made 150 handmade Easter baskets for the foster youth at the Glendora office. This troop has donated many toys and provided community services over the past few years. Social worker Connie Amstone, who lost her daughter in a 2009 car accident, has spoken to this troop on the importance of using seat belts. Upon learning that Connie worked with foster children, the scouts decided to make 140 Christmas gift baskets for our youth. Says, Connie, "These girls are dedicated and excited about helping foster youth. For two years, they have volunteered at the Serenity Foster Family Agency. They are aware that not every child gets adopted, and that there is a shortage of foster parents. They encourage foster children to become Girl or Boy Scouts and try to set a good example, talking to them about the benefits of Scouting, even raising money enabling them to join. For two months, the Scouts worked after school every day making the Easter baskets. The basket items were creative and fun and made with love, bringing a smile to our youth, while planting seeds of hope for their futures. They are fantastic role models."

Supervisor Antonovich's Magic Mountain Holiday Party!

DCFS managers with Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich (from L. to R.) Minh Orr, Dr. Jeff Dorsey, Laura Shotzbarger, Supervisor Antonovich, Paul Freedlund, and Neil Zanville

(From L. to R.) Keesee Gregory of the DCFS Children's Trust Fund, Supervisor Antonovich and Senior Secretary Felita Horton

Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich hosted his 17th Annual Holiday Christmas Party for over 300 DCFS client children and their families this past December 7th. Supervisor Antonovich and his staff were joined by LA County Firefighters, DCFS staff and volunteers who helpled Santa pass out toys to all the children. Lunch was also provided to the families before they went on to enjoy a day at Magic Mountain!

(From L. to R.) Santa Dave Fernandez, DCFS Children's Trust Fund Manager Maria Melton and Supervisor Antonovich

Los Angeles County Firefighters with Supervisor Antonovich

SHARE YOUR HEART... ...SHARE YOUR HOME

Become a Resource Parent (Foster/Adoptive Parent)

1-888-811-1121

Visit our website: ShareYourHeartLa.org

A Special Gift

On February 5, 2014, Social Workers David Greene (left) and Melanie Freeman (second from right) and Service Employees Internation Union Manager Michael Greene (far right) joined DCFS Director Philip L. Browning and DCFS Chief Deputy Director Fesia Davenport in hanging the poster Mr. Browning received from the SEIU during our employees' strike action last December. The poster is now proudly displayed in the DCFS headquarters main conference room.

DCFS Workers Recently Celebrating Years of County Service

25 years of service - Alan Weisbart, Alberto Martin, Armand Montiel, Brian Howard, Coretta Wishom, Deborah Zawel, Deidre English, Don Offor, Evangeline Villanueva, Gary Burks, Gregory Chase, Ingrid Broussard, Inez Herrera, Jeffrey Dorsey, Ladore Winzer, Linda Smaul, Linda Yoshihara, Lisa Floyd, Linda Frazier, Marilynne Garrison, Martha Salinas, Mary Cervantes, Mercede Webb, Mervat Farag, Nenita Bulandus, Patricia Perez, Purita Abad-Heman, Robert Sepulveda, Ruben Gonzales, Scarlett Papa, Thaddeus Danielian, Vernon Thompson, Viktor Cervantes.

30 years of service - Ae An, Belinda Gibson, Cristina Muttukumaru, Dan Klocman, Dawna Yokoyama, Debra Shepheard, Diane Owens, Donald Luther, Doris Brown, Joann Perrotta, Karen Thomas, Katherine Choy, Kathleen Saito, Leslie Griffith, Levetta Parker, Mamie Elliott, Mark Grinenk, Marion Murray-Grant, Mark Miller, Nasrin Shahandeh, Patricia Coursey, Paula Boyd, Phil Stripling, Rebecca McCullough, Regina Goree, Rhelda Randle-Shabazz, Rosa Tang, Sandra Perez, Sari Grant, William Thomas, Vickey Turner, Yolanda Biddle, Zachery Jenkins, Znaida Fombuena

35 years of service - Arpi Goekjian-Campbell, Arthur Lieras, Barbara Barabino, Betty Maxwell, Bettye McCoy, Deborah Cotton Thomas, Edyth Yates Redmond, Gloria Jamison, Goleatha Paxon, Janice Johnson-Lockett, Kathryn Nave-Elliott, Lorraine Abasta, Mable Newman, Machelle Jackson, Maria Monreal, Mary Basye, Mary Shyne, Pamela Benton, Pamela Veals, Patricia Colbert-Ramos, Patricia Griffin, Richard Dyke, Rosalind Davis, Rosie Pugh, Rothell Washington, Ruth Nuñez, Socorro Scala, S. Elizabeth Romero, Susie Quon, Terri Contreras, Vetia Perkins.

40 years of service - Alleaner Ward, Cheryl Bogard, Miriam Scott.

45 years of service - Dee Dee Shulman, Mary MeHarg, Mary Steen, Rosalind Pillars.

Congratulations to Recent DCFS Retirees

Albert Argomaniz, Alberto Mejia, Arpi Goekjian-Campbell, Armando Franco, Asaye Tsegga, Brenda Blackburn, Brian Blessing, Charles Whorry, Cora Martin, Debrah Jefferson, Diana Streeter, Diane Holiday, Diane sparks, Doanthu Tonthat, Duane Hubler, Duc Pham, Earline Weaver Long, Eleazer Degbor, Esperanza Garcia, Ethel Moton, Geneva Johnson, Gwendolyn Foster, Hollis Hollingworth, Janice Kaye, Janie Russell, Joann Perrotta, Joyce Becker, Judy Espinoza, Judy Hogan, Kevin Donnelley, Lang Nguyen, Leda Brown, Linda Mower, Lori Chin, Louise Peterman, Margarita Collado, Maribel Ramirez, Martin Tillinger, Michele Villegas, Pamela Beck, Rex White, Rita Hall, Rita Travis, Robert Haley, Ruby Lang, Ruth Nunez, Sandra Smith, Sandra Williams, Sarah Burger, Sharyn Dent-Bray, Sherwin Forte, Shigenobu Kabashima, Sookhee Roh, Susan Rourke, Susan Weber, Viktor Cervantes, W. Long, William Minter, Willie Quinn, Zeda Moore.

Are You a Current or Former Foster Youth?

NEED HOUSING? WANT A JOB?
NEED TO TALK? NEED HEALTHCARE?
NEED RECORDS OR ID?

CHECK OUT THE YOUTH SERVICES PORTAL
TO FIND HELP

http:/211Youth.211la.org
OR CALL 2-1-1

Recent Director's Employee Recognition Award Winners

Kimberly Melton-Johnson
Supervising Children's Social Worker
West San Fernando Valley Office

Olivia James
Assistant Regional Administrator
Child Protection Hotline

Patricia Cegarra
Assistant Regional Administrator
Vermont Corridor

Ozheni Amirdzhanyan
Children's Social Worker I
Pasadena Office

Phyllis Wilcher
Supervising Children's Social Worker
Glendora Office

Anne Szeto
Senior Secretary III
West San Fernando Valley

Children's Social Worker Foundational Training Simulation Development Team
DCFS staff: Top row (from L. to R.) Edmarine Edwards, Mark Pitts, Yvonne Bacy-Bujer, Barbara Hitchcock, Michael Clark. Bottom row (from L. to R.) Susan Vu-Pritko, Beth Minor, Misty Bautista, Janae Mankowski and Michele Brienze

Santa Clarita LAPD Mission Station DCFS Co-location Program
DCFS staff: (from L. to R.) Cindy Hathaway, Lisa Fleisher-Whitecrow, Michelle Llorens, and Laurie Miller

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

Gloria Molina
First District

Mark Ridley-Thomas
Second District

Zev Yaroslavsky
Third Dirstrict

Don Knabe
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District

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