

# Mississippi Department of Human Services **BEACON** April 2013



## *A Message from the Executive Director*

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I want to offer my support to the Division of Family and Children's Services, our partner agencies and to individual communities across the state for hosting the many activities to increase awareness of the tragedy that is child neglect and abuse.

We can work to heal victims of child abuse but the emotional scars last long after the physical scars have faded away. We as a society must work together to increase awareness and provide information and resources to families to stop abuse before it occurs. **Prevention is truly the key!**

I would like to congratulate Robin Smith for being selected as the first recipient of the Richard Harris Leadership Award, an honor which is well deserved. Robin exemplifies character, dedication and leadership. To my knowledge, at least 13 states have asked for technical assistance from Mississippi to improve their claims and tax offset programs after viewing the success of Robin and her staff. Many have visited us in person and all have had positive comments not just about our technical proficiency in the program but also on her leadership.

Congratulations also to Ann Farrell for receiving a *Character First*

award for her dedication in serving the children of Mississippi through her position in the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development.

April is the time of the year for spring cleaning. The MDHS senior management team is dusting off the cobwebs in our leadership closet by reading, discussing and implementing concepts in the book, *Monday Morning Leadership*, by David Cottrell. As leaders we are challenged to keep "the main thing the main thing." Cottrell defines the main thing as really three things: "Equip employees with the tools to be successful; provide outstanding service to customers; and make a profit."

I know that you will ask me, "How do you make a profit in the public sector where monetary gain is not the primary goal of our mission?" Profit is also defined as, "a valuable return or gain." With this concept in mind, we can certainly make a profit. Simply put: Are people better off because of their experience with MDHS?

Our mission is to meet needs and change lives. If we accomplish these goals we have absolutely provided something of value to the citizens of our great state!

Richard A. Berry  
Executive Director

## **April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month**



The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children's Services hosted events statewide to heighten awareness during Child Abuse Prevention Month and aid in the reduction of abuse and neglect.

In Jackson, a "Picnic for Prevention" was held at Lefleur's Bluff State Park. This annual event helps to educate the public about reporting and prevention and brings families together to enjoy food, entertainment and family fun. This year, local radio stations, MISS103 and WJMI were broadcasting live from the park which added to the excitement.

In addition to the events, Mississippi  
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**April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month  
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Governor Phil Bryant signed a proclamation for the prevention of child abuse that underscores his commitment to children in the state. "In Mississippi, we take the safety and security of our children very seriously. I urge everyone to join us as we work together to make Mississippi a place where children can grow up free from harm and in an environment that encourages learning, growth and opportunity," said Gov. Bryant.

MDHS Executive Director Rickey Berry said, "MDHS is committed to protecting and serving Mississippi's children. I urge citizens to be aware and call Mississippi Centralized Intake's 24-hour Hotline at 1-800-222-8000 if they suspect a child is being abused or neglected. Child abuse is everyone's business."

The national focus to prevent child abuse began in the early 1980s to address the alarming rate at which children across the country were being abused. The Blue Ribbon Campaign, which runs in conjunction with the national campaign, was launched in 1989 by a grandmother in Virginia who tied a blue ribbon to her car as a tribute to her three-year-old grandson who died from abuse. Child protection agencies and advocates across the nation recognize the blue ribbons as symbols to remind everyone of the need to report abuse and neglect of our most vulnerable—our children.

If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, call the Hotline or go online to: [www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov](http://www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov).

Join MDHS and help prevent child abuse and neglect. Remember, you can remain anonymous, just don't remain quiet.



Violence against children and youth is all too common and the numbers nationally are staggering.

In 2009, more than 1,700 children ages 0 to 17 died from child abuse and neglect—81% of deaths occurred among children younger than age four.

Join MDHS as we take a stand for the children of Mississippi and fight to prevent child abuse and neglect. To report abuse, call 1-800-222-8000.



# RETIREMENTS



## *Sollie Norwood Retires from MDHS and Takes on the Mississippi Senate*



Sollie Norwood began his career with the agency in 1988 and since 1989, served as director for the Division of Community Services. Sollie retired from MDHS earlier this year and was elected to serve as a state senator for District 28. Sollie is very involved in his community and church and has received numerous awards during his long career. Recognitions include: National recognition for leadership in providing fatherhood training; the 2007 Ann Kagie Award from the National Association of State Community Service Programs, presented by the Mississippi State Senate; and the 2010 Hope Award for Social Justice, presented by New Hope Baptist Church. During his tenure at MDHS, Jackson Public Schools recognized Mr. Norwood as Parent of the Year in 2005. He also served as a member of the Jackson Public School board of trustees in 2007 and its president during the 2009-2010 term. He is a charter member of the Jim Hill High School Education Foundation. Sollie plans to continue his mission of excellence in service. We wish him well.



## *Perry County Director Frances Williamson Retires*

Frances Williamson retired April 30 with over 35 years of service with the agency. At a retirement reception held at the Perry County office in New Augusta, Regional Director Dennis Miller presented her with a plaque in appreciation for her years of service.

Frances began her career in 1977 working in Forrest County as an eligibility worker. In 2006 she was promoted to county director. Frances will be missed as she is dearly loved by her staff. Thank you for your years of service to the state of Mississippi.



## *Desoto County Director Kathy White Retires*



Kathy White began her career with the agency July 3, 1978 when she was hired as an eligibility worker in Tunica County. In 1985, Kathy became the director for Desoto County, a position she held until her promotion to regional director in 2007.

Kathy has faithfully served the citizens of Desoto County for 35 years. She is admired by her friends, colleagues and staff for her dedication to the mission of the agency. She will be missed!



## Tate County Child Abuse Prevention



Each year in Mississippi, April is recognized as Child Abuse Awareness Month. While all child abuse and neglect related issues are important, the focus this year for Tate County was education. Tate County Division of Family and Children's Services serves over 50 families who have been impacted by some form of abuse or neglect. Tate County staff worked to educate the general public of what constitutes abuse and neglect and how it can be prevented. Some of the awareness efforts included sharing with civic groups, school and church groups and displays of blue ribbons. If anyone suspects a child is being abused or neglected, call Mississippi Centralized Intake, Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-222-8000. Child Abuse is wrong.

### Luvenia Mamom Recognized for Years of Service



MDHS is blessed to have many employees who've been with the agency for decades, thus supplying continuity and experience for those we serve. Quitman County Director Luvenia Mamom (right) was recently recognized for 35 years of service by Region 2 East Director Cindy Brewer. Thank you, Luvenia, for your dedication to the agency and the people of Mississippi.

### Tax Time - How did you do?

April 15 has come and gone and you've (hopefully) filed your taxes by now.

Did you get a big, fat tax return this year? Or get smacked with a large amount to pay the Internal Revenue Service? Either way, if your job requires you complete a W-4 for your employer, it might be possible to reduce that amount.

It's pretty clear why you wouldn't want to pay so much next year in a big lump sum, but you might be wondering why you would want to reduce what you get back? After all, it's like getting a bonus check in April, right?

Actually, when you have too much taxes withheld from your paycheck, you are giving the government money out of your pocket that they earn interest on...interest which they don't share with you. If you adjust your withholding, you get more money in your paycheck that you can then save for a nest egg and earn the interest on yourself!

The IRS provides a helpful, free Withholding Calculator on their website that you can utilize to ensure you've designated an appropriate withholding amount.

Check it out and see what your withholding should be. If you get less back or pay less in April - you win, either way. Click here for the [IRS Withholding Calculator](#).



Did you know that May 26 through June 1 is National Hurricane Preparedness week? Or that June 1 begins the 2013 Hurricane Season? Click [HERE](#) for more information. Remember to plan ahead, prepare a storm kit and have a weather radio.

## Beat Burnout-N-Be Happy

Maria Jones is an intern in Tate County from Delta State University majoring in Social Work. One of the many projects this semester she was assigned included planning an event that addresses the challenges faced by social service workers.

Maria hosted Beat Burnout-N-Be Happy at the Tate County office which is a program that teaches different methods of dealing with stress and how eating healthy and exercising can improve overall health and job performance. It was noted that employee burnout is a major issue that affects frontline workers.

The attendees enjoyed healthy snacks and drinks which were provided by local businesses. Guest speakers included: Ted Crowdis of Jane's Gym in Olive Branch; Amanda Wilson, counselor at Northwest Community College; Jenekia Rice, LSW in Oxford; and Caysie Lagrone, a fitness and health specialist. Speakers shared the importance of a healthier lifestyle which will help DHS staff to better serve clients.



*Do you have a story or event you'd like to share with the agency? How about photos or awards? Send them in and maybe next month you or your county will be featured. Share your good news and retirements. Email to: [julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov](mailto:julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov).*

## Robin Smith Presented Richard Harris Leadership Award



Recently, Executive Director Rickey Berry recognized Robin Smith for her leadership by presenting her the Richard Harris Leadership Award. Her dedication to duty and hard work has been evident throughout her service to the agency.

Robin started as an eligibility worker in 1983 at the Pearl River County Department of Human Services. Robin recalls that the most challenging part of the job was the conversion from the paper system to MAVERICS during 1987 which included many nights and weekends. The director at that time vowed that Pearl River County would complete the MAVERICS conversion before any other county, which it did.

Robin transferred to the Hinds County office during 1989. By 1999, Robin was working as the supervisor of the Treasury Offset Program Unit which collects payments from delinquent TANF and Food Stamp Programs recipients. Over \$5 million are collected through this program annually.

Presently, Robin is a Division Director II where she oversees the Claims Management Unit, Treasury Offset Program, Field Operations Customer Service Unit, DFCS foster care board payment collections, Child Support Offset Program and Child Support Financial Operations.

While the current job is a huge undertaking, she and her staff work together as a team and embrace the motto, "It takes team work to make the dream work."

With all of her accomplishments at the agency, her pride and joy is her son, DeAnte. You, Robin, are our pride and joy and we join together to thank you for your leadership and congratulate you on being the recipient of the Richard Harris Leadership Award.

## Administrative Professionals Day Highlights



Stone County Clerk Mary Peacock (right) and Senior Aide Worker Linda Dixon (Left) were treated to lunch on Administrative Professionals Day. These ladies keep our officerunning calmly and smoothly. It is with tremendous gratitude that we recognize these ladies and say, "Thank you for all you do."



Field Operations Region 5 West staff Barbara Devall and Gladys Dunaway enjoyed a Mexican lunch at Los Parrilleros Restaurant in Brookhaven and gifts in honor of Administrative Professionals Day. Thanks ladies!



Forrest County Division of Field Operations hosted a luncheon on Administrative Professionals Day for their dedicated clerical staff. The ladies enjoyed taco salads, a fruit tray, cake, strawberry lemonade and tea. They were also given a lunch bag filled with goodies including a coffee mug, note pads and pens.



Sharkey County CSR Roshanda Clark (center) was crowned Queen for the Day for Administrative Assistant Day. She was given a tiara and a gift basket of chocolates and beauty products to pamper herself with. Her warm smile and caring nature is a testimony to our good customer service. She is greatly appreciated by all here in Sharkey County.



Noxubee County celebrated Administrative Professionals Day on April 24 and thanked CSR Minnie Lockett, (left), who has been with the agency for 34 years and Clerical Support Linda Mowry who just celebrated 13 years of employment for their service to the agency and people of Mississippi. Noxubee County Director Kay Papas presented them a certificate commemorating their contributions to the office and served a luncheon in their honor. Not pictured is DFCS Clerk Mattie Jenkins who was in training.



## County Corner - Lowndes and Madison Counties

This month, our travels take us to Lowndes and Madison counties.

**Lowndes County** is located on the eastern border of Mississippi.

### **FAST FACTS:**

- As of 2010, the population was 59,779.
- The county seat is Columbus.
- Lowndes County is named for **U.S. Congressman William Jones Lowndes**.
- The total area for the county is 516.45 acres.

In Lowndes County is **Columbus Air Force Base** which sits about nine miles north of Columbus. The base houses the 14th Flying Training Wing assigned to the Air Education and Training Command and is home to the busiest military air traffic control facility in the world. The 14 FTW's mission is to provide specialized undergraduate pilot training for U.S. Air Force and allied officers. The base was established in 1941. About half the pilots in the Air Force today went through basic and primary flight training at Columbus AFB. A little known fact about the base is it is designated as an alternate NASA Space Shuttle Landing Site when that program was in operation.

**Columbus** thrives on its rich heritage and Southern charm and was the inspiration for **Pulitzer Prize** winners **Eudora Welty** and **Tennessee Williams**. Columbus is the birthplace of Tennessee Williams where he spent his beginning years in an 1875 Victorian home in the city. In 1993 that home was moved to Main Street. It has been restored and now serves as a Welcome Center for Columbus.

Columbus is also the home of **Mississippi University for Women**, America's first state funded public university for women which was established in 1884. The "W" is a four-year coeducational public university. Men have been offered admission to MUW since 1982. Then known as the Industrial Institute and College, the institution was created by an act of the Mississippi Legislature March 12, 1884, for the dual purposes of providing a liberal arts education for women and preparing them for employment. MUW is also where renowned novelist Eudora Welty chose to begin her career with the town serving as inspiration for some of her novels.

The **Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science** (MSMS) is a public residential high school for academically gifted students located in Columbus on the campus of the W. 10th grade students are selected to attend through a competitive application process and the school graduates over 100 students each year. While the main academic focus of MSMS is mathematics and science, humanities, particularly history, literature and art are also emphasized.

Notable people from Lowndes County:

- **Sam Hairston**, former Negro league baseball and MLB player.
- **Jerry Rice**, NFL player.

- **Big Joe Williams**, blues singer and guitarist.
- **Clarence Weatherspoon**, NBA player.

**Madison County** is located in central Mississippi. The county seat is Canton.

### **FAST FACTS:**

At the 2010 Census count, Madison County had 95,203 residents. Of note, this is an increase of 27.5% from the count in 2000. More significant is that from 1990 to 2000, the county saw a 38.8% growth.

Named for the fourth president of the United States, **James Madison**, the 23rd county in Mississippi was created in 1828 from portions of Yazoo and Hinds counties. The area attracted settlers from Virginia and the Carolinas who came to farm the lush, rolling hills and fertile soil.

Much of **Canton**, also known as the City of Lights, is on the National Register of Historic Places. The courthouse square is a historic shopping district and host to the **Canton Flea Market**. The east side of town encompasses the historic district with many homes.

The city of **Madison** is also named for President James Madison. The city grew along a bustling railroad track in pre-Civil War Mississippi. It was 1856 when the Illinois Central Railroad opened Madison Station, at the site of the City of Madison. Although near-by Madisonville, a settlement established along the stagecoach route of the Natchez Trace, boasted a race track, two banks, a wagon factory and at least one hotel, its residents could not resist the lure of the future. The newly established railroad community began to thrive and Madisonville soon became extinct.

**Gluckstadt** and Canton are a now most notable for "**Nissan Country**." This once mostly rural area of the county is seeing quite the boom since the Nissan plant came into the state.

Gluckstadt was established in 1905 by several German Catholic families from **Klaasville, Indiana**. The community's name is translated meaning "Lucky Town." Each year the town celebrates its heritage with the **German Fest** on the grounds of **St. Joseph Catholic Church**.

Notable people from Madison County:

- **L.C. Greenwood** is a former American football defensive end for the 1970s Pittsburgh Steelers.
- **Stephen Gostkowski**, placekicker for the New England Patriots.
- **Aaron Shirley**, physician and MacArthur Fellow.
- **Faith Hill**, country music artist (born in Ridgeland, but raised in Star).
- **The Band Perry** (Three members were born in Ridgeland).
- **Bianca Knight**, Olympic track and field athlete.

Next month, we visit Marion and Marshall counties.

## Salvation Army and Washington County Youth Court Volunteers Join to Serve Those Less Fortunate



Washington County Youth Court volunteers recently served lunch to low income and homeless in their community. The group frequently works together to collect items for donation to the Salvation Army and give back to the community. From left: Law Clerk Jennifer Mills; Youth Services Counselor Terry Session; Salvation Army Lieutenant Mills; Court Administrator Darentya Davis; Youth Services Counselor Cheryl Clark; and Volunteer Coordinator Mildred Chew.



## MDHS Employees Demonstrating CHARACTER FIRST



Division of Early Childhood Care and Development, Certificate Program, Special Projects Officer IV Ann Farrell was recognized and received an award for her **DEPENDABILITY** and for fulfilling what she consented to do even if it means unexpected sacrifice. Said ECCD Director Jill Dent, "I would like to congratulate Ann on her award of Dependability. She has been so instrumental in the success of the transfer of the subsidy program to MDHS. Thank you for sticking with it through the tough times during this transition." MDHS congratulates you on your commitment in making a difference!

**CHARACTER FIRST**  
 Definition of the Month: **VIRTUE**  
 The moral excellence evident in my life as I consistently do what is right.

## 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](http://twitter.com/MS_DHS) to stay up on the latest happenings at MDHS.



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