

A Message from the Executive Director

I hope that everyone is enjoying their summer. It has really been a hot one but hopefully everyone has been able to take some time off with the kids and grandkids before they head back to school.

I would like to begin by congratulating Will Simpson for being selected to serve on Governor Bryant's staff in the position of policy advisor for Health and Human Services. We appreciate his contributions to the agency over the past three years and are elated that we will continue to work with him in his new assignment.

I also wish Dr. Kim Shackelford the best in her new career endeavors. Simple words cannot express what she has meant to the agency, the profession of social work and, most importantly, the children of Mississippi during her sterling 27 year career in public service. I will always cherish our friendship and sincerely hope that we have the opportunity to work together on projects in the future.

I currently do not have a timetable to fill their deputy administrator positions. Their duties have been divided between Mr. Smith, Mr. Davis and myself. Please do not be distracted by these changes. You can be assured that whether it is a few days or a few months the individuals selected to replace them will be quality professionals that share our values of **Excellent Program Delivery, Outstanding Customer Service, Self-Development** and, most importantly, **Integrity**.

The motion filed in federal court July 21 addressing the Plaintiff's Motion for Contempt in the Olivia Y. lawsuit resulted in Judge Lee entering an agreed order. There has been much discussion about this issue but once

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Five years ago, Beverly Lyons, a Simpson County case manager, wanted to do something meaningful for those battling cancer. She began growing her hair for the purpose of donating it to one of the organizations that collects hair to make wigs for those who have lost theirs due to illness or treatment of diseases such as cancer.

At the Mississippi Department of Human Services, we have many coworkers, family or friends who have been impacted by cancer. Some are survivors. Others have succumbed to the disease.

Through employment with the agency, we are fortunate through our State Health Plan to have an opportunity for early detection with covered annual check-ups and a variety of tests including mammograms.

A Look at the Numbers

The statistics for cancer are alarming. And the need for help for those with cancer is tremendous.

- In Mississippi during 2012, 6,468 people died from some form of malignant neoplasms (tumors).
- About 410 women die each year in the state from breast cancer. Nationally, 1 in 8 U.S. women (about 12%) will develop invasive breast cancer over the course of her lifetime.
- 2.8 million women in the U.S. have a history of breast cancer.
- 14.1 percent of the estimated U.S. cancer cases in 2012 were due to breast cancer.

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again I ask your patience and understanding. When accurate information is available I will share it with each of you.

What we do know at this point is that an organization named Public Catalyst has been retained to conduct an organizational analysis of the functioning of the current Division of Family and Children's Services. They will complete their analysis of child welfare and foster care services, and submit recommendations to the Governor within the next four months.

The analysis will be thorough and the agency's structure, data system, caseload measurement, salary structure and all other relevant factors will be examined. One recommendation that could possibly be made is for DFCS to become a stand-alone agency.

Please understand that this process is just beginning and nothing has been decided at this point. Any publication or person proclaiming to have knowledge of what the recommendations will be prior to the receipt of the report is engaging in nothing but speculation.

Another factor that I mentioned in my Executive Director Statement July 23 is that any major organizational change of this agency, creation of a new agency or increase in funding for DFCS would have to be accepted by the Court and then be approved by the Mississippi Legislature. Should we not be able to come to an agreement after the issuance of the report, Plaintiffs could file a new contempt motion.

I know that at times I sound like a broken record, but the simple truth is that families and children in this state will continue to need our services. Even in this air of uncertainty, we have to remain focused and concentrate on those vulnerable citizens that we serve.

Rickey Berry
Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Human Services

- Breast cancer is the 2nd leading cause of death among non-white women and 3rd leading cause of death for white women.
- 80% of all breast cancer cases are found in women over the age of 50.
- About 40,290 women in the U.S. are expected to die in 2015 from the disease.

How can you help?

Recently, Beverly shared photos and information about her efforts through donating "locks of love" to help those affected by cancer.



For five years, Beverly grew her hair. On July 17, she had it cut and donated nine 12 inch ponytails to Pink Heart Funds to be used to make wigs for those affected by disease.

Pink Heart Funds was begun in 2005 on the Mississippi Gulf Coast as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charity to provide cranial prosthetics (wigs) for children and adults with hair loss disorders including those receiving treatment for breast cancer. Pink Heart Funds provides free breast prosthetics and post-mastectomy bras, and serves as a resource to support the emotional health of those undergoing chemo.

To learn more about breast cancer, go to BreastCancer.org. For information on Pink Hearts Fund, go to PinkHeartFunds.org.



The Beacon

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 PO Box 352, Jackson, MS 39205-0352

7W DFCS Food Drive for Families



7-West DFCS Regional ASWS Deena Asfour noticed a growing need in her area. Many families were underserved and in need of additional food and personal supplies. With school beginning, the added expense of school supplies places a tight squeeze on already struggling families.

The entire Harrison County team got involved and began a drive to collect food and hygiene supplies to be donated to area families.

As an added incentive to participate, a pizza party was held for the division bringing the most supplies. DFCS won this year! The county hopes to make this an annual event to help the local community and the families served.

5-Star Rating Achieved

Congratulations to LaTonya Hill, an in-home care giver, and Regina Lewis, owner of Happy Start Learning Center in Macon who both recently achieved Star Step 5 of the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System. Because of their work and dedication to excellence, both are eligible for the 25 percent ongoing quality bonus. We are proud of their commitment to provide high quality child care. For more information on the program and criteria for rating, go to [MSU Early Childhood](#).



Program Integrity Busts

State investigators from the MDHS Fraud Unit worked from the coast up to the Mississippi Delta in July, to assist local law enforcement with serving warrants for individuals accused of SNAP fraud. Busts include:

- Bolivar County, 5 arrests
- Washington County, 4 arrests
- Harrison County, 9 arrests

SNAP and TANF fraud are usually the result of a client withholding income or household information that could deem them ineligible to receive benefits. Disqualification periods for SNAP fraud can range from 12 months for the first violation to permanent disqualification. Ineligibility is determined by state and federal mandates and can be ordered by the courts as part of sentencing.

If you suspect a store owner, store clerk or client is misusing SNAP benefits, call the Fraud hotline at 1-800-299-6905. SNAP fraud is a crime.

MIECHV TACC in National Newsletter

In April 2013, Mississippi submitted a technical assistance request for guidance in forming a State Advisory Committee. With support of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Technical Assistance Coordinating Center (TACC), the state is applying the collective impact approach to the formation and work of the State Advisory Committee.

Mississippi is unique in that the state did not have a home visiting system in place or any form of state funding for evidence-based home visiting prior to MIECHV. Further, the state does not subcontract with other partners to do the work. All home visitation staff are employed by MDHS.

The State Advisory Committee is in the early stages of the collective impact process and has been focused on understanding who is at the table and who else should be included. The committee includes representatives from inside the agency and outside (e.g., Medicaid, Delta Health Alliance, Head Start, University of Mississippi, Choctaw Nation).

Partners did not fully understand each other's role, services or eligibility requirements, so time has been spent up front in monthly meetings where each program is able to offer a presentation and share its data.

"These conversations have been very helpful. We see that we are all serving the same families and that makes it clear that we need to find ways to better work together. We can all stay in our own lane, but still work together to focus on some of the larger or overlapping pieces," said Division of Family Foundation and Support Bureau Director Vera Butler.

For more information on the home visitation program, contact Vera at 601-359-4853.

Retirements

Jill Washington



Jill Washington "sailed away" in June to retirement after 31 years with Lincoln County Department of Human Services. She will be missed!

Darrell Welch



Regions 5-East and West celebrated with Darrell Welch to honor his 25 years of service with MDHS. He enjoyed a luncheon that included gifts and a certificate to commemorate the event.

Gwendolyn Shannon



Region 2-E congratulates Gwendolyn Shannon on her retirement from DFCS with 25 years of service. A retirement celebration was held June 29 at the Tallahatchie Extension Office.

Gwendolyn has served the agency through the years with her professionalism, superb attention to detail and her ability to stay organized and on schedule.

We wish her the very best.

Penny Owen



EA Supervisor Penny Owen (left) retired with 28 years of service and was treated to a celebration in her honor June 24 at the Tippah County office. On hand to present her retirement certificate was Jean Davis, former Tippah county director.



Marcellus Warren, Cheryl Harris and Richard Adams



Division of Human Resources, Office of Administrative Services took a triple hit with the retirements of three key employees. Marcellus Warren (left) retired with 25 years of state service. She started work for DFA in 1990 and began and working MDHS in 1995 in Human Resources. Cheryl Harris retired with more than 35 years of government service. She worked for the federal government for more than 30 years before coming to MDHS in the 2012. Cheryl says she will miss her MDHS family. She plans to enjoy her retirement with her granddaughter. Richard Adams (not pictured) also retired. He had more than 25 years of service. Thank you all for your years of dedication to state service.

Nancy Moore

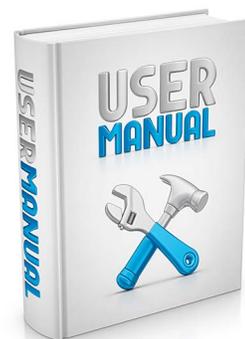


Nancy Moore retired from Alcorn County on June 30 after 15 years with the agency as an Economic Assistance clerk. She will be missed tremendously by her coworkers. She always greeted our customers with a smile. Since retirement Nancy has been keeping the roads hot. She never misses a trip and loves to travel.

DFO Training Highlights



The State Office recently welcomed several groups of eligibility workers and case managers from across the state to Jackson for training. These frontline employees represent the "face of MDHS" to Mississippi residents who come to county offices for assistance. We appreciate the division's diligent work to train and maintain quality staff.



Badges for Baseball Pitches a New Season



The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation (CRSF), Attorney General Jim Hood and the Mississippi Department of Human Services has partnered to celebrate the continuation of the Ripken Foundation's Badges for Baseball program. To kick off the 2015 Badges for Baseball program, 125 youth from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Mississippi, which includes the Sykes, Canton and Walker communities, attended a Mississippi Braves minor league baseball game.

Prior to the Mississippi Braves' game against the Montgomery Biscuits, one youth and adult mentor from the Badges for Baseball program threw out the game's ceremonial first pitch.

"We are thrilled with how much we have been able to expand our presence throughout the state of Mississippi over the years," said Steve Salem, President of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation. "None of this would be possible without the support of Attorney General Jim Hood and the Mississippi Department of Human Services. We owe them a great deal for aiding us in our journey to make a difference for all youth."

"We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, the Attorney General's office and local law enforcement," said MDHS Executive Director Richard Berry. "The Badges for Baseball program has positively impacted the lives of thousands of at-risk youth in Mississippi, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Foundation to bring their message to even more local kids."

Badges for Baseball is a juvenile crime prevention program created by the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice.

It's a simple concept: pair police and children together to play and learn. The program reshapes the relationship between law enforcement and children in communities across the country.

Since adopting the program in 2011, Badges for Baseball has impacted more than 4,800 youth in Mississippi, having

impacted 1,607 youth in 2014 alone. So far in 2015, Badges for Baseball has directly impacted 1,119 youth in Mississippi with participation from more than 50 law enforcement and adult mentors.

Thanks to the continued funding and support from Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood and the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation has provided the state of Mississippi with the resources needed to implement Badges for Baseball. This includes cash awards, baseball/softball and Quickball equipment, a character education curriculum, and opportunities to send deserving youth to overnight summer camp at The Ripken Experience Aberdeen Powered by Under Armour complex in Aberdeen, Maryland.

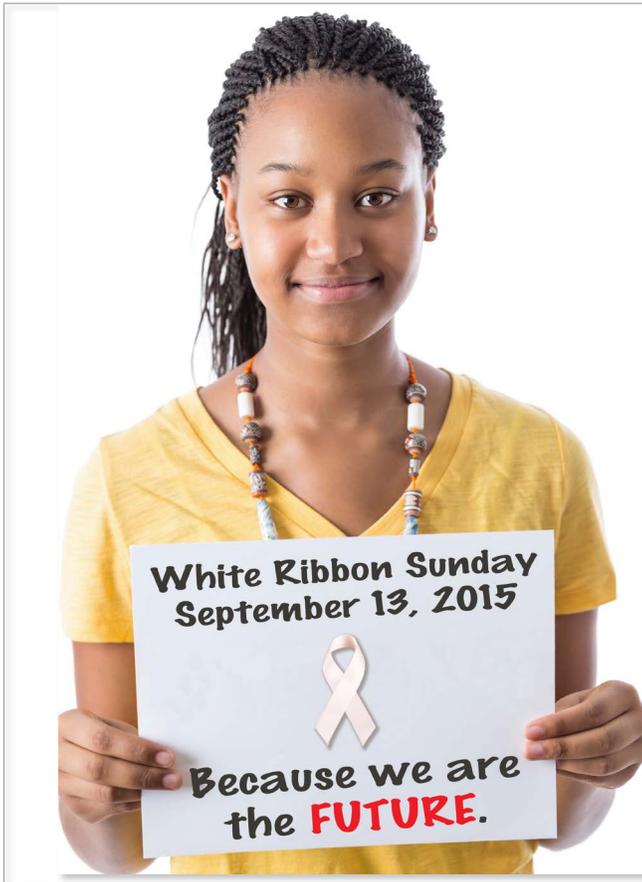
For the last 14 years, the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation has worked tirelessly to implement youth development programs that directly address the problems facing at-risk youth in distressed circumstances across the country.

Inspired by one of the most iconic baseball families, the Ripkens created the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation to honor the legacy of its family patriarch, longtime coach and mentor, Cal Ripken, Sr. The Ripken Foundation use sports-themed programs to bring police officers, youth partners and underserved kids ages 8 to 14 together on a level playing field to learn invaluable life skills.

In addition, the Ripken Foundation's Youth Development Park Initiative creates clean, safe places for kids to play on multipurpose, synthetic surface fields that promote healthy living in an outdoor recreational facility.

In just four years, the Ripken Foundation has created 49 completed parks (eight of which are Ability Fields for children with special needs) in 15 different states, impacting more than 220,000 kids annually. In 2015, the Ripken Foundation aims to impact more than one million children nationwide through its Youth Development Parks and programs.

White Ribbon Sunday Coming Up



This year, the state will recognize September as White Ribbon Sunday month with a signed proclamation by Governor Phil Bryant. The purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness for the need to protect the health and well-being of preteens, teens and single adults in the state.

This statewide observance calls on people to adhere to sexual purity and abstinence from premarital sex. The proclamation states that "we want to remind our citizens that virginity is not merely the physical abstaining from sexual intercourse, but also the mental and spiritual preservation of a person's wholeness until marriage."

Activities during the month will include events to promote abstinence, discourage at-risk behaviors and educate people so as to reduce the risk of unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and other negative outcomes associated with the onset of early sexual activity.

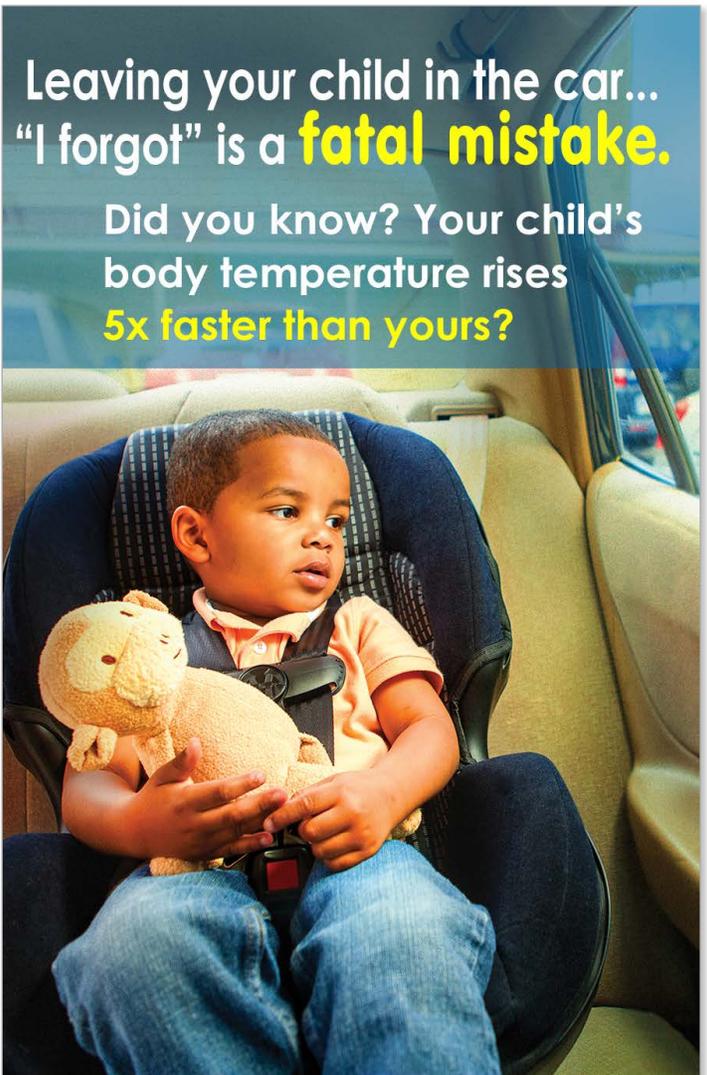
Throughout the month of September, specifically Sept. 13, the Communities Working to Unite Youth, an organization in Rankin County, will be working with area churches to promote activities and messaging.

For more information, contact Tommye Morris at 601-936-3513 or via email at cwuyinfo@gmail.com.

Region 3S Recognition



Warren County Director Terri Cosey (left) was recognized with a certificate of appreciation at the regional meeting for her leadership skills by 3S Regional Director Linda Slaughter.



Leaving your child in the car...
"I forgot" is a **fatal mistake.**

Did you know? Your child's
body temperature rises
5x faster than yours?

To report child abuse call 1-800-222-8000 or go to
<https://www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov>

Health News

One of the most overlooked types of exercise, especially by women tends, to be weight-lifting, also known as strength training.

Strength training has been shown to benefit your heart, improve your balance, strengthen your bones and help you lose weight.

Benefits to Strength Training

- 1. Helps keep the weight off for good.** Not only does strength training aid in shedding pounds, it helps maintain weight loss. A recent study revealed that women who followed a weight-training routine three times a week increased the amount of calories burned during normal daily activities (in addition to those burned during exercise), which helps them with their weight loss goals.
- 2. Protects bone health and muscle mass.** After puberty, whether you are a man or a woman, you begin to lose about 1 percent of your bone and muscle strength every year.
- 3. Makes you stronger and fitter.** Strength training is also called resistance training because it involves strengthening and toning your muscles by contracting them against a resisting force.
- 4. Helps you develop better body mechanics.** Your balance and coordination will improve, as will your posture. Strength training can reduce your risk of falling by as much as 40 percent, a crucial benefit, especially as you get older.
- 5. Plays a role in disease prevention.** Studies have documented the many wellness benefits of strength training. If you have arthritis, strength training can be as effective as medication in decreasing arthritis pain. Strength training can help post-menopausal women increase their bone density and reduce the risk of bone fractures. And for the 14 million Americans with type 2 diabetes, strength training along with other healthy lifestyle changes, can help improve glucose control.
- 6. Boosts energy levels and improves your mood.** Strength training will elevate your level of endorphins (natural opiates produced by the brain), which will make you feel great. As if that isn't enough, strength training has been shown to be a great antidepressant, helps you sleep better and improves your overall quality of life.
- 7. Burns more calories.** You burn calories during strength training, and your body continues to burn calories after strength training, a process called "physiologic homework." More calories are used to make and maintain muscle than fat, and in fact strength training can boost your metabolism by 15 percent — that can really jumpstart a weight loss plan.

Information from Everyday Health

Did you know...

A healthy lifestyle involves many choices. Among them, choosing a balanced diet or healthy eating plan. So how do you choose a healthy eating plan? Let's begin by defining what a healthy eating plan is.

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010, a healthy eating plan:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts.
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium) and added sugars.
- Stays within your daily calorie needs.

Do I have to give up my favorite comfort food?

No! Healthy eating is all about balance.

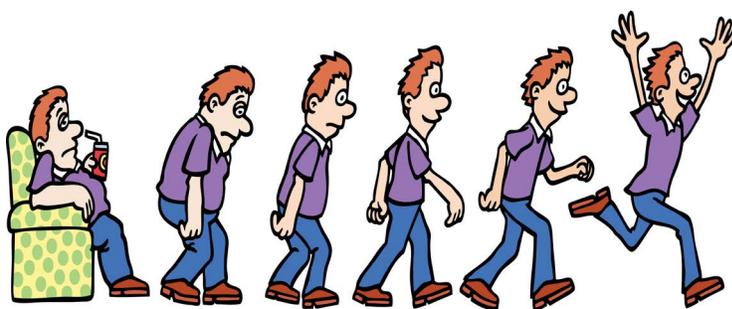
Eat them less often. If you normally eat these foods every day, cut back to once a week or once a month. You'll be cutting your calories because you're not having the food as often.

Eat smaller amounts. If your favorite higher-calorie food is a chocolate bar, have a smaller size or only half a bar.

Try a lower-calorie version. Use lower-calorie ingredients or prepare food differently. For example, if your macaroni and cheese recipe uses whole milk, butter and full-fat cheese, try remaking it with non-fat milk, less butter, light cream cheese, fresh spinach and tomatoes. Just remember to not increase your portion size.

For more ideas on how to cut back on calories, see [Eat More Weigh Less](#).

Couch-to-5k Going Strong



We have a group from the State Office participating in Couch-to-5k, a program that trains runners to run a 5k or more. Our group, led by Program Integrity Investigator Robert Jackson, has continued to run despite the heat. We meet as a group each Tuesday afternoon at the Natchez Trace Overlook Park and Saturday mornings at 7 a.m. along Spillway Road in Brandon. It has been such a joy to watch the group encourage each other and grow in their abilities and strengths. The C25k team plans to participate in several upcoming runs. All are looking forward to cooler temps!