

Mississippi Department of Human Services **BEACON** March 2013



A Message from the Executive Director

I am honored to announce three appointments to the executive team. These positions were vacant due to retirements and I am sure that these talented individuals will "hit the ground running!"

Dr. Kim Shackelford has joined the agency as Deputy Administrator for Family and Children's Services. Mr. Mark Allen will report April 16 as the new Chief Information Officer and last but certainly not least, Ms. Tina Ruffin has assumed the leadership role in the Division of Community Services.

You can learn more about each of these individuals in separate articles here in the BEACON but I want to offer them my congratulations and assure them of my support as they assume these critical roles.

Congratulations are also in order for former Community Services Director Sollie Norwood who was elected to the Mississippi State Senate to replace beloved Senator Alice Harden who passed away late last year. A retirement reception will be held in his honor April 17 here at the State Office.

The legislative session is over and MDHS fared very well. The

bill in our agenda passed and the agency received a significant plus up financially for Olivia Y. Requirements. This is a tribute to the hard work that everyone has put into making the system better for us to receive this size of an increase in such a tight budget climate. The legislature also funded increased employer contributions for PERS to keep our retirement system financially sound and secure.

I would like to personally thank Governor Bryant and his team, Lt. Governor Tate Reeves and our four chairmen: Senator Buck Clarke, Senator Dean Kirby, Representative Herb Frierson and Representative Sam Mims. I would also like to thank Senator Chris McDaniel who handled the conference reports and advocated on behalf of the agency's needs.

This budget will allow the agency to address our staffing needs and begin the process of developing a new child welfare system to replace the MACWIS system. Our goal since the onset of Olivia Y. is to pursue compliance with the settlement agreement while maintaining the integrity of the other programs in MDHS. This budget and the support that we received in this session greatly enhance our efforts.

Richard A. Berry
Executive Director

Welcome to New Faces in Leadership at MDHS



We welcome some new faces to the executive staff at the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

Kim Shackelford, Ph.D., LCSW has been appointed the Deputy Administrator of Family and Children's Services. She was previously employed with the University of Mississippi, Department of Social Work as a professor where she had been teaching for fourteen years.

Prior to her work in academics, she was employed in the field of child welfare, serving as a social worker, social work supervisor, crisis intervention advanced social worker and the director of training

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for the MDHS, Division of Family and Children's Services. Shackelford also worked in an adult psychiatric facility and counseled victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

Shackelford enjoys teaching and training others in methods of assistance and social welfare for vulnerable children and families. She has worked and taught not only across the U.S., but Canada, South Africa and Belize. She has served as a consultant to public child welfare agencies and professionals who work with victims of trauma and has conducted workshops on Secondary Traumatic Stress and other child welfare topics.

Shackelford concentrated her work with child welfare supervisors after developing an effective learning lab/mentoring model for use in supervisory training that is now used in other states and countries. She also developed a variety of training curriculums on numerous topics within the field of child welfare and child welfare supervision.

During her last few years at the UM, she was the director of the UM Child Welfare Training Academy that develops curriculum and training for new child welfare professionals (workers and supervisors) in Mississippi. She additionally served on the MDHS, Citizen's Review Panel.

Some of her awards include the University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences, Thomas A. Crowe Outstanding Faculty Award; the Individual Merit Award from the Mississippi Conference on Social Welfare; and the Commissioner's Award from the United States Department of Health and Human Services. She is a Phi Kappa Phi.

She has recently published a book with Josephine Pryce and David Pryce entitled *The Costs of Courage: Combat Stress, Warriors, and Family Survival* which helps social workers in dealing with families, soldiers and veterans. Dr. Shackelford previously published the book, *Secondary Traumatic Stress and the Child Welfare Professional* with the same co-authors.

Dr. Shackelford has been taking students to Belize for service projects and social service development since 2008. She was involved in the San Mateo Empowerment Project in San Pedro, Belize and traveled extensively to work in this community and lead a student project that empowered the residents to build their own roads and improve their living conditions. Her international work has led her to an interest in social work ethics in international settings, as well as, the well-being of children across the world.

Tina Ruffin is the new director for the Division of Community Services. No stranger to DCS or MDHS, Tina has been with the agency since 1989 and with the division since 1997.

Tina began her career as an eligibility worker in Simpson County. She later transferred to Rankin County and then to State Office in 1995, where she worked in Budgets and Accounting as an Accounting/Auditor. In 1997, Tina transferred to DCS as a fiscal officer before being promoted to deputy director.

Tina attended the University of Southern Mississippi



where she majored in Mathematics and Jackson State University where she earned a Master's Degree in Accounting. She is the proud mother of two children, Thomas Quintus and Vernetta Olivia and one grandchild, Dalton.

Her scripture for daily life is Proverbs 3: 5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Mark Allen grew up in Tupelo before moving to Vicksburg where he graduated high school from St. Aloysius in 1989. He then attended Millsaps College in Jackson where he received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 1993. Mark worked in the private sector before beginning his public service career in 1999 with the Mississippi State Department of Health. During his time at MSDH, he served as the Mississippi Emergency Medical Services Information Systems Manager, was a member of the Emergency Response Team, and attended the South Central Public Health Leadership Institute.



Mark began working for the Mississippi Department of Public Safety in 2008 as a Senior Business Systems Analyst working with the Driver Services Division of the Highway Patrol. In February 2011, he was promoted to Executive Director of Public Safety Planning working with all Mississippi Law Enforcement agencies, fellow state agencies, federal agencies and various nonprofits. During his tenure, he was a member of Executive Board of the Governor's Highway Safety Association, as well as, the Mississippi Rail Safety Task Force.

Mark, his wife Jennifer and their two children live outside of Brookhaven where he is pastor of Sweetwater United Methodist Church in southern Copiah County. Mark was recently selected to sit on the Executive Board of The Baddour Center in Senatobia.

A Review of Policy on Sexual Harassment

Employers today are faced with a myriad of challenges concerning the work experience of their employees. To ensure that staff are comfortable in their work environment, MDHS has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy against any form of sex discrimination.

One form of sex discrimination is sexual harassment which interferes with work productivity and wrongfully deprives employees of the opportunity to work in an environment independent from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtones. MDHS is committed to maintaining a workplace where every employee is treated with honor, dignity, respect and professionalism.

To reinforce that belief, MDHS trains employees on identifying and reporting these types of situations. MDHS' Administrative Policy No. 41 clearly outlines and defines what constitutes harassment and what is expected of all parties.

Sexual harassment is "unwelcome...verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature..."

Because sexual attraction may often play a role in the day-to-day social exchange between employees, the distinction between invited, uninvited-but-welcome, offensive-but-tolerated, and "rejected" sexual advances may well be difficult to discern. However, this distinction is essential because sexual conduct becomes unlawful only when:

- The conduct is unwelcome; and/or
- The charging party has clearly communicated to the offender the conduct is unwelcome.

Any employee found to have harassed another employee as defined in Policy 41 will be dealt with appropriately in accordance with the rules of the Mississippi State Personnel Board.

As much as it is important to protect individuals from acts of sexual harassment, it is equally important to protect employees from frivolous and malicious complaints. Any individual who knowingly and willfully files a false complaint will face disciplinary action.

In an effort to eliminate incidents of sexual harassment, management officials will be held accountable for the actions of their employees. Therefore, managers are expected to set the tone for their employees by providing examples of non-offensive behavior. Management and supervisory staff will work toward an environment which is fair and free of discrimination and retaliation by neither practicing sexual discrimination nor tolerating discriminatory behavior or practices.

All employees should have received a copy of Administrative Policy 41 in his/her orientation package. If you do not have a copy and/or would like one, ask your supervisor or contact Human Resources at 601-359-4444.

BRONZE HUNGER CHAMPION Winner is Lowndes County



The Mississippi Department of Human Services has a footprint in every county and it's the activities at the county offices where the rubber meets the road. County staff are the faces of MDHS and are our "boots on the ground,"—front-line personnel reaching out to those seeking assistance in this tough economic climate.

In March, the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service Regional Administrator Don Arnette notified MDHS Executive Director Rickey Berry that the Lowndes County DHS, Division of Field Operations had been chosen for the prestigious Bronze Hunger Champion Award by the Food and Nutrition Coalition. An initiative of FNC is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Hunger Champions Award Program, which honors local social services offices for providing exemplary outreach and service to clients.

"Since Lowndes County Director Jim Sutherland became a part of MDHS in 2012, his innovative ideas, outreach and exemplary customer service have changed the perception of SNAP and the agency in Lowndes County," said MDHS Director of Field Operations Cathy Sykes. "Through his efforts and the work of Lowndes County staff, the underserved population for SNAP is now accessing benefits and Lowndes County DHS is truly making a difference in their community."

This is an outstanding accomplishment. There are hundreds of food banks, community and faith-based groups, and other organizations nationwide that help people learn about and apply for SNAP benefits.

Being a Hunger Champion recipient shows that Lowndes County is taking great strides to reach out to and educate struggling individuals and families in the community about the benefits of SNAP. A Hunger Champion represents best practices in SNAP outreach.

"I want to commend you for your continued support in connecting low-income people to the FNS nutrition assistance programs," said Arnette.





Improving the Health of Children in Care

MDHS is pleased to be working with **Magnolia Health Plan** to improve healthcare outcomes for children in foster care. This partnership is made possible through the **Division of Medicaid Coordinated Care Program** called Mississippi Coordinated Access Network (MississippiCAN).

Through MS CAN, the state seeks to improve the health and well-being of Medicaid beneficiaries and particularly children in foster care.

A recent success story of this important partnership was documented in the March 15 newsletter from Magnolia Health Plan.

Teamwork—Working together for Mississippi's Children

A child in Magnolia Health Plan's Case Management program received an evaluation by a pediatric cardiologist and it was determined that he needed a heart transplant. MHP Case Manager Wanda Gail Franks provided education to the parent on the transplant process, expectations, outcomes, treatment plan, signs and symptoms of complications, and side effects of medication prior to the transplant. After the transplant was completed, Wanda helped to set up post-operative home care and follow-up appointments with the providers.

After the transplant, DHS became involved with the family and the child was removed from the home. By working with the DHS case worker, Alice Alexander, Wanda assisted with education directly to three different foster caregivers on transplant care, possible complications, medications, and isolation supplies so the child could return to school. A court order required that the child have an evaluation at Brentwood so Wanda trained the staff there about pre-op instructions prior to the required heart biopsy.

Custody was later awarded to the child's biological father residing in another state. Wanda and Alice worked together to set up appointments with the transplant team so the father could receive education on how to care for his son and get care transferred to a medical team in Kentucky for the necessary follow-up. She and Alice helped the father apply for Medicaid in Kentucky and Wanda continued to provide reassurance and education to the father on the care of his son.

Communication is very important and is the key to working as a team to provide the best outcomes. MHP is dedicated to being available to assist with obtaining that needed care with provider appointments, specialty services, medications, education and enforcement of the provider's treatment plan.

For assistance, MDHS case workers or foster parents can call 1-888-869-7747 or 1-866-912-6285 ext. 66434 Monday-Friday from 8-5 p.m.

Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation and MDHS Team Up to Hit Homerun for Mississippi Youth

The **Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation** (CRSF) announced they have partnered with MDHS for the fifth consecutive year to bring Badges for Baseball to at-risk youth in Mississippi. The 2013 initiative included a kickoff training program for mentors and law enforcement participants on March 27 at **Belhaven University** in Jackson.



The training included comments from Attorney General Jim Hood, who helped bring the program to Mississippi in 2008. Hood spoke to participants about the importance of working with youth and the role of law enforcement in the prevention and reduction of risky behaviors among juveniles. Playworks, a national nonprofit that reduces playground bullying and improves school climate through fun, healthy, inclusive games and physical activity, was also in attendance as part of the training.

"We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, the Attorney General's office and local law enforcement," said Richard Berry, MDHS Executive. "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 messaging to even more local youth."

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 kids together to play and learn. The program reshapes the relationship between law enforcement and children living in underserved communities across the country. In Mississippi, the program focuses on issues such as teen pregnancy, drug abuse and other behaviors that negatively impact the futures of participating youth. Since 2008, more than 14,100 youth have been impacted by the Badges for Baseball program in Mississippi.

"We are excited to continue our efforts with the Mississippi Department of Human Services to bring the Badges for Baseball program to deserving youth in Mississippi," said Steve Salem, President and Executive Director of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation. "The program connects young people with positive role models from law enforcement to teach them the importance of good decision-making and to convey important messages of respect, work ethic, leadership, and perseverance."

Funding for Mississippi Badges for Baseball was made possible through a grant provided by MDHS that supports the program in ten communities around the state. Program partners include the **Boys & Girls Clubs** of Central Mississippi, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest Mississippi, the Boys & Girls Clubs of North Mississippi, the Oprah Winfrey Boys & Girls Club, the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Mississippi Delta and the Tunica County Parks and Recreation Department.

Day in the Park to Kick Off Child Abuse Prevention Month

TUPELO – Children, parents and child care organizations in the Tupelo area enjoyed a day at the park on April 2 to kick off Child Abuse Awareness Month.

Each year, Mississippi pauses to recognize April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. In Lee County, the Stop the Hurt Committee, comprised of social services agencies in the region, hosted the day at Tupelo's Gum Tree Park to celebrate children.

"We invited children and families to come join us at the park and talk about child abuse," said Shelia Nabors, community partnership coordinator for the Department of Human Services.

"We enjoyed activities and games for kids to play and brochures and information for parents. It was a fun kick off for kids and a celebration of children and their innocence."

Representatives from Millcreek of Pontotoc, a residential children's treatment center, provided food and drinks for the event.

"Most of our children are in DHS custody and a lot of them have been physically or sexually abused or neglected," said Jimma Smith, director of business development at Millcreek. "The effect abuse has on even a young child at age two or three can lead to problems much later in life. A big part of the reason they end up in residential facilities is from trauma due to abuse or neglect."

Smith said they participate in the Stop the Hurt committee because it helps bring awareness to the problems children face.

In Lee County, from October 1, 2010, through September 30, 2011, 244 new victims of child abuse were reported. That year, Lee County had the eighth highest number of new child abuse victims of all Mississippi counties.

"Child abuse happens and it doesn't discriminate by race, neighborhood or socioeconomic status," Nabors said.

The kickoff leads up to the Stop the Hurt Conference scheduled for April 16.

"The conference is a great opportunity for people who work with families or foster parents—anyone who wants more information about child abuse and prevention," Nabors said.

Speakers at the conference include District Attorney Trent Kelly, motivational speaker Janie Walters and Dr. Tracy Mims from Mississippi Valley State University.

To report child abuse or neglect, call 1-800-222-8000. Reports can also be made online at: <https://www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov/>

Excerpts for this story provided by JB Clark/Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal

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<http://djournal.com/bookmark/22027338>

CLASH of Arts Camp has Stephanie Stubbs Stepping out on Faith



Lee County students had an opportunity to learn about art, health and culture at a camp during spring break.

The CLASH of the Arts camp (Creative Learning Ability Strength in Harmony) was held in the Christian Life Center at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Tupelo and served students in kindergarten to eighth grade. Director for the program is our own Stephanie Stubbs.

Rico Wilson and Josh Myles of Determined, a gospel group in North Mississippi, worked with students and played music as camp participants performed live with Kay Bain on WTVA's "The Morning Show." Kay Bain is an active part of WTVA family and a wonderful supporter of the arts.

Stephanie, along with Pam McKinney, have worked hard to ensure Tupelo area children have exposure to the arts and music.

Great job and thanks for sharing! ☺

Excerpts for this story were provided by the Northeast Chris Kieffer/Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal

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From left: Rico Wilson, Josh Myles, Kay Bain, Stephanie Stubbs and Pam McKinney.

County Corner - Leflore and Lincoln Counties



This month, our travels take us to Leflore and Lincoln counties.

Leflore County

Leflore County is located in the **Mississippi Delta region** of the state. As of 2010, the population was 32,317. The county seat is **Greenwood**.

Leflore County was formed in 1871 from portions of Carroll, Sunflower and Tallahatchie counties. It was named for **Greenwood Leflore**, a Choctaw chief, who was one of the signers of the Treaty of 1830, by the terms of which the Choctaws sold all their lands east of the Mississippi River. Many of them migrated to the Indian Territory, but Leflore himself remained, becoming a planter, and at times, a politician.

Leflore County was a major site of activism and violence during the Civil Rights Movement.

The county is also home to **Mississippi Valley State University**, a historically black university located near Itta Bena. The institution, which opened in 1950, was created by the Mississippi Legislature as Mississippi Vocational College. The legislation to form the institution was signed into law by **Governor Thomas L. Bailey** on April 5, 1946.

The site selection committee appointed by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning had originally selected the Greenwood Army Air Base, but after further study, the proposed site was moved outside of the town of Itta Bena.

In 1964, MVC was renamed Mississippi Valley State College. In 1974, Governor William Waller proposed changing the names of three black institutions from "colleges" to "universities." MVC was then renamed Mississippi Valley State University.

In 2010, the county seat of Greenwood had 15,205 people.

This first Euro-American settlement on the banks of the **Yazoo River** was a trading post founded by John Williams in 1830 and was known as Williams Landing. The settlement quickly blossomed and in 1844 was incorporated as "Greenwood," named after Chief Greenwood Leflore.

Growing in the midst of a strong cotton market, the city's success was based on its strategic location in the heart of the Delta; on the easternmost point of the alluvial plain and astride the Tallahatchie and Yazoo rivers.

Greenwood's Grand Boulevard was once named one of America's 10 most beautiful streets by the U.S. Chambers of Commerce and the Garden Clubs of America.

Notable Residents:

- **B.B. King**, Blues artist.
- **Valerie Brisco-Hooks**, Olympic athlete.
- **Fred Carl, Jr.**, founder/CEO of Viking Range Corp.
- **Morgan Freeman**, Oscar-winning actor.
- **Jim Gallagher, Jr.**, professional golfer.
- **Bobbie Gentry**, singer/songwriter.

- **Tom Hunley**, ex-slave and the real-life Hambone in J. P. Alley's syndicated cartoon feature, Hambone's Meditations.

Lincoln County

Lincoln County is a county located south central portion of the state. As of 2010, the population was 34,869.

It is named in honor of the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. Its county seat is **Brookhaven**. The county has a total area of 588.17 square miles. As of the 2010 Census, there were 34,869 people residing in the county.

Lincoln County is home to an above-average number of millionaires including the former MCI Worldcom CEO and founder **Bernie Ebbers** who resided near Brookhaven prior to his conviction in the scandal that collapsed the company.

The population of Brookhaven at the 2010 Census was 12,513. It was named after the town of Brookhaven, New York, by founder **Samuel Jayne**, in 1818.

Bogue Chitto, a small community south of Brookhaven, was named for the nearby Bogue Chitto River. Bogue Chitto derives from "bok chito," meaning big creek in Choctaw. The phrase is used to refer to clear, swift flowing rivers as opposed to "hatchie" which refers to a sluggish, broad, deep river. The area has a great water park, suitable for a family outing.

Also in Lincoln County is the "ghost town" of **Woolworth**. Woolworth was once a major train stop. With the rise of automobiles, roads were built that bypassed Woolworth. The town's sawmill closed and the train stopped running. The only visible remains of Woolworth are the old general store and the old blacksmith shop; both are next to the train tracks on the east side of the road and are currently used as storage by the owner of the property.

Notable Residents:

- **Lance Alworth**, member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame and College Football Hall of Fame; attended Brookhaven High School.
- **Jim Brewer, Maxwell Street blues musician**, was born in Brookhaven.
- **Charles Henri Ford**, American poet, novelist, filmmaker, photographer and artist.
- **Ruth Ford**, Actress (b. 1911-2009).
- John Davis, MDHS Deputy Administrator for Programs.
- **Earsell Mackbee**, football player.
- **Robert W. Pittman**, founder MTV and former CEO and COO of AOL, was raised in Brookhaven.
- **J. Kim Sessums**, artist, designed the African-American Monument in the Vicksburg National Military Park.

Next month, we visit Lowndes and Madison counties.

MDHS Investigators Uncover over \$300,000 in Fraud

In recent months, Mississippi Department of Human Services, Program Integrity investigators helped bust individuals across the state trying to defraud a program that provides assistance to those in need. With these recent arrests, restitution and fines to be repaid this fiscal year total over \$300,000.

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.

MDHS Director of Fraud Investigations Kenneth Palmer said, "SNAP is designed to help low-income people put food on the table. SNAP fraud, however, hurts everyone. The local store where purchases would have been made loses revenue and, of course, the family suffers because of the loss of benefits that would have allowed for appropriate food purchases."

Small "mom and pop" grocers are usually the type of stores targeted by those trying to defraud a system in place to help those who are at risk of food insecurity, such as the elderly and children. Local residents can help spot fraud in their grocery stores. If you suspect a store owner, clerk or client is misusing SNAP benefits, call the Fraud Hotline at 1-800-299-6905. SNAP fraud is a crime.

Name, Location	Restitution, Fees, Fines	Sentence	SNAP Disqualification Period
Attala County: Kimberly G. Reyes, Kosciusko	\$7,096	1 year probation	12 months
Clarke County: Brandi A. Moulds, Quitman	\$15,292	3 years suspended; 5 years probation	12 months
Desoto County: Denitral Gibson, Nesbit	\$16,400	5 years probation	12 months
Desoto County: Mary K. Kellum, Horn Lake	\$741	10 days suspended	TANF fraud
Hinds County: Jessica Jefferson, Jackson	\$11,867	3 years probation	12 months
Hinds County: Kisheenia Lindsey, Jackson	\$8,897	3 years probation	12 months
Lee County: Amber N. Dunaway, Saltillo	\$10,941	5 years probation	12 months
Lincoln County: Teresa Palmer, Brookhaven	\$12,098	3 years probation; 3 years suspended	24 months
Neshoba County: Sera Johnson, Philadelphia	\$8,046	3 years probation; 3 years suspended	12 months
Newton County: Amy D. Wansley; Decatur	\$7,836	Sentenced to 2 years; 1 year to serve, 1 year suspended	24 months
Panola County: Julie Austin, Oxford	\$7,529	2 years probation	12 months
Union County: Gwen A. Simpson, New Albany	\$10,664	3 years probation	12 months
Washington County: Misery M. Brothers, Greenville	\$10,275	5 years probation	12 months
Washington County: Shareda W. Ratliff, Greenville	\$6,565	Pre-Trial Diversion Program, not less than 18 months or more than 3 years	24 months
Winston County: Apryl M. Triplett, Noxapater	\$6,025	3 years probation	24 months

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.

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