



Washington County
 Department of Social Services
 Commitment to Community



Partners in Press

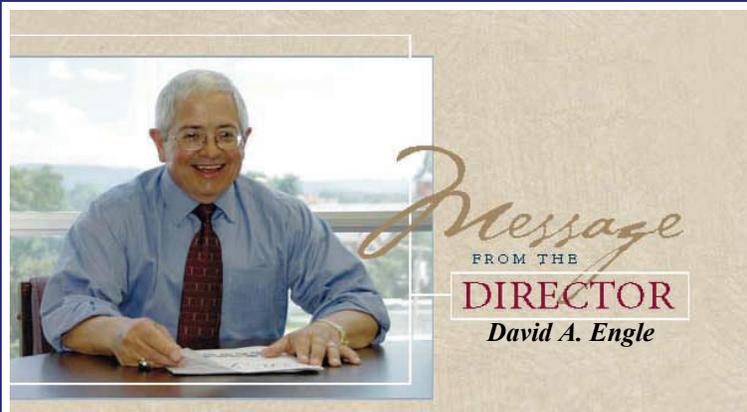
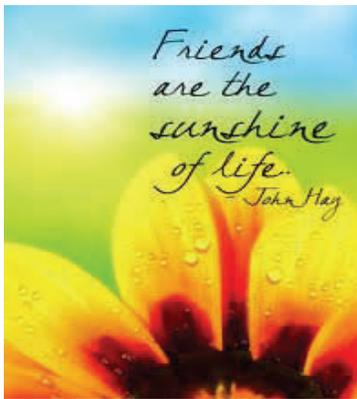
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Summer 2013

We serve people, promote self-reliance, and provide safety by delivering quality services and developing community partnerships.

-WCDSS Mission Statement



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Performance Quality Improvement

Performance Quality Improvement is one of the hallmarks of the O'Malley Administration as well as the National Council on Accreditation. While "PQI" may sound like a new term to you, it is really an extension and a re-emphasis of the Continuous Quality Program (CQI) that we have used here at WCDSS since 1998 to improve customer service and our work environment. Over the years, CQI has led to the development of countless re-engineered work processes in all of our divisions to help us cope with diminishing resources and increased customer service demands. CQI improvements to the work environment include the Leadership Development Program, increasing security throughout our buildings, creation of the Trauma Team (now Crisis Team), Diversity Team, improved internal communications, creation of the Risk Management Team, countless in-service training opportunities and much more. The theory behind CQI is that staff are the experts in indentifying service delivery and work environment issues and developing

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2013-2014 WASHINGTON COUNTY DSS ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

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Bill Beard, Vice Chair

Evvie Williams, Secretary

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Norma Sappington

Robert Petties

Terry Baker, County Commissioner,
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Board meetings are held the fourth Monday of the month (September-June) at 5:30 pm in the Washington County DSS Board Room.

How to reach us:

Wash. Co. Department of Social Services
122 N. Potomac St., Hagerstown, MD
21741

Phone: 240-420-2100 Fax: 240-420-2111
Child Abuse Hotline: 240-420-2222

www.dhr.state.md.us/washington.htm

The Safe Place — Child Advocacy Center
24 N. Walnut Street, Hagerstown, MD
Phone: 240-420-4300 Fax: 240-420-4339

The Family Center and Sunshine Center
221 McRand Court
Hagerstown, MD 21740
Phone: 301-790-4002 Fax: 301-790-4007

Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony Brown, Lt. Governor
Theodore Dallas, Secretary



Director's Corner Continued

improvements/enhancements to these. *The difference between PQI and CQI is that PQI places a greater emphasis on the importance of using data to make these decisions.*

Under PQI, we are evaluating the success of interventions to improve customer service by monitoring the following outcomes: In Adult, Child and Family Services we are planning ways to reduce the number of children in out-of-home placements, to ensure that children who are in out-of-home placements receive visits from their social workers monthly, and to close child abuse and neglect investigations in 60 days or less. In Adult Services, we seek to respond to emergency situations in 24 hours, and within 5 business days for non-emergencies. Family Investment staff work to process expedited food stamp applications within 24 hours of receipt, and regular Temporary Cash Assistance and Medical Assistance applications are processed in 30 days or less. Child Support staff pursue strategies to collect at least 74% of all current support owed, and to ensure that we have court orders for 88% of our nearly 6,000 cases. Administrative staff work to spend and report fiscal resources timely, complete timely PEPs, and ensure that information technology resources are readily available for co-workers. These are a few of the performance quality indicators for each of our divisions. Please check bulletin boards in your work area, the WCDSS shared drive (CQI & Strategic Plan – Scorecard – FY'13), and the DHR Balanced Scorecard for more indicators for your program area.

Recognizing the demands on all staff created by our ever increasing caseloads and diminished staff resources, in April Executive Staff suspended monthly meetings of the Quality Council which has been the body overseeing the creation and implementation of our Strategic Plan. In its place, the Executive Staff have, and will continue to, constitute ad hoc focus groups to address specific strategic planning strategies. Last month a team was convened to review the annual client, stakeholder and employee surveys to glean unmet needs, and to identify strategies to address these. Another ad hoc team was convened to critique the agency Leadership Development Class and to identify steps necessary to strengthen this training. Strategic Planning Standing Teams such as the Communications Management Council, Risk Management Team, and Employees First, will meet regularly with Executive Staff to present their progress, recommendations, and initiatives.

I encourage all staff to become familiar with the PQI objectives for your division and to participate with intra- and inter-division teams aimed at improving our work performance. The Great Recession has exacted a devastating toll on the health, welfare, and safety of vulnerable children, families, and adults in our community. Despite the resource challenges we face, it is essential that we use these teams to constantly refine our work processes to provide the services needed by our less fortunate neighbors.



By Tiffany Lowe, Child Welfare Program Manager

The Washington County Department of Social Services and the Washington County Mental Health Authority hosted a conference for youth ages 14 and older titled “Moving Toward Bright Futures: Washington County Youth Matter” on Tuesday, June 11, 2013 at Life House Church Bethel in Hagerstown, Maryland. The conference was the official kick off for the Youth Matter Initiative.

As an extension of Maryland’s Family Centered Practice Model, the Youth Engagement Model is centered on assuring the safety, well-being and permanency of every child, while building on the strengths of family and community to meet the child’s needs. The Youth Engagement Practice Model is specifically designed to focus on addressing the needs, and ensuring the involvement of youth (ages 14-21) who are committed to Maryland’s child welfare system. As an expert on their own lives, youth must be considered partners in the child welfare decision making process. All levels of the child welfare system and community partners have a responsibility for communicating realistic options to young people and negotiating reasonable alternatives. The mission of Maryland’s Youth Engagement Model is to improve services to youth in Maryland’s child welfare system and draw on the experiences and recommendations of youth to enhance child welfare policy and practice.

The conference was attended by approximately 110 adults and 80 youth. The conference included two opportunities for youth to share their own personal stories. Two presentations were made by the Teen Parent Panel. The Teen Parent Panel is comprised of local teenage parents who educate peers about the realities, rights and responsibilities of teen parenthood by sharing their personal stories with their peers. The goal of the Teen Parent Panel is to reduce the number of teens in Washington County who become teen parents. The day closed with a panel of youth who are currently in foster care through the WCDSS. They talked of their experiences in foster care; historical, current status, and their future plans and goals. The panel shared information to questions asked by the facilitator and also by participants in the audience.

There are 67 youth, ages 14-21, who are currently in foster care in Washington County. This represents 39% of all the children who are in an out-of-home placement. This community event was designed to highlight some of the issues facing the youth population as well as introduce the steps that the agency is taking to remove barriers that these youth often face.





Making the Grade, with help from the Washington County Family Support Center

Kathleen Dorman presented the following address on May 19, 2013, speaking at the adult education commencement at which she received her high school degree.

Hello everyone, my name is **Kathleen Dorman** and I attend the **Washington County Family Center**. I have been a part of the Maryland Family Network of Support Centers for some time now and I can't tell you how grateful I am that my dreams have finally come true. My story goes back to the year of 2001 but I won't take up that much of your time. When I first started attending the Family Center, I needed a place to go and get my GED and with two kids it was hard. My life as a little unstable, so a friend of mine introduced me to the Family Center. I was so happy that I was given the opportunity to change things in my life. They offered me so much more than I thought I was going to need such as parenting classes, counseling, leadership and information about sex and drug abuse. At that time I was young, I needed guidance, I was headed in all the wrong places and wish I could say to you that I listened to them back then. But sometimes, people like me, have to live and learn.

After leaving the Center I felt I had quit yet another thing in my life. I felt down, alone and broken. I was

turning into someone that I never wanted to be and I lost everything. My boys were with their father and I was lost in the world of addictions. I spent seven long years praying to God for an angel who would find me, help me, and love me. In these times I would think of what I learned at the Family Center and see how I could use that information in my life today.

In January 2012, my new husband and baby daughter, moved from Baltimore, Maryland back to Hagerstown. I called the Washington County Family Center, again, to see if they could help me. Imagine my surprise, when the person who answered the phone was one of the staff who had helped me so many years ago, I felt like I was back home again.

When I began at the Family Center in the Literacy for Life program, I made my mind up to work as hard as ever to achieve my goal of graduating. I started right away with excitement of knowing how much I could achieve with their help. On April 19, 2012 I began the National External Diploma Program and I was on a roll, then life's problems started. My mother and my sister were sick with cancer and I wanted to be with them, so it slowed down my progress but I didn't give up. I fought with them as a family against their illness knowing that we would all get through it the best we knew how.

As I continued in the Family Liter-

acy Program at the Center I could see the changes in my daughter, Neveah. She was excited about coming to school and didn't want to miss a day. She knew exactly what to do when she got to the Center: breakfast in the kitchen, Parent Child Time in the toddler childcare room, play for her and learning for me and then a home cooked lunch. After lunch we would read books before naptime and then I would go to parent classes. This routine helped Neveah establish routines and allowed us to both learn but more importantly we were doing it together.

"I felt like I was back home again."

Finally, on October 13, 2012 I received my High School Diploma! I cried joyful tears when I received that precious piece of paper. I was someone who was told she was never going to be anything, never going to amount to anything, I'm no good at this or that, etc. All those negative words that were ever said to me went out the window because I accomplished something that mattered so much to me and no one can take that from me. As of this writing, I am currently enrolled at Hagerstown Community College and look forward to this new chapter in my life.

I cannot explain in words the gratitude toward the Family Literacy Program at the Washington County Family Center for all it does to help people like me. I just hope that one day I can give back what they have given me. Thank you all for taking the time to help mothers and fathers, like me, to achieve a goal that they so long for and have lost hope in achieving.

Updates to the Washington County DSS Internet Page

The following information has been added to our Web page:

- COA Seal
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Job Listings for Non- Merit Positions
- Partners In Press Newsletter
- Annual Report



Press Releases

Family Center Graduation
Golden Fork Award
Employee Recognition Day 2013
Social Worker of the Year

Please use the link below to see our Washington County DSS Web Page.

<http://www.dhr.state.md.us/blog/?p=252>

Bonnie Elgin is a native of Cumberland, Maryland and retired from the Social Security Administration in 2006. Her government career began in the Norfolk, Virginia Social Security field office while her husband was stationed there in the Navy. Mrs. Elgin worked in the Alexandria, VA and Silver Spring, MD offices before returning to her husband's hometown of Hagerstown. She worked in various positions during her Social Security career including Public Affairs Specialist and Field Operations Supervisor.

**Getting to
know our
new
Washington
County Board
of Social
Services
Chair -
Bonnie Elgin**

Unable to sit still after retirement, Bonnie spent a couple years working as a puppeteer for an international organization known as "Kids on the Block" doing skits in elementary schools on bullying, child abuse, and healthy eating. She also worked as a Weight Watcher leader during that time, and utilized her certification as a personality trainer to do workshops for small groups.

Mrs. Elgin currently works part-time as a State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) Coordinator for the Washington County Commission on Aging (COA) where she uses her background in Social Security and Medicare policy to help educate and counsel COA clients.

Bonnie is married with three children and eight grandchildren. Her favorite activities are spending time with her family, friends, reading and photography.

Bonnie has served on the Washington County Board of Social Services since January 2009 and has found it a very rewarding experience being educated and enlightened to the varying needs of the less fortunate and how those needs are being met through the State and County programs.



HANCOCK DYNAMIC DADS' PICNIC

During the month of April, the community of Hancock was filled with activities to promote child abuse awareness and prevention. What a fitting way to wrap up the month's festivities by hosting a **Dynamic DADS' picnic** to promote father-child involvement. What a success the Dynamic DADS' picnic turned out to be with 89 fathers and their elementary age children in attendance. The evening was coordinated by Alan Clingan, case manager with the Washington County Family Center's DADS' Connection and Katie Russell with Family School Partnership. Everyone enjoyed a picnic dinner, bingo for the kids along with prizes, K-9 demonstration by Chief Buskirk of the Hancock Police Department and Officer Russell of the Greencastle Police Department, community resources provided by Patti Murphy of Washington County Health Department, and a raffle for the DADS.



The purpose of the event was to remind fathers of the important role they play in their child's life. Parents are their child's first teachers but fathers are their child's first super hero. Children listen and model what they hear and see their fathers doing. By spending a few minutes sharing a meal together, talking or having fun, fathers show their children how much they care about them. Fathers can also help their children be successful in school by talking to their children about their school work, home work, favorite subjects, and where they may struggle. Just simply asking to see completed homework assignments each night can make a difference in their child's education.

WCDSS Board of Social Services Announce Their 2013-2014 Officers

At their May 20 meeting, the Washington County Board of Social Services elected their new officers for 2013-2014: **Bonnie Elgin**, Chairperson; **William K. Beard, Jr.**, Vice-Chairperson; and **Evelyn C. Williams**, Secretary.

As leader of the Board, Mrs. Elgin brings 31 years of experience working for the Social Security Administration, where she retired in 2006. She is employed part-time by the Washington County Commission on Aging as a State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) Coordinator. Mrs. Elgin has been a member of the Washington County Board of Social Services since 2009.

William Beard retired from Frick Company in Waynesboro, PA as Director of International Sales. Mr. Beard is currently the Board Vice-President of the Washington County Commission on Aging. Mr. Beard is Executive Director as a volunteer of two non-profits: MIHI, Inc., and the Corporation for Assistive Technology (the Home Ramp Project). Mr. Beard's volunteer career began with SCORE.

Evelyn Williams has been an educator for Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) for more than 30 years. She has served as a teacher, assistant principal and currently is Supervisor for Social Studies for WCPS. Mrs. Williams currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Washington County Historical Society and the League of Women Voters.

Transition to PQI (Performance Quality Improvement)

PQI (Performance Quality Improvement): Since 1998 the agency has been involved in strategic planning with Continuous Quality Improvement as the vehicle to improve customer service and our work environment.

performance quality
improvement

Recognizing increased caseloads and staff shortages, Executive Staff agreed to spearhead the conversion from CQI to PQI as we prepare for re-accreditation. Instead of monthly Quality Council meetings, the Executive Staff will serve as the PQI Committee (Quality Council) and will assemble ad hoc committees as needed to support the department/program teams and workgroups already working so hard in every division to review data and make recommendations related to achieving performance goals.



Already two such ad hoc groups have met to discuss the upcoming LDP program and to review the survey data. PQI will begin to appear as a regular agenda item at all our meetings. You will see performance data for the work you do posted on bulletin boards and available on the shared drive. The suggestion box, annual report, and newsletters will continue – but our terminology has changed – *no more CQI*, but now it's all about

PQI – Performance Quality Improvement. PQI is all about assessing and improving overall performance and meeting standards that promote quality outcomes for the clients we serve. WCDSS is committed to an agency-wide Performance and Quality Improvement Program (PQI) that will ensure efficient, effective service delivery and the achievement of strategic and program goals. In all divisions/program areas we will continue to use data to identify areas of needed improvement and implement corrective action plans in support of achieving performance targets, program goals, and positive client outcomes.



3rd Golden Fork Award

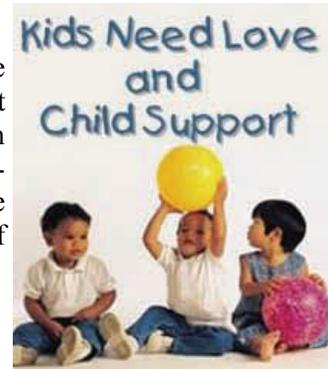
July 18th Rosemary Malone, Executive Director of the Family Investment Administration, and Marilyn Lorenzo, Policy Specialist with the Family Investment Administration, returned with homemade cookies and other goodies to present Washington County with its 3rd Golden Fork award! In total, our Family Investment Division has been awarded four Silver Spoons and three Golden Forks for compliance with deadlines, error rates, and other factors. Great job, Washington County!

CHILD SUPPORT AWARENESS MONTH

Child Support Staff have kicked off a “high-flying” month-long recognition of their child support customers and hard-working staff members. Awareness Team members have created a bit of a festive atmosphere with banners displayed on Memorial Boulevard (Aug. 5-12) as well as on our own DSS building and green ribbons hung throughout the downtown area.

On August 14 Child Support will be represented at the Elgin Fair and hold a coloring contest for the children attending to win backpacks full of school supplies.

After a successful Driver’s License Restoration program last year, the Child Support Division will repeat the initiative this year in an effort to demonstrate to delinquent obligors our willingness to assist them in regaining driving privileges which were suspended due to child support arrearages. Letters to qualifying child support customers will be mailed during August to request payment of \$100 for reinstatement of their license.



2013-2014 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The 2013-2014 Leadership Development Program is well underway with the approval of 18 participants for this year’s curriculum. They are **Danielle McGowan, Joshua Bond, Julia Jensen, Becky Rice, Katy Zeger, Khya Funk, Kristi Mantz, Maria Fairfax, Carly McFerren, Jason Licari, Christina McCauley, Jill Farkosh, Kimberly Cochran, Lisa Teeter, Megan Capps, Melody McClure, Roni Deike, and Natasha Ashby.**

The LDP Program year will begin with a kickoff on September 4. There will be approximately 16 classes with topics that include Principles of Supervision, coaching and Counseling, Time Management, Human Resource Practices, Business Writing, Public Speaking and several more.



Each participant will select a mentor with whom they will have monthly interviews to discuss the fundamentals of leadership/supervision and share classroom and day-to-day experiences. Group projects will be assigned in September. Each participant will be expected to attain an intermediate level of proficiency in Microsoft Word, Powerpoint and either Access or Excel.

The Washington County Leadership Development Program is a PQI (Performance Quality Improvement) initiative that was designed to address the strategic planning objective of succession planning. Please extend a “Congratulations and Good Luck” to the 2013-2014 LDP Participants.

CANCER SCREENING @ WASH. CO HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Cancer Screening Programs at the **Washington County Health Department** have many services that they offer to the communities of Washington County. The programs that are offered are Colon Cancer Screening Program and the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program. Both of the programs mentioned above offer extensive services for those people that are uninsured or underinsured in Washington County.

Screen for Life
Cancer screening sees what you can't

- Breast
- Cervical
- Colorectal

The Colon Cancer Screening Program will provide colonoscopies, sigmoidoscopies, double contrast barium enemas, case management, transportation and linkage to care if cancer is diagnosed. To be eligible for this program men or women will need to live in Washington County, be 50 years or older or if under 50 years of age have a family history or personal history that increases their risk for colon cancer and have an income at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.



The Breast and Cervical Program offers pap tests, clinical breast exams, mammograms, ultrasounds and case management of all abnormal results. To be eligible for this program a woman must be a Maryland resident, be 40-64 years of age, or be 64 or older, not have Medicare B, and have an income at or below 250% of Federal Poverty Guidelines.

The mission of the Cancer Screening Programs is to provide education and promote awareness to the citizens of Washington County regarding cancer, prevention, screening, treatment and other available resources. With knowledge and awareness many more people will lose their fear of getting these viable and lifesaving screenings done. Early detection is most important in cancer detection and prevention. For more information, please contact **Holly Luther, Community Health Educator, Washington County Health Department, 1302 Pennsylvania Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland. Phone 240-313-3414.**



*A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining,
the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing,
and the lawn mower
is broken. -James Dent*



*It's a sure sign of
summer if the chair
gets up when you do.
-Walter Winchell*



Sunshine Center Turns Two!



Two Years Strong and Growing...

Since opening in July 2011, the **Sunshine Center** has served over eighty parents. Eighty two children have celebrated birthdays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and the change of seasons in the comfort of the home-like atmosphere of the Sunshine Center.

The mission of the Sunshine Center is to provide a safe and comfortable setting where families can maintain their relationships, resolve the issues that created the need for removal, and reduce trauma associated with out-of-home placement. Services to support parents working towards reunification include Visitation Coaching, Warm Up meetings between

resource parents and birth parents, and, newly added, Intensive Family Preservation (IFP) services to support families as children transition home. IFP Staff provide support to meet children's safety needs in the home and reinforces skills learned in visit coaching. These services help ensure that families will not have to experience another out-of-home placement in the future.

Because of the generosity and donations of community volunteers, a large array of toys, board games, books, and crafts give parents options in planning activities for each visit and maximizes the time children share with

parents, siblings and extended family. Food plays a very important role at Sunshine Center. Along with celebrations, children often request favorite family dishes and desserts. Cooking together and finding comfort in sharing a meal goes a long way in helping families cope with separation.



A resource parent celebrates a birth parents birthday with her and her child.

Sunshine Center Wish List

- Paper Towels
- Toilet Paper
- Napkins
- Cleaning Supplies
- Dish Detergent
- Dishwasher Detergent
- Hand Soap
- Paper Plates
- Copy Paper
- Art Supplies
- Washable Paints
- Hula Hoops
- Jump Ropes
- Croquet Set
- Wii Games
- DVD Children's Movies
- Floor Pillows
- Board Games
- Toys for all ages
- Holiday Decorations
- House Plants
- Stuffed Animals
- Baby Dolls
- Baby Doll clothes
- Action Figures
- Dump Trucks
- Riding Toys
- Volunteers

A Look at the last two years:

- FY'12-77 children served
- FY'13- 67 children served
- FY '12-44 parents served
- FY'13- 50 parents served
- FY'12-10 Reunifications
- FY'13- 8 Reunifications
- FY'12- 22 parents in Visit Coaching
- FY'13- 21 parents in Visit Coaching

Interagency Family Preservation Services at Sunshine Center

In 2012, Washington County DSS saw a need for families in the reunification process at Sunshine Center to have intensive, in-home support as children transition home from foster care. Often, many things have changed while children have been in care. A new home, different school district, and maybe even a "new and improved" parent who now has an increased understanding and confidence in their parenting style and expectations of their children. As families prepare for reunification, visits become more frequent, longer in duration and eventually progress to overnights, weekends and then return home. **Interagency Family Preservation** is a statewide program that promotes the integrity of the family, builds family skills, and seeks to reduce out-of-home placements. Ensuring the safety of the child(ren) in the home during the course of service is paramount. With the addition of these services to families, Sunshine Center can offer seamless support and prevention of another out-of-home placement. For more information, contact Shana Matthews at 301-790-4001.

