



News

Winter 2013

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Support Services

Rhelda Shabazz
Deputy Director
Juvenile Court &
Adoption Bureau

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Bureau of Clinical Resources
and Services

Dawna Yokoyama
Deputy Director
Service Bureau 2

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



I hope the New Year has brought you optimism and hope for a year full of positive change. In this issue of our newsletter we have a number of stories showing the good things happening around the Department. I'd also like to share with you the following summary of our 2012 successes as we move forward into 2013. In late 2012, we completed our first strategic plan in over ten years. We received input from our staff and stakeholders to develop this plan, which will be our blueprint for progress and improved services over the next five years. With the completion of this plan, we are implementing a new organizational structure in our Department. This new structure will help us provide better oversight and management of services while maximizing our resources.

Our 7,300 employees work together with the priority of keeping children safe in their own homes. We respond to over 180,000 allegations of abuse and neglect annually and we supervise 35,000 children, with about 15,000 children living in out-of-home care. With safety and permanency as our priority, we reunified about 5,600 children with their parents last year. For those who cannot reunify, we seek permanent and loving homes. Last year, about 1,500 children were adopted into safe and loving families.

Also, in 2012, we received our 100th safely surrendered baby. These babies are newborns that are relinquished by their parents rather than being abandoned. This is a wonderful program that partners us with fire departments and hospital emergency rooms throughout the County.

As we move into 2013, we will build on a number of other successes we experienced last year. A few examples include:

- The opening of our Children's Welcome Center to serve children less than twelve years of age who are waiting for foster placements.
- The establishment of monthly management meetings to review key performance data and track department improvements.
- The full implementation of an identity theft program to protect older foster youth; this program is a partnership with the County's Department of Consumer Affairs.
- The implementation of our new AB 12 program which provides services for youth over the age of 18 who choose to stay in foster care.
- And, enhancing our use of technology by purchasing iPhones with talk to text capability for our Emergency Response workers.

None of these successes would be possible without the support of our Board of Supervisors, our Chief Executive Officer, and our partners in the County and the community. I thank them all for their support. I especially would like to thank the women and men of our Department who work tirelessly everyday to ensure the health and well-being of the children we serve. ❤️

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Children's Welcome Center Reduces Trauma for the Most Vulnerable

Grand opening at LAC/USC showcases 24/7 child-friendly facility for foster youth.

An enthusiastic crowd of over 200 DCFS and other County workers were on hand as Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Director Philip L. Browning officially opened the new DCFS Children's Welcome Center on the grounds of LA County/USC Medical Center. The Children's Welcome Center was created as a central location to ensure that abused or neglected children up to the child's 12th birthday have a warm and nurturing place where their immediate needs are met while a suitable foster or relative home is located for them. The center employs a 24-hour staff of eight DCFS Children's Social Workers and Department of Health Services certified nursing attendants specially selected and trained to meet the needs of abused and neglected children.

For those youth traumatized by detention, their ordeal is lessened somewhat by the comfortable, child-friendly environment that includes napping beds, cribs, bassinets, couches, a large screen TV, a kitchen and eating area to provide hot meals, plenty of toys, games, stuffed animals, and a private playground.

The Children's Welcome Center is a collaboration between DCFS and the County Departments of Health Services, Public Health, and Mental Health. Best-selling children's author Cornelia Funke donated \$100,000 to transform the facility into a warm and inviting environment. Ms. Funke received a board scroll from Supervisor Molina and struck an empathetic chord with those present when she announced the establishment of ongoing scholarship/vacations to be awarded to deserving social workers in recognition of their life-saving work. Supervisor Molina and her quilting group called The East LA Stitchers (TELAS) presented a donation of beautiful quilts for children to use while at the center.

DCFS Director Philip L. Browning stated, "The Children's Welcome Center will go a long way in reducing the trauma experienced by abused and neglected children in need of a safe home." 🧡



(from L.to R.) Annette Trujillo, Sonia Vasquez, Christina Misa, Cornelia Funke (in the back), Paula Gamboa, Anna Jeong, Maricruz Trevino, Philip Browning, Supervisor Gloria Molina, Dr. Astrid Heger (in the back), Frank Ramos, Ronnie Graham, Jackie Steward, Teresa Lozano.



Supervisor Gloria Molina presents a scroll to author Cornelia Funke.



The living room area of the Children's Welcome Center.

Los Angeles County Productivity and Quality Awards

Commission Top Ten Award: E-mHub System Connecting DHS Medical Hubs and DCFS



First Row (L. to R.) – Donna Fernandez (DCFS), Philip Browning (DCFS), Julia Wood (Department of Public Health), Lexis Rosen (DPH), Eva Vera-Morrow (County Counsel), Laurie Martinez (Department of Health Services)

Second Row (L. to R.) – Anthony Phung (Internal Services Department), Tricia Denson (DCFS), Catherine Mak (DPH), Cecilia Custodio (DCFS), Nayat Mutafayan (DCFS), Jerry Fong (DCFS), Dr. Charles Sophy (DCFS), Ed Bradley (Chief Information Office), Dr. Mitchell Katz (DHS), and Lisa Geoppo (DHS)

Third Row (L. to R.) – Marva Blakely (County Counsel), Dr. Jonathan Fielding (DPH), William T Fujioka (CEO), William Sullivan (Quality & Productivity Commission), Richard Sanchez (CIO), Kimberly Jo (CIO), Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Karen Bernstein (DHS), Dara Smith (Chief Executive Office), Dr. Janet Arnold (DHS), Jivero Roy (DHS), Tom Tindall (ISD)

Bronze Eagle Award: Contractor Alert Reporting Database



First Row (L. to R.) – Catherine Mak (DPH), Yolanda Young (ISD), Dr. Southard (Department of Mental Health), Scott Wiles (CEO), Sheryl Spiller (Department of Public Social Services), Philip Browning (DCFS), Kathy Hanks (DPH)

Second Row (L. to R.) – Marva Blakely (County Counsel), Ng Phan (Auditor Controller), Linh Moran, Cindy Harding (DPH), Dulce Macomber (A-C), Heather McCabe (A-C), Liz Friedman (County Counsel), John Naimo (A-C), Don Chadwick (A-C), Jason Stempinski (A-C), Princess Nelson (A-C), Dr. Mitchell Katz, and Jean Li (DPSS)

Third Row (L. to R.) – Gary Akopya (DPSS), Tom Tindall (ISD), Dr. Jonathan Fielding (DPH), William Sullivan (Quality & Productivity Commission), William T Fujioka (CEO), Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Tricia Denson (DCFS), Kimberly Foster (DCFS), Richard Kushi (DMH), and Diana Flaggs (DCFS)

Performance Measurement Award: Coordinated Services Action Teams



First Row (L. to R.) – Christy Maeder (DMH), Tricia Denson (DCFS), Marvin Southard (DMH), Philip Browning (DCFS), Lisa Sorensen (DCFS), Roberta Spears-Mathews (DCFS), Greg Lecklitner (DMH), and Dr. Charles Sophy (DCFS)

Second Row (L. to R.) – Kumar Menon (DMH), William Sullivan (Quality & Productivity Commission), William T Fujioka (CEO), Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Dr. Laura Andrade (DCFS), and Robin Kay (DMH)

Special Immigrant Status Unit provides legalization services for undocumented youth enabling permanency

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Special Immigrant Status unit (SIS), in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, is dedicated to providing timely lawful permanent resident status to certain DCFS undocumented children. The SIS unit is a specialized program located in Service Planning Area 7 (generally East L.A. and adjacent communities) housed at the DCFS Belvedere office. It is the only unit of its kind, servicing all the Department's nineteen community-based offices, including Adoptions.

Since 1987, the SIS unit has been providing legalization services to undocumented children, who are victims of abuse and neglect, and advocating on their behalf. By filing for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, the SIS unit obtains lawful permanent resident cards known as "green cards" for qualifying undocumented children. The unit also files for replacement of lawful permanent residence cards when appropriate, temporary resident cards, and U.S. naturalization (for young adults ages 18 and over). The unit makes name corrections on green cards and obtains certificates of citizenship for children on post adoption cases. Immigrant victims, adults and children, who may qualify for U-visas, are identified and referred to non-profit immigration organizations in the community that partner with the SIS unit. U-visa certifications are completed for qualifying victims of crime, whose cases were investigated by DCFS, and who are referred by the non-profit immigration organizations to the SIS unit.

Legal status affords DCFS children permanency, the right to remain in the United States, and eliminates the fear of deportation upon emancipation from the child welfare system. Timely referrals to the SIS unit result in savings in revenues for the County as legalized children qualify for state funding to cover services. 🌸



(from L. to R.) Cecilia Saco, Supervising Children's Social Worker; Elizabeth Verjan-Molina, Intermediate Typist Clerk; Maria Rodriguez, CSW III; Sheila Jackson, CSW III; Olga Lopez, Eligibility Workerm II; Patricia Pena, ITC; Gloria Rios, EW II; Veronica Cervantes, CSW III; Angela Espinoza-Irube, EW II; Roxanna Flores-Aguilar, Assistant Regional Administrator

Close up: people you should know



Sheila Rice, Children's Social Worker III
Public Inquiry Section/Ombudsman
(213) 351-5602 or email ricesh@dcfs.lacounty.gov

Robert Curtis, Children Services Administrator I
Public Inquiry Section
(213) 351-5602 or email curtir@dcfs.lacounty.gov

"We will respond to our constituents by telephone, correspondence, e-mail, or in person regarding issues of concern impacting the Department's service delivery."



Elizabeth Esteban, Children's Social Worker III
Youth Development Services Ombudsman Office
(213) 351-5720 or (877) 694-5741 or email lunael@dcfs.lacounty.gov

"I can assist foster and probation youth with their complaints and concerns regarding the Independent Living Program and AB12 (non-minor foster youth) services and availability of resources."



Dragon Naturally Speaking is enterprise speech recognition software that lets you interact with your PC by voice – three times faster than typing – to drive productivity. The software simply turns talk to text. Staff are successfully using the software to document their work in the Child Welfare Service/Case Management System (CWS/CMS), create email messages, write reports and complete forms without having to type. Quotes from Dragon users: “Even with my accent, Dragon worked great! It will definitely cut down on the time I use for typing” - Jackie Hamilton, CSW. “I was resistant to the software at first and, after being trained, I LOVE IT!” - Elvira Lugo, Staff Assistant. “Creating a professional document is much easier for staff. For example: social workers can dictate contacts or court reports in MS Word much faster than they would be able to type it. MS Word has Spell Check so they can edit their document and copy and paste it into CWS/CMS. In addition, using this practice will eliminate the problem of social workers losing data that CWS/CMS failed to save. No more typing a contact or court report over! Thank you Rashad and Paula for all your help.” - Violeta Zepeda, Dragon Coordinator, West San Fernando Valley (SFV).

Dragon Naturally Speaking software Phase II rollout includes the following offices: South County, 70 users ; Covina Annex, 25 users ; Sensitive Unit, 9 users; West SFV/East SFV, 51 users; Belvedere/Corporate Place, 69 users; Vermont Corridor, 96 users; Wateridge, 40 users. Other: Americans with Disabilities Act staffers, 100 users; Hotline, 14 users; Medical Case Management Services, 25 users. As of December 4, 2012, with Phase I and II rollouts, there are 597 Desktop Dragon users. The Dragon Project Team led by Paula Boyd will be rolling out to the rest of the DCFS offices soon. 🇺🇸



Rashad Ryans, Information Systems Analyst I and Paula Boyd, Children Services Administrator II

For more information, please visit: <http://lakids.dcfs.lacounty.gov/dcfs/BISCS2012/dragonspeak/index.aspx>

Every week, a baby in L.A. County suffocates while sleeping.

Is your baby sleeping safely?



- 1 Share a room, not a bed
- 2 Lay baby down to sleep in a crib or bassinet
- 3 Place babies on their back every time— at night and for naps
- 4 Give babies space to breathe — no pillows, bumpers, blankets or toys



ican4kids.org/safesleep



Cada semana en el Condado de Los Angeles un bebé muere de asfixia mientras duerme.

¿Está seguro su bebe mientras duerme?



- 1 Comparte una habitación, no una cama
- 2 Acueste a su bebé en una cuna o moisés para dormir
- 3 Coloque a los bebés sobre su espalda todas las noches y durante las siestas
- 4 Dele espacio a los bebés para respirar — sin almohadas, protectores, cobijas o juguetes



ican4kids.org/safesleep



The Social (Worker) Network



(L. to R.) CSW Jamie Reyes, Marine Private Jesus Ramos, DCFS Director Philip L. Browning, Supervisor Gloria Molina, legal guardians Richard Rios and Richard Cisneros)

On December 18th, foster youth Jesus Ramos opened the Board of Supervisors meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance and then received a scroll from Supervisor Gloria Molina and the Board. With the support of DCFS social worker **Jamie Reyes**, Jesus' legal guardians, and the Five Acres' Wraparound Team, Jesus was accepted into boot camp for the United States Marines Corps at Camp Pendleton. He successfully graduated from boot camp on December 7th and is now a Marine Corps Private. Jesus makes us all proud! 🇺🇸



Glendora CSW Jacquetta Johnson

Delphia Jones, a Court Appointed Special Advocate, wrote a letter to DCFS Director Philip Browning praising the work of Glendora Children's Social Worker **Jacquetta Johnson**. After a child's legal guardianship was terminated at the guardians' request, Jacquetta facilitated a number of evaluations to address the child's special needs. Recognizing that the youth was not receiving the unconditional support he needed, Jacquetta located a suitable, loving home and the youth appears to be stable and happy. Jacquetta's skills were praised in negotiating sensitive problems and facilitating a team approach. Ms. Jones' letter concluded, "She is your greatest public relations tool as she makes DCFS look good." Good job, Jacquetta! 🇺🇸



Betty Malloy (DCFS Homeless Program) crosses the finish line

On November 17th, United Way of Greater Los Angeles welcomed 10,000 eager participants to Exposition Park for its Sixth Annual 5K Run/Walk to end homelessness. The DCFS Homeless Services Unit was represented in full force with Director Browning pacing the troops including **Theresa Rupel, Betty Malloy, Carol Griffin, Tricia Denson, Laura Chiara, Jeremiah Johnson, Jinae Johnson, Yolanda Johnson, Pamela McClester, Rosalind Pillars and Nancy Urquilla**. Thanks for caring. 🇺🇸



CSW Thien-Phuong Do and SCSW Nadya Medrano

Three sisters were removed from their father in 2001 and adopted, but later detained from their adoptive parents in 2006. The sisters were adamant that they did not wish to be adopted again. Children's Social Worker **Thien-Phuong Do**, with the Asian Pacific Program, supported the eldest sister in successfully transitioning out of foster care, and was able to find a foster parent who could care for the two younger sisters. Within a short time, the children and foster parent were considering adoption. The two young women's adoptions were finalized two days before one went off to college! The new family expressed their sincere gratitude to CSW Do and Supervising Children's Social Worker **Nadya Medrano** in advocating for adoption, and ultimately providing both children with a forever family. 🇺🇸



(from L. to R.) Circus owner Alex Ramos, SCSW Lovette Panthier, Brad Wright, Meshun Wright and daughter Melanie, Christine Devine

Former UCLA and NBA player Brad Wright and his wife Meshun are thankful for the many blessings and joy that their three-year-old adopted daughter Melanie brings to their lives. On December 2, they purchased 600 tickets for foster youth to attend the Ramos Brothers Circus in Glendale and also used the occasion to highlight Christine Devine’s work with Wednesday’s Child. A highlight of the night was seeing 7-foot Brad standing in the middle of a globe, as two motorcyclists rode around him,

to the delight of the crowd. “This is our way of giving back,” said Brad, who plans to stage additional circuses and promote the need for foster and adoptive parents. Kudos to San Fernando Valley Supervising Children’s Social Worker **Lovette Panthier** for logistically pulling off the event on short notice. Brad Wright was presented with a Board scroll for his generous contribution, as was Johnny Rockets who provided refreshments for the children in attendance. 🍷



(from L. to R.) Elizabeth Penalver-Vasquez, ARA Glendora; Sarah Dykema, Children’s Ministry Director-Foothill Church; Monica Rivas, SCSW Glendora; Kelly Chakerian, Missions and Outreach Director-Foothill Church; Joe Santoro, Glendora Mayor Pro Tem; Chris Lewis, Lead Pastor-Foothill Church; Jonathan Clark, Adoptions CSW Glendora; Rex White, ARA Glendora; Alejandra Oseguera, parent; Rob Castro, Glendora Chief of Police.

The Glendora DCFS office is building new partnerships! Glendora’s Regional Administrator **Rex White**, Assistant Regional Administrator **Elizabeth Penalver-Vasquez**, Supervising Children’s Social Worker **Monica Rivas** and Adoptions CSW **Jonathan Clark**, partnered with the Foothill Church in Glendora to create a child-friendly visitation center on the church site for families seeking to reunify with their children. On November 8th, the visitation center opened its doors with Glendora City Council representatives, the Glendora Police Chief, DCFS staff and church members in attendance for this festive occasion. 🍷



(from L. to R.) Jeani Schubert, HSA; Roxanna Flores-Aguilar, ARA; Laura Luna, SCSW; Ailene Montalvo, Administrative Secretary; Isaura Campos-Argumosa, SCSW; Angela Saucedo, SCSW; Amelia (Amy) Meneses, HSA

Thanks to various donors and the hard work of Human Services Aides **Amelia (Amy) Meneses** and **Jeani Schubert**, the Belvedere DCFS Office once again had a very successful Thanksgiving food box distribution this year. One hundred and fifty families were provided with all the “fixings,” including a turkey, rice, beans, fresh eggs, tortillas, chorizo, fresh fruits and vegetables, and various non-perishable food items. Wells Fargo employees donated two van loads of non-perishable goods and turkeys. When the employees of the Montebello Chevrolet dealership heard that additional turkeys were needed, they raised \$1,187, which was then matched by the Teague Family Foundation totaling \$2,374. Also contributing to this wonderful holiday tradition were Delphi Academy, C&F Foods, Carmelita’s Foods Inc., La Gloria Foods, and Melissa’s Variety Produce. Amy and Jeani have dedicated many years to this annual event with more families receiving baskets each year. 🍷

THE LAST WORD

Recent Director's Employee Recognition Award Winners



Edgardo Tayag
Human Services Administrator I
Revenue Enhancement Division



Leticia Ozaeta
Children's Social Worker I
Metro North



Reginald Carter
Assistant Regional Administrator
Pasadena



Belvedere Team Decision Making
Belvedere Office
Rosario Mercado, SCSW; Maria Coronel-Aldana,
Intermediate Clerk; Rosa Colorado, SCSW;
Lizette Bonilla, SCSW; Carol Porras, SCSW;
Maria Escamilla, SCSW



Luis Pereira
Supervising Children's Social Worker
West San Fernando Valley
The Service Linkage Specialist Team



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



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Neil Zanville
Dominique Robinson
Elizabeth Orozco
Donnetta Baker
Richard Cervantes

DCFS Workers Recently Celebrating Years of County Service

25 Years: Brenda Spates, Carmelita E. Ramos Calaguas, Caryn M. Burler, Delia S. Burquez, Kathy D. Keys, Lisa Marcella McKay, Maria G. Guerrero, Raymond Hardy, Susan Rourke, Tammy Y. James, Vickie Bradley.

30 Years: Alicia M. Luna-Garcia, Amelia Meneses, Barbara Garcia, Burnett Bell Jr., Linda Thomas Peggy M. Heidelberg-Dunson.

35 Years: Alicia G. Clark, Armando A. Franco, Donna Fearn, Jack Smoot, Lynda J. Hargrave, Richard McCullagh, Salvador Garcia, Sandra Brewster-Brackins, Sandra Smith, Tyrone Allain.

40 Years: Diane H. Reush, Lorraine Johnson, Lynne Aguirre, Margaret Trujillo, Sheila A. Showers Wanda Lunnie.

45 Years: Sharon L. White.

Congratulations to Recent DCFS Retirees

Alba Diaz, Anne Williams, Arletha Pappas, Azalee Schaffer, Barbara Smith, Brynda Thomas, Charles Quintana, Cinderetha Clay, Cleo Robinson, Crystal Cooper-Smith, Cynthia Ocampo, Darlene Wharton, Deana Porter, Gaynor Harris, James Tighe Jr., Jana Giles, Judson Tutwiller, Katherine Banks-Tsegga, Lily Zhu, Lynn Herrion, Marilyn Chairez, Marita Lane, Marsha Bryant, Michael Esparza, Patricia Grant, Paul Che, Robbie Caldwell, Robert Steinman, Rosa Robles, Stella Vickers, Stephen Gibson, Suzanne Menzel, Thelidria Calhoun.