



The Beacon

APRIL 2012



An Update from the Executive Director

While writing this article, I happened to glance at my calendar and after a brief calculation realized that it is my one-hundredth day on the job as executive director. Time really flies and it seems as you get older it passes even faster. I feel it is very important to view every day as a gift from God and try to achieve something meaningful each day. We have a unique opportunity here at MDHS to accomplish this since there are so many in need of our services.

Last month I mentioned some new initiatives that we were undertaking for the new year. I will update you on those and a couple of new ones. The initiative to move child care licensure from the Mississippi State Department of Health to MDHS did not materialize. We will continue to work together in partnership with the Department of Health as we have for many years to provide the best service possible to both providers and the children in licensed day care centers.

I am happy to report that the project to take the child care certificate program in-house by the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development has been a huge success. Licensed and in-home providers are now submitting their ledgers electronically resulting in more accurate data and payments. We have been able to increase the payments to providers from once to twice per month by eliminating paper records, mail time and manual data

verification. Through these cost saving measures, 1,000 children of low-income working families who were on the waiting list will now have access to child care through the certificate program.

MDHS and the Department of Health met the deadline outlined by Governor Bryant in his State of the State address to develop a plan to reduce teen pregnancy in Mississippi. Governor Bryant has approved the plan and endorsed an ambitious goal to reduce teen pregnancy by 15 percent over the next five years. A Blue Ribbon Committee, co-chaired by myself and Dr. Mary Currier, has been busy implementing the plan.

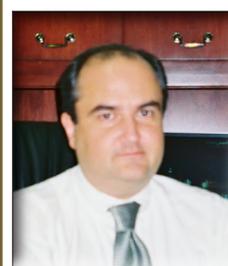
Ten sub-committees have been formed and are working to identify resources and energize the communities in the effort. An exciting aspect of this initiative is that all the committees have youth representation. It became apparent early on that listening to the young people facing these challenges each day is the best way to learn about and address the problem.

Finally, I am proud to introduce six new members of the executive team. These new leaders bring a mix of experience and youth and boundless enthusiasm to the team. I am honored to serve with them.

Richard A. Berry
Executive Director

New Faces in New Places at MDHS

DEPUTY APPOINTMENTS



*John Davis
Deputy Administrator
for Programs*

We welcome John Davis as Deputy Administrator for Programs. John is no stranger to the agency, having put in years of service. John started as an eligibility worker and was promoted to county director before moving to the State Office several years back. John loves to travel, having visited most of the countries in Europe with his teenage nephew. However, he states his heart is in the many mission trips he has been part of in Central and South America.



*Will Simpson
Deputy Administrator
for Administration*

Newcomer to the agency, Will Simpson joins us from a private law practice in the Jackson area. Will is originally from *Clarksdale* but currently lives in Madison. He and wife Allison have one son, William, age five and are expecting a girl that William wants to name "Batgirl," but more appropriately will be named Alicia Clare (Ali). They have two basset hounds that round out the household. Will is an avid reader and enjoys movies.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Child Abuse Prevention Events Scheduled
- Casey Family Programs and Memphis Peabody Welcomes MDHS, Division of Family and Children's Services
- Experience Works - Employees that Make a Difference



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

DIVISION DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS



Jim Maccarone, Division of Youth Services

Division of Youth Services Director Jim Maccarone has spent the past five years focused on improving the quality of life and educational opportunities for youth at the Oakley Youth Development Center (OYDC). He is married to the former Karen L. Verell, MD of Jackson and they have three children and one grandson. Jim enjoys singing in his church choir, teaching Sunday School and working

around the house. The Maccarone's also have two dogs that rule the roost and are very much part of the family. When Jim is not chauffeuring his youngest to soccer games year round he enjoys reading and spending time with his family. Prior to joining MDHS in 2007 Jim was the assistant headmaster at a private school in Greenville and owned his own travel agency. Jim is retired from the U.S. Marine Corps.



Cathy Sykes, Division of Economic Assistance

Cathy Sykes is certainly no stranger to MDHS. She worked her way up the ranks, starting as an eligibility worker 35 years ago(!!!) before her promotion to division director for *Economic Assistance*. Cathy lives in Duck Hill where she commutes to Jackson from each day. She has been married for 35 years to husband, Mike. They have two children and three grandchildren. When not at the office, Cathy enjoys the outdoors. She likes to work in the yard, play with her grandchildren and ride four-wheelers. She also loves to go to Ole Miss football games.

Melinda Bertucci, director for the *Division of Aging and Adult Services*, is an integral part of the division that supports the aging and vulnerable adults in the state. Prior to this appointment, Melinda served as the division's staff officer, division planner and program manager. Melinda has been a part of the division for five years. Melinda is married to Brett and together they have one precious 15-month-old daughter, Carlee. Melinda grew up in Westerville, Ohio and went to college in Richmond, VA at Virginia Commonwealth University. They currently reside in Gluckstadt.



Mike Gallarno, Division of Family and Children's Services

Division of Family and Children's Services Director Mike Gallarno has worked with DFCS since 2008 and has more than 26 years of state service. He is married to Maggie Hanbury Gallarno and has two children, Daniel, 17 and Millie, who will be 7 in June. Work with DFCS has been focused on meeting the terms of the Olivia Y lawsuit settlement which has included development

of the DFCS Continuous Quality Improvement Unit. His passion for families and children's welfare spills over to volunteering with the Ronald McDonald Children's Charities, the Ronald McDonald House and other charitable efforts.



Melinda Bertucci, Division of Aging & Adult Services



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To report abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult, call:

Mississippi Centralized Intake

1-800-222-8000

www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov

You can remain
anonymous.
Just don't remain
quiet.

Page 3 April 2012

Child Abuse Prevention Events Scheduled

Each year in April, the agency promotes child abuse prevention and reporting through a series of events hosted statewide.

These events are key to reducing abuse and neglect in Mississippi. And for those who think making a report is not "their job," reporting is everybody's business. Abuse and neglect goes unreported many times because people are afraid to get involved or don't want to interfere. But reporting is important. *Reports can be made online or by calling the Hotline at 1-800-222-8000.*

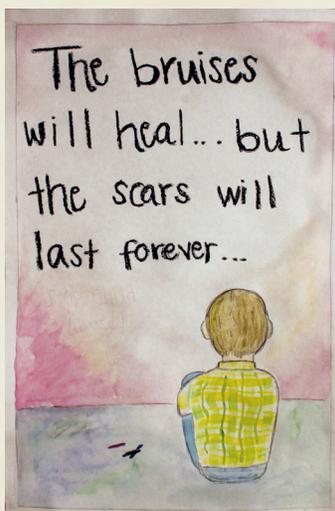
Last fiscal year in Mississippi, there were 21,409 reports of abuse or neglect investigated statewide. Of that number, 5,290 were shown to be evidenced cases.

The highest number of investigations were in Hinds County at 1,582, followed by Harrison county at 1,557 investigations. The county in the state with the lowest number of reported cases was Issaquena.

Evidenced reports range from cases of physical neglect to exploitation with physical neglect having the highest number of reported evidenced cases.

The DFCS, Prevention Unit works extremely hard to advocate reporting and awareness through public awareness campaigns, interviews and local community events. They also host the Annual *Picnic for Prevention at LeFleur's Bluff State Park* in Jackson which partners the agency with community leaders, agencies and organizations to help the public understand signs of abuse and where to report suspicions of abuse or neglect. This year attendees were also eligible for reduced admission to the *Mississippi Natural Science Museum*, the *Mississippi Children's Museum* and LeFleur's Bluff State Park.

The Picnic for Prevention coincided with many MDHS sponsored events across the state that offered information on child abuse prevention.



The annual Stop the Hurt Conference was held April 17th at *St. James Catholic Church*. Featured speakers included social worker Danielle Seale and Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Randy Pierce. The conference was open to professionals and volunteers from across the community with attendees eligible for CEUs.

"We can't do it by ourselves," said Shelia Nabors, the regional community partnership coordinator for DFCS. "It takes the whole community. We all have a role in keeping children safe."

Advocates in Pontotoc and Tupelo also held awareness events. At the Pontotoc courthouse square, organizers collaborated and shared community resources. At the event held at the *University of Mississippi-Tupelo*, speakers focused on issues surrounding child abuse and sexual assault.

Child abuse is a problem across the country, said Kim Shackelford, associate professor of social work at the University of Mississippi and it can happen even in financially stable families that appear to have a fairy tale life. "Child abuse knows no boundary," Shackelford said. "There's equal opportunity for abuse and neglect."

"Economic difficulties, an increase in parental stress and substance abuse have impacted the number of cases of child abuse and neglect," said Carrie Coggins, MDHS area social work supervisor.

The eight-county region in northeastern Mississippi has piloted a new practice model for MDHS that emphasizes smaller case loads for social workers with more intensive contact with families and more involvement by community stakeholders, such as doctors, mental health professionals, teachers and other community leaders.

Remember, make the call. You can remain anonymous. Just don't remain quiet. Report abuse.

Top Ten Alternatives to Lashing Out at Your Child:

1. Put your hands over your mouth and count to 10. Or better yet, 20.
2. Stop and take three deep breaths.
3. Call a parent and/or friend.
4. Take a brisk walk to let off steam while someone responsible watches your child.
5. Take a hot bath or splash cold water on your face.
6. Pick up a pencil and write down your thoughts.
7. Stop and think about something positive your child has done or said lately.
8. Turn on the radio or television.
9. Hug a pillow.
10. Call 1-800-222-8000 for prevention information.



Casey Family Programs and Memphis Peabody Welcomes MDHS, Division of Family and Children's Services



MDHS, DFCS Field Operations Director Tammy Miller, DFCS Regional Director Tracy Malone, Executive Director Richard (Rickey) Berry and Deputy Administrator for Family and Children's Services Lori Woodruff recently presented information at the [Memphis Peabody Hotel](#) on the many positive improvements being made at MDHS in the area of family protection, reunification and preservation. The Casey Family Programs event was held to highlight the tremendous child welfare reform efforts taking place in our state. Our team had the opportunity to present information on our efforts to numerous states and the Casey Family Programs. MDHS, DFCS is currently engaged in a partnership with Casey Family Programs to impact the service provision and ultimate outcomes of the division's responsibility to children in state custody.

Casey Family Programs first became involved with DFCS through a Permanency Values Statewide Event several years ago. This event led to intensive round table sessions with the permanency staff who oversee cases of children who have been in state custody 36 months or more. To date, Permanency Round Tables have been held in DFCS Regions 2-W, 5-W and 7-E with dramatic outcomes already noted.

The next Round Tables are scheduled this month for Regions 1-N, 1-S and 2-E.

The goal of Permanency Round Tables is to move a child into permanency or to facilitate stronger permanent connections for every child in care. Our goal is permanent placement for each child. We believe that no child should grow up in foster care, a system which was designed as "temporary" placement for a child brought into care.

Casey Family Programs is also engaged with the state in the development of several plans to improve services including a workforce recruitment and retention plan; a plan to move toward performance-based contracting; and a parent representation court project. Casey will also assist the agency in messaging the division's mission and vision for the families we serve.

A big event, "Mississippi Make It Happen. Building Communities of Hope!" is scheduled for May 10, 2012 at the Mississippi Children's Museum. DFCS and the entire MDHS is looking forward to a great turnout for that event where we will turn our focus to communities being the foundation for the future of Mississippi's families and our children. The various tasks that Casey Family Programs has committed to work with Mississippi on all provide support for the roll-out of the Mississippi Practice Model.

The Mississippi Practice Model is our initiative to reform child welfare service delivery in Mississippi in a manner that will create sustainable, systemic positive change. Mississippi sees the success of the roll-out of the Practice Model as the key to the overall success of child welfare reform in the state. The Practice Model was developed in partnership with the Center for the Support of Families. The Casey Family Program initiatives are successfully impacting the implementation of our Practice Model.

When you put it all together, "It's a beautiful thing," said Lori Woodruff.

For more information on Casey Family Programs, go to: <http://www.casey.org/>.



The mission of Casey Family Programs is to provide and improve – and ultimately prevent the need for – foster care. Since 1966, Casey Family Programs has provided high-quality foster care, kinship care and transition services to improve the lives of children and families across the country. Today, we are working with children, families and communities to ensure that all children can be raised in a safe and permanent family. Building on more than 40 years of experience in the field, we provide strategic consulting services to help public child welfare agencies improve their services. We educate state and federal lawmakers on the need for public policy changes that will help child welfare systems provide effective services for children and families.

Experience Works Employees Who Make a Difference

Within many of our county offices are some special people who help keep the day-to-day operations of the office running. These volunteers from *Experience Works* help county offices with activities such as answering the phone, opening the mail and greeting customers. Carolyn Ann Pugh is one of the many across the state who are a part of the program. Mrs. Pugh works in the Panola County DHS office.



Experience Works is a national, charitable, community-based organization. Originally named Green Thumb and chartered in 1965 as a small, rural demonstration program, Experience Works has grown to be the nation's leading provider of training, employment and community service for low-income older people. The program helps low-income seniors with multiple barriers to employment get the training they need to find good jobs in their local communities. The largest program offered by Experience Works is the *Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)*. This program, funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act, as well as state and local grants, helps thousands of low-income individuals, age 55 and older, throughout the United States.

Through this program, seniors benefit from training, counseling, and community service assignments at faith-based and community organizations in their communities, prior to transitioning into the workforce.

Participants are placed at eligible host agencies (primarily at faith-based and community organizations) for which they are paid the minimum wage for an average of 20 hours per week. A host agency is either a private nonprofit organization (other than a political party) that is tax exempt under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue code of 1954, or a public agency operated by a unit of government.



The Attala County DHS office of Child Support Enforcement utilizes the Experience Works program by having Judy Dees serve as the receptionist for their office. Mrs. Dees has been in this position for the past two years and has been a delight to know and work with. She was featured in the Clarion Ledger's

June 8, 2011 edition as the face for Experience Works and the need for continued funding in promoting jobs for seniors.

Robert Kendrick works part-time as a Senior Aid in Lauderdale County. Mr. Kendrick began his service with the Senior Aid Program in March 2009 where he worked with Feed By Faith and the Red Cross of Lauderdale County. He began working with the Lauderdale County DHS in March 2012 as a custodian, but we found we could utilize his talents in a more productive way by allowing him to work our telephone switchboard. Mr. Kendrick is using this training in hopes of gaining full-time employment in the service industry because he feels his mission in life is to help others who are less fortunate.



In Pontotoc County, Joyce Forman helps 18 hours a week by answering the phone and greeting clients which is invaluable because it frees the clerk to perform other administrative duties. Mrs. Forman also works on the Shredding Project to ease paper overcrowding. Thank you to all our Experience Works volunteers and employees.



From July 2009 to July 2010, *EXPERIENCE WORKS*:



- Seniors in our programs contributed more than 14 million hours of community service;
- 31,142 older workers in 30 states and Puerto Rico were served by the Senior Community Service Employment Program;
- Served more than 10,000 local faith-based and community organizations;
- 3,288 older workers got jobs;
- More than 55,600 low-income seniors found employment through the program.

Hinds County Hits a Home Run with Staff Development Trainings



On Wednesday March 21, 2012 Hinds County Department of Human Services held it's monthly Leadership and Staff Development Enrichment Workshop. This activity was coupled with a graduation ceremony for staff who attended a four week class in Leadership and Staff Development hosted by Hinds County Director Michael Miller.

Attendees participated in various activities such as: identifying personality traits of themselves and others, personal development, monitoring, teamwork, time management, case work/customer service issues, electronic technology training, situational role playing and "Habitudes" and Character First presentations/discussions. This is the second class of graduates in Hinds County.

This class included: Eligibility Worker II Jennifer Walker, EWII Te'paske Triplett, EWII Jeanette McCollum, EWI Alexis Harris, EWII Kymberli Ervin, Case Manager Melanie Daniels, EWII Barrie Brown, EWII Minnie Anderson and EWII Tanya Barnes. The Hinds County Enrichment Workshop also includes Character Recognition, Policy discussion and agency concerns. The theme for the office is "IT TAKES TEAM WORK TO MAKE THE DREAM WORK." The overall purpose of the training is to change the terminology and thought processes and create an environment that provides optimal customer service that is second to none.

Congratulations to Hinds County for creating a positive can-do attitude for staff that will positively support our clients.

OYDC Team Honors Dance and Walk for Clinton Relay for Life



On Friday, April 13, the *Oakley Youth Development Center* "Team Honors" participated in the *American Cancer Society's Relay for Life* in Clinton. Because of our youth's efforts, the Honors Program raised \$600 in pledges and contributions to support the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

The outing was supported by security representatives from various departments within OYDC. While supporting the worthy cause, our youth enjoyed fun-filled events such as face painting and dancing in a "Soul Train" line which transitioned into "A Dance Off." One of our Oakley youth danced his way into the elimination round.

The *American Cancer Society* is the "Official Sponsor of Birthdays." Celebrate! Remember! Fight Back! Encourage others to participate in Relay for Life events at schools, colleges and in your community. Active participation in the events brings everyone together in the fight against cancer.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services and the American Cancer Society both are, "Making a Difference in the Lives of Others."



To apply for a job, go to the
State Personnel Board website at:
<http://www.mspb.ms.gov/>



County Corner - Spotlight on George, Greene and Grenada Counties



Welcome to the County Corner. This month we travel to [George](#), [Greene](#) and [Grenada](#) Counties.

George and Greene Counties are located in the southeastern tip of Mississippi just above Jackson County on the eastern side of the state.

The area has seen some population increase since the 2000 Census. In 2010, the population for George County was at 22,578, an increase of 17.9% since 2000. Its county seat is Lucedale. George County is named for James Z. George, a U.S. Senator from Mississippi. The county has a total area of 483.63 square miles. George County was formed in 1910 from Jackson and Green Counties. Three rivers flow through the southwest corner of George County; the Pascagoula, Red and Black rivers.

Notable people from George County include: [Ruthie Bolton](#) who was born on May 25, 1967 in Lucedale. She played collegiate and Olympic basketball. From 1997 through 2004 Bolton played with the Sacramento Monarchs. Ruthie Bolton is one of the most accomplished female athletes in the world. She is a two-time Olympic Gold Medalist, a USA Basketball Female of the Year, a Sports Illustrated Best Woman Athlete by home state and one of only four players to be named to the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2011. Also from George County is: Eric Moulds, former wide receiver for the Buffalo Bills, Claude Passeau, Major League Baseball pitcher, Carolyn Haines, author, also credited as Caroline Burnes, David L. Cook, Christian music recording star and comedian and the Cook Family

Singers who were stars at the Grand Ole Opry.

Greene County, established in 1811, is among the oldest counties in Mississippi. It is located just north of George County and named for General Nathanael Greene. The county has a land surface of 710 square miles and is located far down in the southeastern section of the state on the border of Alabama. As of 2010, the population was 14,400 reflecting an 8.3% growth since 2000. Its county seat is Leakesville. The principal waterways in the county are the Chickasawhay and Leaf Rivers and Big Creek. Notable natives include: [Donnis \(Don\) Churchwell](#), born May 11, 1936 in Leakesville, nicknamed "Bull," was an offensive tackle for the Washington Redskins and also played for the Oakland Raiders. He played college football for the Ole Miss Rebels and was drafted in the fifth round of the 1959 NFL Draft by the Baltimore Colts. He was a member of [Johnny Vaught's](#) Rebels team that captured the Sugar Bowl title in 1958 and won the Gator Bowl in December 1958. Also from Greene County, former congressman Wilmer Mizell who was also a MLB pitcher and Bill Hicks, a comedian.

Grenada County is located in north central Mississippi. The county has a total area of 449.38 square miles. As of 2010, the population was 21,906. Its population has dropped 5.8% since the 2000 Census. Its county seat is Grenada. Grenada County is named for the Spanish province of Granada. Grenada County was formed by an act of the Legislature on May 9, 1879 from lands

taken from Carroll, Choctaw, Tallahatchie, and Yalobusha Counties. The city of Grenada was incorporated on February 27, 1836. The land from which Grenada County was formed was a part of the Choctaw Indian lands ceded to the United States under the [Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek](#) in 1830. The earliest known white settlers there were missionaries who established an Indian mission school in 1815 near what later became the town of Elliott.

Notable natives include: Pete Boone, former University of Mississippi athletic director, Trent Lott, former U.S. senator, Eddie Willis, member of Funk Brothers, William Winter, former Mississippi governor, John Hurt, blues folk musician, Chris Avery, professional football player, Greg Robinson, professional football player. Also a Grenada County resident was [Jake Gibbs](#) (born November 7, 1938). He was a former Major League Baseball player who played for the New York Yankees from 1962 to 1971. His strong hit record in 1968 earned him the nickname "Dead-Eye" Gibbs. An All-American quarterback at the University of Mississippi, Gibbs decided instead to go pro in baseball despite being drafted by the AFL's Houston Oilers and NFL's Cleveland Browns in 1961.



GPS Monitoring Available for Youth in Jackson County

At the end of February 2012, the Jackson County Youth Court began utilizing *GPS Ankle Monitors* to use as an alternative to in-house detention of adolescent offenders.

An ankle monitor is a device that individuals under house arrest are often required to wear. At timed intervals, the ankle monitor sends a radio frequency signal containing location and other information to a receiver. If an offender moves outside of an allowed range, the authorities are notified. Ankle monitors are designed to be tamper-resistant and can alert authorities to removal attempts, such as cutting the conductive band causing a circuit break.

The most common configuration is a radio-frequency transmitter unit that sends a signal to a fixed location receiving unit in the offender's residence. The residence unit uses either a land line or a cellular network to relay information to a service center computer. If the offender is not at the residence at times stipulated, an alert message is sent to the service center and then relayed to the supervising probation or parole officer. GPS units are similar in design, but the offender also carries a GPS cell phone unit that receives a signal from the ankle unit, or both functions may be combined into one ankle unit.

Electronic monitoring was originally developed by a small group of researchers at Harvard University in the 1960s. In 1983, Judge Jack Love in Albuquerque, New Mexico, inspired by a Spider-Man comic strip initiated the first judicially sanctioned program using monitoring devices. In 2007, an estimated 130,000 units were deployed daily in the United States.

In Jackson County, 17 youth have used GPS monitors in lieu of being placed in detention facilities or being released. The program is currently funded through the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) by the U.S. Department of Justice. Jackson County hopes to be able to continue the program so there are alternatives to detention while maintaining supervision over the minor offender.

Eligibility Worker and Case Manager Day Celebrated



Our eligibility workers and case managers are the backbone of the agency. These frontline staff members are normally the ones who interact with our clients everyday to help them navigate the social services system and understand what all may be available to them. In Panola County, staff stopped and honored these employees with a beautifully decorated cake. Thank you to all the EWs and CMs across the state who help our clients so they can work towards self-sufficiency.

Staff Development Workshops

Staff Development is an important tool that agencies and organizations use to enhance the skills of their employees or give necessary guidance and direction. MDHS leads the way with a myriad of classes every month to enhance our staff's ability to serve Mississippians. To register for a class, go to: <https://www.ms.gov/dfa/ace/W2EFTDispatcher> and enter your ACE ID and password, then click on the Mississippi Enterprise Learning Management System (MELMS) tab.

Do You Have a Facebook or Twitter Account?



Social networking is one of the many ways we stay connected with our friends and family. We also use it to find out what's going on in the world. "Like" the Mississippi Department of Human Services Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/msdhs> or follow us on Twitter at http://twitter.com/MS_DHS to stay up on the latest happenings at MDHS.