

THE BEACON



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SELF-DEVELOPMENT

OUTSTANDING
PROGRAM DELIVERY

EXCELLENT
CUSTOMER SERVICE

Winter 2015/2016

A Message from the Executive Director

I am officially announcing my retirement as the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services effective January 31, 2016. My work life of 34 years with the State of Mississippi, especially the 25 years spent at MDHS, have been totally rewarding and fulfilling. I have been blessed beyond my wildest dreams.

As Solomon scribed in *Ecclesiastes 3:1* as he lamented life almost three thousand years ago: "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven." Although I understand that there comes a time to move on and realize that change is constant, the decision to retire from MDHS is possibly the most difficult one that I ever had to make in my life. I love the agency and especially the caring, dedicated, honest, hardworking people that make it up. My decision to retire is being made for health reasons and no other. You deserve only the best from your leader and my recovery from the heart attack has limited my ability to give you my all.

I have been honored beyond words to have served as your Executive Director. I have also been honored to have served in Governor Bryant's administration. The confidence that he placed in me by allowing me to serve each and every one of you as your leader is humbling and gratifying. I feel very strongly that the agency has come a long way in the past four years. My biggest disappointment is that I will not be able to continue on as I had planned to see some of our initiatives reach their full potential.

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Meet Our New Executive Team!



*Deputy Executive Director
Garrig Shields*

Garrig is originally from Louisville, Mississippi and attended Mississippi State University for his undergraduate degree. He then earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Mississippi. Prior to his latest position with the Attorney General's office, he was the Senior Attorney for the Executive Director's Office (EDO) under Mr. Berry. Garrig is very excited to return to MDHS as the Deputy Executive Director. Garrig and his wife Lauren of four years live in Ridgeland, MS with their goldendoodle, Guinevere.

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Although it is time to move on and leave my MDHS family, I have the love and support of the Berry family and plan to devote full time to being "Papaw" for my son and daughter and my five wonderful grandchildren. Ms. Donnie and I plan to travel, do a little fishing and of course continue to follow our beloved Rebels.

I have formed lifetime friendships here at MDHS and should any of you ever need my help you are certainly welcome to call on me at any time. I will remain an advocate for MDHS and committed to the principles of conservative, responsible government based on service to our citizens for the remainder of my life.

Once again, it has been an honor to serve as the leader of the finest, most compassionate group of people anywhere in the world. Thank you all for your kindness and support throughout the years. May God continue to bless each and every one of you!

Rickey Berry
Executive Director



*Deputy Administrator for Programs
Cathy Sykes*

Cathy began her career as an eligibility worker in Grenada County in 1976, then was a social worker, social work supervisor, county director, regional director and director of Field Operations. She has been married 39 years to Mike Sykes and have two children, Brian who is 35 and Meggie, who is 27. They also have three grandchildren Kayleigh, Taylor and Corbin. She loves spending time with them and she loves sports.



*Deputy Administrator for Administration
Jacob Black*

We welcome Jacob Black as deputy administrator for administration. Jacob is originally from McCool, Mississippi. He attended Mississippi State University for his undergraduate degree and is a graduate of Mississippi College School of Law. Jacob began his work with the agency as a Child Support Enforcement Attorney in Hinds County before moving to work for the Executive Directors office on contracts and general advising. Jacob and his wife Ryan are expecting a baby boy in June 2016.



The Beacon



For information or to submit articles for the Beacon:
Email: mdhs.communications@mdhs.ms.gov
Mail: MDHS, Office of Communications
PO Box 352, Jackson, MS 39205-0352

Christmas at Oakley



Oakley Youth Development Center held their Annual Christmas Program which was sponsored by Forward Lookers Federated Club. OYDC would like to say thank you!



Youth Services Director James Maccarone delivering holiday cheer at the Annual Christmas Program. Thanks to the Division of Youth Services and Division of Program Integrity for support!

DFO Training



The State Office recently welcomed child support enforcement officers 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.

APHSAs Assists Leadership Development Team



The Leadership development team developed a partnership with APHSA (American Public Human Services Association) to improve organizational effectiveness within different departments of MDHS. The Leadership team has incorporated aspects of organizational effectiveness into their 'Monday Morning Leadership' program that has been operating within the agency for the better part of a decade. Participants in this year's program included field staff members, division directors, as well as section managers.

Participants in 'Monday Morning Leadership' gain basic supervisory skills in workplace situations, develop core leadership skills, and develop relationships with leaders across the agency. Skills taught in the class include: MDHS core values, effective communication, self-development, teamwork, emotional intelligence, workplace trust and customer service.

The Organizational Effectiveness program materials aim to build capacity, and boost the leadership culture of an organization, through the learning of systemic and systematic approaches for problem-solving. Organizational Effectiveness is designed to have an impact on the organization, in addition to having practical applications on a personal level. The participants learn and apply the 'DAPIM' (Define, Assess, Plan, Implement, Monitor) process of problem-solving.

Class instructors have concluded that the latest class was highly successful. After listening to the classes' final group project presentation participants plan to use their acquired knowledge in their day-to-day work. Instructors commented, "Based on feedback from the participants and demonstrated improvement through their leadership projects, integrating Organizational Effectiveness into our leadership development curriculum has proven to be a great success in helping our leaders to apply the leadership lessons learned through the class."

DAAS Recognized for Community Assist Program



From left, Virgis Osby, Deborah Snyder, Janie O'Keefe (Executive Director), Tricia Peyton, Kathy Stafford (AmeriCorps VISTA), Cara Tate and Carolyn Stafford.

For the second consecutive year, the Division of Aging and Adult Services was recognized by Gulfport's Disability Connection for its partnership and assistance with the Mississippi Community Assist program.

Formed through the AmeriCorps, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), the Community Assist Program serves low-income communities via partnership with nonprofit and public organizations.

VISTA, a national service program, was designed to fight poverty. President John F. Kennedy originated the idea for VISTA which was founded in 1965. The movement evolved into the AmeriCorps in 1993 which embodies a network of programs. VISTA volunteers serve for one year by performing a variety of capacity building service activities to address the organization's needs (e.g., fundraising/grant writing, volunteer recruitment, program/system development, staff training, etc.). Throughout the service year, the volunteer member is given a "living allowance" below poverty level to fully immerse him/her in their project and the community they are serving. These capacity building service activities ensure the continuation of anti-poverty programs within the local community.

At the end of the year, the member is eligible for either an Education Award (\$5,550) for college expenses or an End-of-Service Stipend (\$1,500). Currently, VISTA member Kathy Stafford serves Disability Connection in this capacity under the sponsorship of the Division of Aging and Adult Services. She is supervised directly by Program Administrator/VISTA Supervisor Brandon Davis and is provided on-site resources and organizational guidance by Disability Connection Executive Director Janie O'Keefe.

Disability Connection is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated in creating an all-around connected community. The organization does this by informing, assisting and

participating in collaborations which engage individuals with disabilities. Its clients are encouraged to fully participate in their communities, eliminate barriers, and foster cooperation and understanding. In 2015, through the "Employment Connection," which is one of Disability Connection's various programs, 33 people were employed with the help of job-seeking services (e.g., resume writing, interview skills, etc.), and 112 were served through its financial literacy program which teaches how to balance a budget, manage debt and learn basics in entrepreneurship.



Service Certificates Awarded

Sharon Papas, Noxubee County director was recently recognized for 35-years of service. Congratulations!



Lola Daniels, supervisor in Lowndes County was recently presented with a 20-year pin and a certificate of service. Congratulations!



Regional Meetings/Holiday Parties



Region 6



Region 5W

Showing Our Appreciation

Francis Pearce, supervisor in Forrest County was recently presented with a 20-year certificate of service by Regional Director Dennis Miller. Congratulations!



Clay County Director Janet Turman and Neshoba County Director Kimberly Price received certificates on behalf of their staffs' special projects efforts. Congratulations!



The Gift of Giving



Latoya Jones and Deborah Graham presented a certificate of appreciation and festive balloons to their special visitor.

A visitor from a local church stopped by the Wayne County DHS before Christmas stating that her church wanted to do something special for a family in need for the holidays. LaTanya Vaughan and the Wayne County staff had a particular family in mind. They recommended a family who recently lost everything in a tragic house fire.

The woman later returned to the office and said her church would be donating a \$500 Walmart gift card towards the family. During her visit to Walmart, she spoke to the store manager and he also wanted to donate an additional \$35 for the family! What a gesture!

Quality Stars!



The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development is proud to announce that Melissa Tenhet's Child Development and Family Studies Center has achieved Star Step 5 of the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System!

Also, congratulations to Donna McNair and Hope James for successfully fulfilling the requirements to achieve a Five-Star Rating!

The Mississippi Quality Star Rating program is designed to improve the level of quality in child care centers across the state.

Quality care is measured by an evaluation using the Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS) & by the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS).

The instruments measure the quality of child care space and furnishings, schedule, parent involvement, teacher-child interaction & safety.

To locate an MQS participating center, visit: www.childcareinfo.ms.

January is National Human Trafficking Awareness Month

It's not okay, #endtrafficking.



Brad Dennis of the Klaaskids Foundation training MDOT Enforcement Officers on how to assess and respond to human trafficking incidents in July 2015.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which traffickers use force, fraud or coercion to control victims for the purpose of engaging in commercial sex acts or labor services against his/her will. Human trafficking is not foreign to **Mississippi with 31 cases being reported in 2015** alone.

Every year, human traffickers generate billions of dollars in profits by victimizing millions of people in the United States and around the world. Traffickers are estimated to exploit 20.9 million victims, with an estimated 1.5 million victims in North America alone. We must all do our part to help end this tragic and heinous crime.

For more information on how you can help stop human trafficking, visit traffickingresourcecenter.org.



#endtrafficking

IT'S NOT OKAY
END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

JSU JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY
College of Public Service
School of Social Work

Fourteenth Annual Mississippi Child Welfare Institute Conference

*"Supporting and Preserving
Children, Youth and
Families Through
Community Welfare"*



DR. DAVID CHANDLER
OPENING KEYNOTE



DR. SADHANA DHARMAPURI
PLENARY



DR. NNEKA HOLDER
PLENARY



MRS. PEARL DOWELL
PLENARY



DR. SAMUEL L. JONES
LUNCHEON SPEAKER



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2016
5:30 P.M. – 6:30 P.M.

Youth Empowerment Session
Speaker: Lawrence Pillers
Former NFL Player

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
8:15 A.M. – 5:30 P.M.

Plenary Sessions and Workshops

FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2016
8:30 A.M. – 1:30 P.M.

Plenary Session, Workshops and
Closing Luncheon

SPEAKERS

DR. DAVID CHANDLER

*Executive Director
Division of Family and Children's Services
Mississippi Department of Human Services*

**DRS. SADHANA DHARMAPURI
AND NNEKA HOLDER**

*University of Mississippi Medical Center,
Adolescent Medicine*

MRS. PEARL DOWELL

*Social Worker and Early Learner Consultant
President/Managing Consultant for the Early
Learning Consulting Group*

DR. SAMUEL L. JONES

*Professional Speaker, Author, and Educator
Owner, Life Changing Presentations*

REGISTRATION FEES

PROFESSIONALS

\$125 (Before January 18)
\$175 (After January 18)

STUDENTS

\$45

EXHIBITORS

\$250

SW LICENSURE RENEWAL

\$25

#MCWI2016



January 27-29, 2016
Marriott Hotel Downtown
200 E. Amite Street
Jackson, MS 39201
Phone: (601) 969-5100

The Mississippi Child Welfare Institute Conference provides professional development and network experiences to diverse professional disciplines, students, faculty, and community persons committed to child welfare. Child welfare concerns include foster care, adoption, education, health, mental health, and safety.

For more information about the conference and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Dr. Theresia Johnson-Ratliff at 601.979.8899 or 601.979.8871. e-mail: theresia.johnson-ratliff@jsums.edu

MDHS Trainer's BOOTCAMP:

A Music Motivated and Fun Filled 30 Minutes packed with exciting exercises with New Routines everyday!

Sessions Begin

Tuesday January 26, from
12:00pm – 12:30pm

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

Location: MDHS Fitness Center

Trainer: Aaron Tullos

