

## A Message from the Executive Director

October 2008, AP-49 was issued creating and outlining the guidelines for administering a compressed work schedule. Since the executive management of the agency has no control over employee pay raises, increases in health insurance premiums, or employee contribution rates to PERS, we felt that compressed time would be something the agency could offer employees to improve morale and the overall workplace experience here at MDHS. The thought at the time was that having regular days off would allow employees to schedule non-critical doctor and dental appointments, and other routine personal business matters thus cutting down on unplanned/unscheduled time off.

Over the passage of time management has reported to me that this is not the case at all. The compressed days have turned into long weekends. People will be off on a Monday for a compressed day and then take leave Tuesday for an activity that could or should have been planned for the compressed day. I want to stress unequivocally that compressed time is a privilege not a right. As long as it is being conducted according to policy and without disruption of services to the public it is a good thing. It appears that some employees, including some managers, have taken an entitlement mentality toward the policy and have chosen to abuse this valuable privilege on a regular basis.

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## Christmas for Hancock County Foster Children



Santa's elves were in Hancock County for Christmas and brought presents for each and every foster child in the county system.

Local businesses joined forces with the Hancock County DHS, Division of Family and Children's Services to provide

Christmas joy for children who are far away from the only homes they have ever known.

Presents ranging from bikes to keyboard pianos which lined the hallways of the MDHS offices during the holiday season.

The coordinator of the "Angel" program is social worker Pat Peterson.

"I've coordinated this program for about 10 years," Peterson said. "Every year I call different companies around town. They each adopt 'angels' so our foster children can receive Christmas gifts and not feel forgotten."

Peterson said that each angel card lists the child's age, measurements and what the child wants for Christmas.

According to Area Social Work Supervisor Pamela Cross, there are approximately 370 children in foster care in Hancock County, a number that fluctuates constantly.

"Between the time we send out the angels and the time we get the gifts," Cross said, "we have more children in the system, so some of our donors send extra gifts."

"I'm just always overwhelmed by the outpouring of generosity from the community."

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Examples of what has been brought to my attention are: missed court dates; supervisors not readjusting schedules to meet important project deadlines; activities not being posted in the month that the service was delivered because the last working day of the month fell on a Compressed Friday; and the most extreme and unacceptable case of them all, an office being closed on a compressed day because there was not enough staff scheduled to work to keep it open.

Our mission here at MDHS that I have made clear since the day that I took this job, is to meet the needs of the public. We serve the most vulnerable citizens in our state. There never needs to be a time that we are not at our best and are unprepared to fulfill our mission to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect, fight against food insecurity, provide energy assistance, and all of the other services that we administer to combat the horrors of poverty and depravation.

I have discussed this matter in-depth with senior management, and now I am calling on all MDHS employees to read the policy, understand that it is a privilege to have this opportunity, cooperate with their supervisors, and to recommit themselves to our mission at hand which is to serve our citizens. I am confident that we can meet this challenge as we have the many others that we have encountered over the past few years. If we cannot, and I am forced to choose between continuing Compressed Time or adequately serving the public, I will not hesitate to do what is best for the needy citizens of Mississippi.

**Richard A. Berry**  
Executive Director

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It makes me very emotional," Social Worker Melissa Matherne said. "I wish I could watch each and every child open their gifts."

"They go through so much when they have to leave their families, schools and all that is familiar to them. I'm very thankful for everyone that donates for our children."

"I just want to thank all of Santa's elves," Peterson said. "Without them, none of this would be possible."

"Due to the generosity of local business and individuals, every foster child in Hancock County received a Christmas gift."

To learn more about how you can help with this program, contact Patsy Peterson at 228-897-5790.



*VFW Post 3253 Ladies Auxiliary donated Christmas presents to Hancock County foster children. Above left, Patsy Peterson accepts a check for the children from VFW 3253 Auxiliary President Cindy Schoonmaker.*

# THE BEACON

For information or to submit articles for the Beacon:

Email: [mdhs.communications@mdhs.ms.gov](mailto:mdhs.communications@mdhs.ms.gov)

Mail: MDHS, Office of Communications

PO Box 352, Jackson, MS 39205-0352



## Foster Parents Needed in Bay St. Louis and across Mississippi

For those looking to make a difference in the lives of children, becoming a foster parent provides a rewarding opportunity to help a child in need. Youth Villages is currently in need of caring adults in the Bay St. Louis area to open their hearts and homes to children who have suffered abuse, neglect or abandonment.

These children need families who will care for them until they can return to their birth families or an adoptive family is found for them.

Foster parents provide children with a safe, nurturing environment and monitor their emotional growth, school progress and physical health. They also serve as positive role models to children who NEED HOPE in their lives.

Youth Villages provides foster parents with 24-hour access to counselors, support groups and a monthly stipend to offset the cost of adding a child to their home. Foster parents also often have a first right to adopt if the child becomes available for adoption.

Foster parents should be over the age of 25 and have a viable income, reliable transportation and be able to pass a background check and home study.

Youth Villages offers free training classes for new foster parents to teach them how to address a child's emotional and behavioral problems, as well as parenting and discipline techniques.

For more information about training classes or how you can change the life of a child, contact Sade Reese, foster parent recruiter at 228-354-9717 or [sade.reese@youthvillages.org](mailto:sade.reese@youthvillages.org).

MDHS is also recruiting for resource homes across the state. Contact your local MDHS county office for more information or call 800-821-9157. Give a home to a child who has none.

## DofE Update: Adventurous Journey for Oakley Students

Recently six young men from Oakley Youth Development Center visited the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science as part of their participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program. The museum outing allowed them to complete the requirements for the DofE Bronze Medal. The 24-week program includes participation in Community Services, Special Skills and Physical Recreational Activities. The award culminates in an Adventurous Journey where students experience something exciting they would not normally have had an opportunity to participate in.

Corey Wright, conservation educator at the museum, took the group on a behind-the-scenes tour to see exhibits of live and preserved animals, and facilities used when receiving and preparing animals for display or research. The young men interacted with an indigo snake, a bearded dragon, a gopher tortoise and a baby alligator, and learned the importance of conservation for everything from insects to a manatee. The highlight, for many of the youth, was seeing the lab where DNA from various animals is extracted and matched to DNA of other various animals to determine if the animals studied qualify as a new species.

With the completion of the museum adventure, these students can be awarded certificates of completion and a Bronze Medal from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award program. It is our hope that the lessons will be remembered and applied once these youth go home.



## Christmas Luncheon for DFO Region 3 North



Region 3 North recently held its second Annual December staff meeting and Christmas luncheon. After a morning of leadership training, the group was treated to a non-traditional lunch of grilled chicken, potato salad and baked beans. The afternoon consisted of policy review and discussions of administrative procedures. Leadership recognitions were awarded to: Leake County Child Support Clerk Holly Morris, Initiative; Rankin County Supervisor Kathey Mosley, Endurance; Attala County Child Support Supervisor Lynn Williams, Obedience; and Attala County Director Sheldon Harmon, Sincerity. Congratulations on these recognitions, and thank you all for serving Mississippi families.

# Choose a Healthy You for 2014

*News and Tips from the ActiveHealth Management On-Site Wellness Team*

*Monthly Wellness webinars are available to help you stay informed about health issues.*

**Click here to access a webinar.**

Meeting Password: wellness

Call-in Information: 1-866-469-3239

Access Code: 652 167 619

Webinar times: 9:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. CST

March 11: Healthy Meal Planning for the Family

April 15: Tips to Fit in Fitness

May 13: Tobacco Free

June 10: Pumping Up Your Metabolism

July 8: Turn the Pressure Down-Blood Pressure

Aug. 12: Know Your Numbers

Sept. 9: ABC's of Diabetes

Oct. 14: Sweet Slumber

Nov. 11: Healthy Holidays

Dec. 9: Calm Waters-Relieve Stress



## CORE EXERCISE: SIDE PLANK

**Muscles Worked:** The side plank works the abdominal muscles on the sides of the body known as the internal and external obliques.

**Description:** Lie on your side with your legs extended out. Place your elbow directly under your shoulder. Your head, shoulder, hip and ankle should all be in alignment with one another. Tighten the abdominal muscles and lift at the hips. Hold for about 3 seconds and then lower back down. During this motion watch that you don't let your hips rotate. Perform this exercise 3-4 repetitions and rest. Repeat this sequence up to two more times.

**We recommend prior consent from your physician before starting any exercise program.**

*Even the longest journey must begin where you stand.*

# OYDC Honors Program Initiative Action

The Oakley Youth Development Center Honors Program is continuing their "Initiative Action" program by volunteering with The Salvation Army and Zoo Area Progressive Partnership.

The Salvation Army Thrift Store burned in January 2014 and the nonprofit was forced to relocate its donation center to 590 Raymond Road in Jackson. The Honors Program immediately offered to help The Salvation Army get back on its feet. Even though the OYDC group was small in numbers, their work spoke as if hundreds were volunteering. The youth greeted people that dropped off donated items and helped unload items from vehicles, including The Salvation Army truck that was packed with items ready for restocking.

The Honors Program youth also participated in the MLK Day Clean Up at the Jackson Zoo sponsored by the Progressive Partnership. Youth worked to clean and plant flowers throughout the park. If you visit the zoo this spring, note the beautiful tulips on the campus that were planted by the OYDC Honors Program.

In addition to performing services at The Salvation Army and the Jackson Zoo, the Honors Program has partnered with and provided volunteer services to Stewpot, the Mississippi Food Network, Pleasant Valley MB Church of Vicksburg, and the 4C's of Clinton.

The Honors Program at Oakley teaches youth how to give back and impact their world for the greater good. These youth are recognizing the valuable contributions they can make as volunteers in their community.



# My Healthy GOALS

## Set my goals for the year

If you're serious about making some changes and getting healthier this year, one of the most important things you should do is set your goals. It's the difference between good intentions and great results.

### 1. Write down your main goal. (Exercise more? Lose weight? Improve health?)

*MY GOAL:*

### 2. Think about why you want to change.

*What is motivating me to change?*

*How confident am I that I can do it?*

Not Very 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very

### 3. What is the very first step you need to take?

*How can I get started?*

### 4. Put your goal into a SMART plan: SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ACTIONS, REALISTIC and TIMING

*SPECIFIC: How will I do it?*

*MEASURABLE: How often will I do it and when?*

*ACTIONS: What actions will I take?*

*REALISTIC: Am I confident that I can do this?*

*TIMELY: When will I start? How long will I do it?*



Brett Watkins,  
your onsite health coach

Speak with a health coach toll-free:

**1-866-939-4721**, Monday–Friday, 7:30 am to 10:00 pm, CST, and Saturday, 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, CST, or visit [MyActiveHealth.com/Mississippi](http://MyActiveHealth.com/Mississippi).



Scan the QR code into your mobile device to get a healthy start.

# County Corner - Quitman and Rankin Counties

This month, our travels take us to Quitman and Rankin counties.

Quitman County is located in the Mississippi Delta region, and is named after John A. Quitman, Governor of Mississippi from 1835 to 1836 and from 1850 to 1851. As of the 2010 census, the population was 8,223.

The county seat is Marks. As of the 2010 census, the city population in Marks was 1,643. Marks is notable for being the starting point of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign in 1968. This was the second phase of the civil rights movement. One of nine "caravans" traveling to Washington, DC, the Marks caravan was named "The Mule Train."



The town of Marks was named after Leopold Marks (1851-1910) who left Germany to avoid conscription by the German army. He landed in New York in 1868. He knew no English and arrived with only 27 cents in his pocket.

Nonetheless, Leopold Marks was Quitman County's first representative to the state Legislature and served in that capacity for eight years. Leopold Marks realized the potential of the Coldwater River region, the dense forests, and the fertile banks of Cassidy's Bayou when he bought a small trading boat and peddled goods up and down the river. He opened a store and began to buy land at 40 cents per acre. He also sold jewelry all across the county until he reached Friars Point, in Coahoma County, which is situated on the Mississippi River.

Marks encouraged the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad to come to the area by giving the railroad company, without cost, the right-of-way through his plantation plus 10 acres of land. Leopold Marks' son Henry donated land to the town to be used as a cemetery.

The official "founding" of the town is considered to be May 12, 1907; and on May 12, 2007, the town celebrated its centennial.

- Earl Hooker (January 15, 1929 – April 21, 1970) – blues guitarist.
- Charley Pride (March 18, 1938 – ) – country music artist.
- Snooky Pryor (September 15, 1921 – October 18, 2006) – harmonica player.
- Sunnyland Slim (September 5, 1907 – March 17, 1995) – blues piano player.
- Barbie Bassett-WLBT Chief Meteorologist and author



Rankin County is one of the fastest growing counties in Mississippi. Located just east of Jackson, the county boasts 7 incorporated cities.

Rankin County School District is home to nearly 19,500 students and 3,000 employees. The district has 27 schools in eight attendance zones, making RCSD the third largest school district in Mississippi.

Named in honor of Christopher Rankin, a Mississippi congressman who served from 1819-1826, the county was established Feb. 4, 1828, from Hinds County

The U.S. Census Bureau states, as of 2010 data, the population of Rankin County was at 141,617 with a 22.8 percent growth since 2000. The county has an area of 800 square miles. Although the county seat is Brandon, the largest city is actually Pearl.



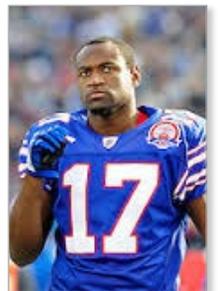
The Ross Barnett Reservoir, on the Pearl River, is a popular spot for all kinds of water recreation, and Brandon boasts excellent family athletic facilities.

The Mississippi Braves baseball team play at Trustmark Park in Pearl.



The River Oaks Woman's Hospital in Flowood features world-class birthing suites and Rankin County's health care index rating was higher than any rural county in the nation.

- Devin Britton, professional tennis player
- Patrick Henry, (1843-1930), U.S. representative
- Volney Howard, Attorney General and U.S. Representative for Texas[15]
- Mamie Locke, political scientist, Virginia state senator
- Justin Mapp, professional soccer player
- Mary Ann Mobley, Miss America 1959, actress and television personality
- Tyler Moore, professional baseball player for the Washington Nationals
- Jerious Norwood, professional football player
- Joe M. Turner, professional magician, mentalist, speaker
- Louis H. Wilson, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Skylar Laine, is an American country singer. She placed fifth on the 11th season of American Idol.
- Justin Jenkins - NFL Buffalo Bills player
- Eric Washington - former NBA player



Next month we look at Scott and Sharkey counties. Until then, take some time and enjoy a day trip through scenic, historic Mississippi.

## Region 4-N Chooses FPS Whitney Black as January's PMW



From left: PMC Ryakko Williams, FPS Whitney Black and ASWS Carolyn McNeel.

Whitney Black, a Mississippi State University graduate and Winston County, Region 4 North Family Protection Specialist was selected as January's Practice Model Worker.

Whitney exemplifies genuineness, respect and empathy with all of her coworkers and clients.

When asked to define the practice model, Whitney said, "The practice model holds you more accountable for the services that you provide to the families, as well as a great tool to use as we provide families with timely and accurate services to meet their needs."

Whitney said that she has desired to be a social worker since childhood and remembers, as a child, wanting to help family and friends overcome their problems.

This lifelong desire is displayed in her work as she utilizes the practice model components. Whitney embraces the practice model and is eager to learn new ways to provide quality services for her clients.

PMC Williams asked Whitney to talk about the most memorable experience she can relate to the practice model and a way that it has been successfully implemented with her families.

Whitney stated, "I love the component that supports working with fathers." She feels that many times fathers are overlooked. She said, "Even if the children are not reunified with their father, the efforts preserve a connection and give children a second chance at having a relationship."

Whitney identifies her families' strengths and needs and works diligently with them so they can become self-sufficient.

Thank you, Whitney, for being a diligent supporter of the practice model and for being a great asset to our agency and families.

## Work Hard. Run Hard at the River



The 2014 Mississippi River Marathon was held Feb. 8 in Greenville. Running in the half-marathon was Staff Attorney Michael McCauley (left), (Yalobusha, Tate and Calhoun counties) and running the full marathon was Staff Attorney Rutledge McMillin (Washington County). This was Michael's first half marathon and Rutledge's ninth marathon. Staff Attorney Jessica Carr (Madison County) cheered them on with signs of support. MDHS is proud of its attorneys who work hard and run hard!

## Pike County Celebrates Christmas



**KUDOS TO PIKE COUNTY FIELD OPERATIONS FOR CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS WITH A GREAT IDEA! WITH A DOLLAR GIFT EXCHANGE, THE OFFICE ENJOYED A FUN TIME TOGETHER FOR CHRISTMAS. THANKS FOR SHARING WITH US!**

## MDHS Employees Demonstrate Character First

During Adult Protective Service's (APS) (Regions 3 and 4) December regional meeting, Hinds County APS, Carol Cooper was awarded for the Character First trait, Meekness: "Yielding my personal rights and expectations with a desire to serve." Carol recently had an opportunity to respond in meekness while remaining professional and continuing efforts to serve clients.



## Character Recognition

In April 2000, Winnie Boyles began her journey with the MDHS, Division of Family and Children's Services, and after several years, transitioned to Economic Assistance. Winnie demonstrates gentleness in many ways on the job, as well as in her personal life. Showing consideration and sharing the concerns of the clients is one of her many strong points. Economic Assistance benefits from Winnie's hard work, her gentle, good nature and her valuable service.



## Region 4 North RIP Meeting

Region 4 North is excited to have a great supportive team that includes strong community support. Region 4-N community partners are always available and work with staff to ensure area children and families receive the support needed. These partners stand ready to help in any way to improve outcomes for families. At a recent Regional Implementation Planning (RIP) meeting, 22 community partners were in attendance. Region 4-N also thanks Region 4-N Director Iris Joiner and State Office staff who also attended the meeting.



## CHARACTER FIRST DEFINITION OF THE MONTH

### MEEKNESS

Having or showing a quiet and gentle nature.



## Local Service for MLK Day



At a program in Tupelo to mark the remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., our own Stephanie Stubbs from the Lee County office was in attendance to lead the crowd in singing. The Rev. Gloria McKinney, pastor of St. Paul, gave the message. "We have to keep telling the story," said the 28-year educator. "The unknown story, an untold history, will lead to a lost generation. We've still got a long way to go, but we'll get there together with the greater love, peace and respect for all mankind," she said. For the present, though, she challenged people to renew their passion for change. Mayor Jason Shelton spoke to the crowd on his commitment to diverse leadership. "We will continue to work until we are one city (Tupelo), one voice, working together for civic and economic progress for all citizens."