

# THE BEACON



INTEGRITY

SELF-DEVELOPMENT

OUTSTANDING  
PROGRAM DELIVERY

EXCELLENT  
CUSTOMER SERVICE

October 2013

## A Message from the Executive Director

October brings with it many changes. The cooler weather, the colorful foliage and the onset of the holidays makes for a truly special time of year. As we enter a new federal fiscal year, all of the good numbers we accomplished in 2013 are now in the rear view mirror, and we look forward to an even better 2014. It is time now to refocus on one of our agency's values—Outstanding Program Delivery.

The fiscal impasse in Washington seems to have subsided for the moment with the current continuing resolution running out January, 15, 2014. Hopefully Congress will be in a more conciliatory mood after the holidays and get down to the business at hand including passage of a new Farm Bill and reauthorization of TANF.

I know that uncertainty is troubling to all of you that are working so hard to make ends meet and do what is best for your families. You have my word that I will keep you as informed as possible as we go through this process. I may not be able to predict the outcome but I will provide your leaders with all of the information that I have so there will be no surprises.

As we move into the holiday season, our focus should be on our families. The nuclear family has been the foundation of human society for thousands of years. It seems that the further we stray as a society from this basic concept that is the bedrock of our civilization, the more social problems we encounter. Time invested with your family will pay you back hundreds of times

*Continued on page 2*

## MDHS APS Jamie May Awarded Spirit of NAPSA



*NAPSA 2013 Spirit Award recipient Jamie May pictured with NAPSA Awards Subcommittee Chair Joe Snyder.*

At this year's **National Adult Protective Services Association** conference in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, our own Jamie May was the award recipient of the 2013 Spirit of NAPSA. Jamie works out of the Winston County office in the APS program, a vital service that seeks to protect vulnerable adults in Mississippi.

Jamie is the first Mississippian to receive such an honor. The national award is given annually to a frontline APS staff person in recognition of their significant contribution to the field of abuse intervention.

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## In this issue:

- Holmes County TANF client moving forward.
- Retiring? We have the group for you!
- Awards and recognitions.
- Breast Cancer Awareness promoted in county offices.
- And much, much more

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over. Every child should have the opportunity to grow up in a loving, nurturing environment and have an opportunity to live the American Dream.

In addition to our families being the main focus of our personal lives, we should take the same approach in our work lives. One of the primary reasons for our success with the Olivia Y settlement agreement is the implementation of Family Centered Practice. A child does not exist in a vacuum. He or she is part of a family and that family environment will be the greatest single factor in the child's development. Every day we deal with families that are suffering. Whether there is food insecurity, abuse, neglect, an absent parent or the power has been turned off, we establish contact with a family when they apply for services. Each of us should use every opportunity that we have to assist these families with all their needs not just the ones confined to our specific program areas.

We must talk to each other! You will find that all of our divisions are serving parts of the same families. A holistic approach addressing all the family's needs is the only way to guarantee success.

We must also realize that there are many different types of families in today's society. While it is well documented that the safest environment that a child can live in is in the home with their married biological parents, we cannot be judgmental and turn our backs on other familial arrangements.

To effect positive change we must be willing to meet the family in whatever situation that they find themselves when they arrive at our door. We need to work together to devise a plan engaging all of our divisions, those of our partner agencies and available community based resources. Our families need to view MDHS as an ally that they can depend on to encourage and assist them on their journey to self-sufficiency and prosperity!

Richard A. Berry  
Executive Director

Jamie investigates reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults and covers eight counties located in the east central part of the state.

Her supervisor, Anita Ballard nominated Jamie, and noted that despite working multiple counties, Jamie willingly volunteers to work additional counties during times of staff shortage.

Jamie embodies the spirit of NAPSA and demonstrates integrity in every aspect of her job. She consistently goes the extra mile for her clients, and has received numerous accolades from her peers and supervisors. She represents what an APS investigator is and should be, serving as a role model for all to emulate. Congratulations!

## Mass Adoption Brings 12 into Forever Families



As the holidays near, many families are looking forward to quality time with their loved ones. And for 12 children in central Mississippi, their dreams of a forever family for the holidays and beyond is now a reality.

In Brookhaven, 12 children ranging in age from three to 14 enjoyed festivities, complete with cake and other goodies, as their adoptions were finalized. Dorothy Jacobs, the regional resource adoption ASWS for Region V-E and Regional Director Dionna Evans (pictured above) have worked hard to make this mass adoption a reality.

Mass adoptions are scheduled to bring together resources and families for a momentous event in the lives of children. For more information on adoption, go to: **MDHS Adoption**. (Photo provided by the **Brookhaven Daily Leader** Justin Vicory.)

# THE BEACON

For information or to submit articles for the Beacon, contact Julia Bryan at: [julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov](mailto:julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov) or phone 601-359-4517. To mail photos or articles, send to: PO Box 352, Jackson, MS 39205-0352.

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# Retiring? We have the group for you!



Above, from left, standing: Jerrell Hutson, Barbara Bewley, Becky Mack, Karen Cooley, Grace Lowan, Joyce Parker. Seated: Frances Ivers, Eunice Robinson, Peggy Bridges, Frances Reno and Vicki Pierce.

A couple of us from the State Office recently had the pleasure of attending the MDHS Retirees Luncheon Club at the Flowood Corner Bakery. This delightful group was so excited to know that some information about the group would be shared with the agency.

The club began meeting in 1982 and wants to extend an invitation to those who will be retiring from the agency to join them. The group meets on the third Wednesday in February, April, June, August, October and December.

At this particular meeting, Betty Spencer, a social worker with the Mississippi Center for Police and Sheriffs, was on hand to talk about a home they offer for runaway girls in Hinds County.

To join the MDHS Retirees Luncheon Club or for more information, contact V P Karen Cooley at 601-924-0316.



## Stone County Boss's Day



Stone County Director Judy Davis was treated to a cake on Boss's Day by staff who remember her checking on them all each Wednesday with the phrase, "What day is it?" Staff surprised Judy with a cake featuring the GEICO® camel asking, "What day is it?" Happy Boss's Day!

## Did you know November is National Adoption Month?



In November we celebrate National Adoption Month. Across the U.S., there are more than 100,000 children and youth in foster care awaiting adoption. In Mississippi, there are about 150 children who need a forever home. MDHS joins others nationwide in "Partnering for Permanency" to emphasize the need to join together and create permanent connections for children in foster care. For more information on how you can get involved, go to: **National Adoption Month**. Let's give children in foster care a home of their own.

# Awards and Recognitions

## Oakley Student Receives Duke of Edinburgh Award



Governor Phil Bryant, Dustin Ishee and DofE-USA Executive Director Josh Randle

October 16, Governor Phil Bryant honored 18-year-old Dustin Ishee with the prestigious Duke of Edinburgh Award. This self-development award is given by the British Royal Family through one of their principle charities for youth.

The DofE is a self-development program available to youth ages 14 to 25 and is offered in more than 140 countries across the world. Since its inception, more than 8 million youth have earned a Gold, Silver or Bronze medal for their participation in the program.

"This is a proud day for our state," said Governor Phil Bryant. "Our goal is to build on Oakley's success with the DofE Award through expanding our reach to more juvenile justice facilities and to share these best practices with other states across the country."

To earn a DofE Award, participants must choose from their own activities in the areas of community services, special skills, physical fitness and adventurous journey. The awards require a successive degree of effort and determination.

"The Award program aims to develop one's entire self, creating responsible and experienced citizens and encouraging selfless service to others," said Josh Randle, the program's USA national executive director. "It's about personal discovery and building character, and the life lessons learned give participants the confidence and skills to make a difference within themselves, their communities and the world."

Governor Bryant presented Dustin with the Bronze Award at a special ceremony at the Governor's offices which was attended by Ishee's family and his juvenile court judge.

The DofE International Award USA was launched in 2006 and currently operates in more than 30 states and the District of Columbia with in excess of 7,000 annual participants taking part this year alone. For more information, visit [www.dofeusa.org](http://www.dofeusa.org).

## Service Awards



From left: FPS Sherrie Hollman, FPS Nequasha Holmes, FPS Marvin Harvey, FPS Theresa Dyre, RD Judy McClain, FPS Latricia Suggs-Moore, FPS Clark G. Leonard, ASWS Carol Johnson, FPS Alice Robinson, FPS Latrice Fox and FPS Mattie Smith.

In September, Latricia Suggs-Moore was honored for her seven years of continuous, dedicated service to the agency. Members of the Grenada County DFCS staff were on hand to congratulate her and thank her for all she contributes to the families and staff in Grenada County.



From left, standing: Linda Smith, 10 years; Linda Davison, 10 years; Ronnie Bether, 10 years; and Lena Parker 10 years. Seated: Idell Crossley, 25 years; Brenda Wess, 30 years; and Yustaka Sellers, 25 years. Not pictured: Daisy Lee, 20 years; and Ralph Mathews, 10 years.

Region 7 East celebrated 150 years of combined service in the Division of Family and Children's Services. Congratulations and we celebrate your continued service to the agency.



# BREAST CANCER AWARENESS PROMOTED IN OFFICES ACROSS MISSISSIPPI



Lee County Staff



Rankin County Economic Assistance Staff



Region 7 Staff



Region 5-W DFCS Staff



# County Corner - Perry and Pike Counties

This month, our travels take us to **Perry** and **Pike counties**.

Perry County is part of the Hattiesburg Metropolitan statistical area and is named after the War of 1812 naval hero, **Oliver Hazard Perry** who died in 1819.

In 2010, the population was 12,250. Perry County has very stable population with marginal growth since the 2000 Census.

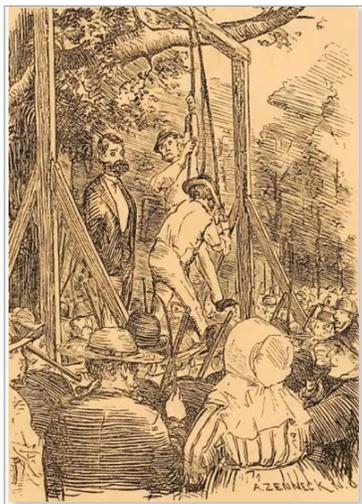
The area has tremendous timber resources which the early inhabitants exploited and from 1890 to 1900, the population grew from 6,456 to more than 14,500.



Perry County was established Feb. 3, 1820, and originally was formed because settlers didn't want to cross the **Leaf River** to get to the courthouse in Greene County.



Until 1906, the county seat was the old town of Augusta, near the center of the county on the east bank of the Leaf River. At Old Augusta, the outlaw, **James Copeland**, was executed by hanging Oct. 30, 1857. Present day Old Augusta remains a small village.



New Augusta, two miles south of Old Augusta, was made the county seat because it was situated on the Mobile, Jackson and Kansas City Railroad line. New Augusta remains as the Perry County seat.

Perry County hosts the **Mississippi Pecan Festival** the last weekend in September with vendors who offer some of the South's finest foods. This annual event, which just enjoyed its 26th year, has unique shopping attractions with more than 250 booths from all over the region, and music genres from Bluegrass to Gospel in the shade of huge pecan trees.



Pike County is located in the southern portion of the state bordering Louisiana. As of the 2010 census, the population was 40,404. The county seat is **Magnolia**. It is part of the McComb Micropolitan statistical area. The county has a total area of more than 410 square miles.



Pike County, as well as **Pikes Peak, Colorado**, was named for explorer Zebulon Pike.

Pike County was formed from Marion County by an act of the **Territorial General Assembly Dec. 9, 1815**. Holmesville was selected as the county seat Dec. 11, 1816, in honor of Major Andrew Hunter Holmes, an army officer killed in the War of 1812. By 1873, however, Magnolia was voted in as the new county seat.

Pike County has **Percy Quin State Park, Homochitto National Forest** and **Bogue Chitto Water Park**.



Last fall many may remember that torrential rains breached the dam at the Percy Quin State Park which threatened homes in both Pike County and **Tangipahoa Parish** in Louisiana.



The Bogue Chitto Water Park is a huge attraction for many who enjoy the scenic river. With activities like canoeing, hiking and kayaking, this water park is packed with fun for a weekend camp site.

**McComb** was founded in 1872 after

Henry Simpson McComb of the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Railroad, a predecessor of the Illinois Central Railroad (now part of the **Canadian National Railway**), decided to move the railroad's maintenance shops away from New Orleans, outside of the attractions of that city's saloons. Main Street, in downtown McComb, still has many shops, attractions and businesses.

Magnolia was founded in 1856 by **Ansel H. Prewett**, a local civic leader and cotton planter. Knowing that the approaching railway would need a station for water and fuel, Prewett sold a right-of-way to the railroad company for one dollar, according to legend, and divided a section of his plantation into town lots, which he sold to investors. Prewett, while serving as temporary sheriff of Pike County, was killed by outlaws in the early 1870s escorting a prisoner on the very railroad that made Magnolia a viable community.

Next month, we take a look at **Pontotoc** and **Prentiss** counties. Until then, take some time and enjoy a day trip through scenic, historic Mississippi.

## Highlights from Region 3-S Practice Model Coach



From left: PMC Melody Vaughn, FPS Keyata Johnson and ASWS Mahalia McDonald.

Keyata Johnson is a Region 3-South, Family Protection Specialist. She received her bachelor's degree in Social Work from Jackson State University and began her career with the agency in February 2013. Keyata exemplifies a worker who adheres to the practice model's principles and guidelines by mobilizing services in a timely manner and maintaining and preserving connections. Keyata is knowledgeable of her cases and maintains weekly contact with parents to let them know that she cares about what they're doing.

Keyata said, "Working at MDHS has brought many moments of joy and triumph. It has moments of sadness and many exhausted nights. However, at the end of the day, in that moment that a family is reunited and they are thankful for all the hard work and dedication, it then becomes a self-fulfilling moment that was well worth the fight."

"Working at MDHS has also shown me the leadership, strength and dedication that lies within this division," she continued.

Keyata, congratulations on this recognition and know that the agency appreciates your hard work and dedication to the children of Mississippi.

## DAAS APS 2013 Refresher Training



Floor seated L-R: Margaritta Jackson; Janie Walters, Champion Communications; Ginny Watkins. Second row seated L-R: Regions 5-6 APS Supervisor Victoria Johnson-Lewis; Carol Cooper; DAAS Director Melinda Bertucci; APS Program Administrator Edna C. Clark; Queen Blue; Yolanda Garner. Standing back row L-R: Sarah Boggan; Beth Zoeller; Valerie Boone; Region 7 APS Supervisor Sunda Bennett; Jamie May; Regions 3-4 APS Supervisor Anita Ballard; Sedrick Watts; APS Program Manager Migai Wilson; Ramonda Copeland; Regions 1-2 APS Supervisor Alfreda Moody; Division Planner Sharon Clark; Trena Smith; Voloria Mulligan; Shannon Cannon; Kinya Johnson.

The APS staff participated in refresher training held in Jackson. This year's training emphasized the theme, "Bringing Balance to it all with a New Perspective."

In addition to policy and practice sessions, staff engaged in Character First training conducted by the department's legislative liaison staff Charlie Smith and Paul Nelson, and Division of Family Foundation and Support Vera Butler. A legal component was conducted by Special Assistant Attorney Generals Sara Roberts-Harvey and Joyce Hill-Williams.

Participants also enjoyed Janie Walters, a dynamic motivational and inspirational trainer, who guided the group in interactive sessions on topics, "The Garbage Truck Comes on Tuesdays and Fridays" and "Blow a Bubble...Not a Gasket." These sessions were filled with humor and practical tips for neutralizing stress.

Gov. Phil Bryant has proclaimed the week of Oct. 28 to Nov. 1 as Tornado Preparedness Week in Mississippi.

Every year tornadoes pose one of the biggest threats to our state. The months of November and March see the second highest average number of tornadoes annually in the state of Mississippi behind April.

Tornadoes spawn from powerful thunderstorms and can cause deaths and devastate neighborhoods in seconds, sometimes with little to no warning. Between 1950 and 2012, Mississippi was struck by 229 tornadoes in the month of November.

"We saw how effective preparedness can be during the Pine Belt tornadoes back in February as hundreds of homes were destroyed, but there was not one death,"

said Mississippi Emergency Management Agency Director Robert Latham. "When our citizens know what to do, lives are saved and all we have to do is go in and help with rebuilding."

The National Weather Service will conduct a statewide tornado drill at 9:15 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 30. The NWS will use the Routine Weekly Test on NOAA weather radios to simulate an actual tornado warning. All local emergency managers, schools, businesses and residents throughout the state are encouraged to participate in this drill.

A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-

shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach in excess of 200 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Mississippi averages 29 tornadoes and seven deaths per year since 1950, according to the weather service.

"Over the past 20 years, about 80 percent of tornadoes during the month of November have occurred at night. This presents a challenge to our residents to remain weather aware during the overnight hours," said NWS Jackson Meteorologist in Charge Alan Gerard. "A NOAA Weather Radio is the best way to make sure that you receive a warning when asleep."

## Monday Morning Leadership Arrives at OYDC



From back row, from left: Mike Hobby, Charlie Smith, Gloria Sanders, Will Simpson, Jim Maccarone, Florine Archie, Joshua Gary, Rickey Berry and Mike Thornton. Front row: Charlotte Robinson, Vickie Parker, Traci Green and Sandra January. Not pictured, Pamela Dulaney and Johnny Johnson.

Executive Director Rickey Berry, Deputy Director Will Simpson, Director James Maccarone and Director Mike Hobby gave tribute to recent Monday Morning leadership class graduates. This was the first class to be held at the Oakley Youth Development Center outside of Raymond. In this eight-week leadership course, Mike Thornton focuses on eight mentoring lessons and Charlie Smith teaches the principles of the four MDHS core values: integrity, self-development, outstanding program delivery and excellent customer service.

## Thanks to DFCS and MIS Staff for Doing Whatever it Takes



From back row, from left: Chuck Frances, Christine Townsend-Bunch, Don Griffin, Bill Suthoff, Cheryl Joiner, Patrick Curran, Nancy Meaders, Joyce Monroe, Don Oliver. Seated: Tracy Aynes, Violet Davis, Diane Mobley, Cassandra Rodgers, Tosha McGill.

Recently a luncheon was hosted by the MDHS Management Staff to celebrate and thank the MACWIS, MIS, CSF and BCS staff for the work and long hours performed on the first set of SQL MACWIS lawsuit reports. Staff worked through the Labor Day weekend and the holiday to meet the DFCS lawsuit required due date for the reports. Thank you all for your hard work on this project!

## When was the last time you Rebooted?

I recently received a link to a story from our venerable tech geek, John Garmon, in Management Information Systems. The article shared a simple, often overlooked tip for all of us who work with computers every day. Before you pick up the phone to call about computer problems, try to reboot your computer. For those who may be somewhat unfamiliar with this term, it simply means to turn off your computer safely, then turn it back on. This allows the computer to "release memory" so programs can function properly, stops unnecessary programs that may be running in the background and restarts other needed basic functions. So before you pick up the phone to call for technical support, try to reboot.

## Attention: Family Members of Active Duty Soldiers

If you have an active duty family member serving our country, submit a photo so we can highlight their sacrifice.



## CHARACTER FIRST

DEFINITION OF THE MONTH:

## COMPASSION

Investing whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others.



## EXCITING NEWS FROM MDHS



THE MUCH ANTICIPATED NEW MDHS WEBSITE IS EXPECTED BY THE END OF THE YEAR. THE SITE WILL BE CLIENT-FOCUSED, EASY TO NAVIGATE AND USER-FRIENDLY.