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## Services Names Social Worker of the Year and says Farewell

Congratulations go out to Alex Sweetak for being selected as Social Worker of the Year for the Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services! Alex was presented with the award by Assistant Director Susan Coppage at this year's Spring All-Staff meeting held on March 21, 2013. In addition to the excellent work that Alex does on a daily basis, he was recognized for the great job that he did as Interim Supervisor as well as that of a Lead Worker. We truly appreciate



**Alex Sweetak accepts award for QACDSS Social Worker of the Year from Assistant Director Susan Coppage.**

Alex and all that he does!

Best wishes for a wonderful retirement go out to Cindy Hadaway, Adult Services Worker, who has retired after 39 years of hard work for the Department of Social Services! What an amazing accomplishment! We know that Cindy is enjoying her retirement so far and has many things on her "to do" list!

## Director's Spotlight

Welcome to all to the newest edition of the Queen Anne's County newsletter! I hope you continue to find these updates helpful and useful in getting to know our department a little better each time. The past six months have not only brought us weird weather but also several staffing changes. We had one retirement and two resignations, which corresponds to three new staff coming aboard. Three staff

(Director, Assistant Director

Susan Coppage and foster care social worker, Terri Lowther) completed a Trauma Stress Studies certificate program sponsored via satellite through Salisbury University and The Trauma Center at the Justice Resource Institute in Boston. We all transitioned to Google with ease, are looking forward to pay raises next year (thank you legislators), and most importantly preparing for two major changes in the delivery of our services, namely Affordable Care Act

(ACA) and Alternative Response (AR). We expect a higher volume of customers to apply for the new health insurance plan and although no increase in workload is expected from AR, it changes the way we deliver services to the families referred to us for help.

So even if we prepare for everything there's bound to be a few rocky roads ahead so hold on to your hats and enjoy the ride!

**Cathy Dougherty, LCSW-C**

## Child Support Earns Gold Medal and Collects over \$1 Million in Support



Child Support achieved a Gold Medal for Court Order Establishment.

The Child Support Division is flying high with the gold medal they recently achieved for Court Order Establishment. Queen Anne's County was the only Child Support Agency in the State of Maryland to be awarded a gold medal in any of the performance measures. On April 25, 2013, Kathy Nolan and Theresa Morris attended a meeting where they received a certificate from Secretary Ted Dallas and

CSEA Executive Director Joe DiPrimio. Congratulations to the team for their continued excellence.

In other news, Child Support has recently developed an Administrative Hearing Process. Once a month, Non-Custodial parents are subpoenaed to the office to discuss how they can begin paying their child support as court ordered. If they appear for the meeting, payment agreements are discussed with them for

payment on the arrears, and, if appropriate, an NPEP (Non-Custodial Parent Employment Program) referral is done if the Non-Custodial parent is having difficulty locating a job. If the Non-Custodial parent fails to appear for the appointment, he/she is referred either for civil contempt or criminal contempt depending on the case. There has been great success with this program, and Non-Custodial parents that were not paying are

*"So far in FFY 2013, Child Support has collected \$1,579,957 for the children of Queen Anne's County."*

now paying or are actively working with the NPEP program.

It gets even better, so far in FFY 2013 (Oct. – March), Child Support has collected \$ 1,579,957 for the children of Queen Anne's County. Great work team!!



## Child Support Re-Launches NPEP

Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services Child Support Enforcement Division has recently re-launched the Non-Custodial Parent Employment Program (NPEP), a program that works directly with unemployed or underemployed non-custodial parents who are having trouble paying child support. The program, coordinated by Child Support Specialist Dawn Seward and in conjunction with the QACDSS Family Investment Unit, assists non-custodial parents in the job search process by completing personalized employment searches on their behalf and referring them to potential employment opportunities utilizing various agency resources. The program also works with non-custodial parents to continue their education, can aid with obtaining their GED, or assist

with completing training/courses to obtain special licenses and certifications. The NPEP program will also assist with federal bonding and expunging of records, drafting and updating resumes/cover letters, and interview preparation. Since NPEP's re-launch in August 2012, 74 non-custodial parents have been either court-ordered or referred to the program. To date, the NPEP Program has assisted 9 people with Federal Bonding and 27 non-custodial parents that have been referred to the program are either employed or are making consistent monthly child support payments.



On March 21, 2013, Assistant Director of Child Support Kathy Nolan awarded Theresa Morris, Human Services Specialist, with a certificate for 25 years of service with the State of Maryland. Congrats to Theresa!



# Services Welcomes New Employees to QADSS

The In Home Services Unit is happy to announce that Sara Tanski has joined us as a Consolidated Services Social Worker, who will in time, also assist with CPS investigations. Sara is filling Jody's previous position. Sara joined us on 2/19/13 and most recently worked for Wrap Around Maryland. She comes to us with a variety of case work experience and we look for-

ward to benefitting from her expertise. Sara lives in Stoney Beach, Maryland with her husband, Scott, her son, Patrick and her daughter, Naomi.

Sarah Muir joined the Out of Home Services Unit on 5/15/13 as a Foster Care Social Worker. Sarah comes to us from Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services and resides in Caroline County. In addition to

her experience as an In Home Services worker, Sarah also has experience as a mental health clinician. Sarah is looking forward to her new position here at Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services! Be sure to stop by and welcome Sara and Sarah!

**Queen Anne's County DSS would like to welcome it's newest additions to the Services**

**Unit: Sara Tanski and Sarah Muir!**

## Jody Simmons Named Special Projects Coordinator

Jody Simmons has taken on a newly created position in the Services Unit as a Special Projects Coordinator. Jody started her new position in January 2013 and has been working on a variety of different projects including being the Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) Coordinator, CHESSIE Coordinator, Local Coordinating Team

(LCT) Representative, and developer and facilitator of many other projects to enhance the ability of the Services Unit to meet the special needs of our customers. Congratulations to Jody and we look forward to the use of her expertise in many different facets!

# Welcome Baby Will Ritchie!

Family Services Social Worker Abby Ritchie returned to work on April 15, 2013 after a "relaxing" maternity leave! Abby gave birth to her son Will on February 13, 2013 and he was welcomed by his parents and his big sister, Amelia. All are

doing well and Amelia is taking good care of her little brother. The Services Unit was so excited for Abby's return that we had a couple of "presents" waiting for her! Congratulations to Abby and her family!



**The Ritchie Family welcomed Baby Will into the world on February 13, 2013!**

## Brittany Captures Customer Service Award



Brittany VanBlargan was awarded the 2012 DHR Customer Service Award. Director, Cathy Dougherty, attended the ceremony with Ms. VanBlargan and FIA Supervisor, Darlene Kuechler, at the War Memorial on October 3, 2012. This event was started by a special committee at Central 13 years ago to recognize 2 coworkers who demonstrated exceptional cus-

tomter service. The committee continues to organize the event and it has grown to each local district office recognizing one member of their staff.



**Welcome Baby Jacob!**

*Join the FIP  
Unit this Fall  
2013 in  
celebrating our  
Baltimore  
Ravens with  
Purple Fridays!*

## In the Lives of FIP

It's always an exciting time over in the FIP unit. From work achievements to life celebrations, it seems like we are always celebrating something. Here are a few highlights of what has been going on in our world:

Clifton Townsend is a grandfather again, if you didn't know any better, you would have thought it was his first! The joys of

being a grandparent! Jacob Mann made his arrival on 5/13/13 weighing in at just under 8 pounds. Mommy and Baby are doing well and Cliff is floating on cloud 9.

Nadine just got back from a cruise in April. She came back refreshed, sunburned as usual, and jamming to her disco music. We thought she was going to break out and do the Duggie.

The ladies of FIP (and Cliff) are crazy Raven Fans...or so they claim. It may be just an excuse to have weekly parties! Never the less, we all had a wonderful time cheering our Ravens on to win the Superbowl. We're sure this tradition will carry on to the upcoming season, so if you're in the building, you're more than welcome to join FIP in celebrating Purple Fridays!

This was an exceptionally exciting and busy year for Candace. After a lovely wedding in October, Mr. and Mrs. Jones announced that they are expecting their first baby - Braden. It has been a delight to watch Candace reach these milestones and even more delightful to anticipate a new baby FIP-PER in August!

Robin Day's daughter, Bonnie, is overseas for 10 weeks this summer studying with the International Business Institute. She will be traveling to Europe, India and China.

Finally, congratulations to Mark Sr. and Denime McCain as they celebrate their son, Mark Jr's High School graduation. Mark Jr. has decided to follow in his father's footsteps and will be leaving for boot camp in August.



## FIA Welcomes New Employees

Family Investment Unit's newest employee is Ron Douglas, Substance Abuse Counselor. Ron is responsible for interviewing, screening and referring Temporary Cash Assistance Customer and drug felon customers for drug and alcohol assessment and treatment. Ron started at QACDSS on April 15, 2013 and filled the vacancy left by Susan Harrison. He is certified at the Bachelor's level in Addictions by the State of Maryland. Ron lives in Anne Arundel County where he worked at Pathways in the Inpatient Program for 16 years and for an Alcohol and Drug Intervention Program in

Glen Burnie for 10 years. He came to the QAC Health Department, Nielson Center in 2006 and worked with the Adolescent Program and the Adult Outpatient Substance Abuse Program.

The Family Investment Unit is pleased to welcome Aleisha Wright as a FIA Specialist II Case Manager. Aleisha will be responsible for establishing and maintaining her own caseload of customers who receive various public benefits from our agency. Her start date was December

12, 2012. She is a native of Talbot County and attended Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Florida. Before coming to Queen Anne's County Social Services, Aleisha worked for the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development in Crownsville as a Contract Management Officer. As of this date, Aleisha has attended CARES, Food Stamp and Temporary Cash Assistance training. She also completed her Medical Assistance training on May 23, 2013.

## FIA Attends Trainings, Employees Profit

The Family Investment Unit would like to recognize the following workers for the professional trainings they have attended or are currently attending:

Amy Clark – Medical Assistance and Child Care Subsidy Trainings; Betty Whyte, Jennifer Crumble and Katie Comegys – OHEP Conference in Ocean City, MD.; Robin Day and Lisa Walls – Long Term

Care Training; Vera Meredith – Medical Assistance and Temporary Cash Assistance Trainings; Aleisha Wright – CARES, Food Stamps, Medical Assistance and Temporary Cash Assistance Trainings.

Airlee Johnson conducted a Cultural Diversity Training for the agency on 4/26/13. Attendees learned to identify, understand and rise above the common biases and stereotypes that

affect us all.

FIA staff also attended a Communication Skills for Women Seminar in April and The Women's Conference in May.

These training help to equip and encourage the FIA team in the ongoing task of serving our customers both effectively and compassionately.



## Nurturing our Families

The mission of the Nurturing Program is to empower and educate parents in becoming responsible, to increase parental involvement in the lives of their children and the community, to teach problem solving strategies to allow them to work together for the best interests of their children, and to provide opportunities for personal growth and development in order to prevent and treat the

intergenerational cycle of child abuse and neglect. The Nurturing Program, established in 1983, is a nationally validated prevention and intervention parenting educational model designed to remedy and modify parenting attitudes and patterns to increase family communication and cooperation and to teach how to nourish, protect, guide and provide nurturance to the parents and their children.

The Program is offered by the Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services and takes place at centrally located facilities throughout Queen Anne's County such as Family Support Center, QAC Department of Social Services, and local churches. During FY'13, the program is slated to serve 26 families.

*Story continued on page 8*

## DHR Goes Google

On April 22, 2013, MD DHR migrated its email and calendar systems from GroupWise to Google! This is an ongoing statewide initiative that will move all Maryland agencies to a single e-mail platform. DHMH, MEMA, MDA, MSA, MSRP, GOV, State Police and number of other agencies have been successfully transitioned to Google Apps. Some benefits of moving to Google e-mail include: Statewide e-mail ad-

dress book (across all agencies), robust search capabilities, larger mailbox sizes (25GB), cost savings, synchronized passwords, online collaboration features, as well as many other features. Con-

gratulations and many thanks to Laurie Marks for helping the agency complete a smooth transition to Google and for her continued efforts in helping agency employees with all questions and concerns!



## Appreciating our Volunteers



On April 23, 2013 our Volunteer Coordinator, Peggy Landskroener hosted a celebration to recognize our volunteers along with our Advisory Board Members. Volunteers were presented with the Governor's Volunteer Service Certificate for their support, time and commitment to our agency. Light refreshments and

punch were served. First row: William Holloway, KI High School Student; Bertie Turner, Job Coach; Emily Nicholson, KI High School Student; Kate Tumulty, DSS Advisory Board Member Back row: Peggy Landskroener, Volunteer Coordinator; Ruth Mylott, Job Coach; Cathy Dougherty, Director

## Healthy Queen Anne's

On April 5, 2013, Queen Anne's County Department of Social Services began Healthy Queen Anne's - a workplace initiative to promote and support a healthy work environment, healthy staff, and healthy families. The program will promote healthy habits, resources

for living healthy and the importance of wellness which includes an exercise program for the department and a "Biggest Loser" component for those that would like to lose weight. The six week American Heart Association Walking Challenge was extended to each staff.

Staff was given a pedometer and permission to walk twenty minutes each work day. Guest speakers attend each session to provide healthy lifestyle information.

### **Nutrition and Healthy Eating**

Nutrition basics include the food groups and becoming more aware of calories and the roles that specific nutrients play in a healthy diet.



**Employees gather for a picture before one of the daily 2:00PM walks.**

Be sure to include a variety of foods from the major food groups: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, lean protein, nuts and seeds, and healthy fats. Use guidelines for how much food to choose from each group, include foods you can find in your local grocery store, and fit your tastes, lifestyle and budget.

Also consider your health risks. Do you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure? If so, be sure to follow a diet that is low in salt, saturated fat and cholesterol, and high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and healthy fats. For personalized advice, talk with your doctor or a dietitian.

#### **Fitness Basics**

Starting a fitness program may be one of the best things you can do for your health. Physical activity can reduce your risk of chronic disease, improve your balance and coordination, help you lose weight, and even boost your self-

esteem. And the benefits are yours for the taking, regardless of age, sex or physical ability. The Department of Health and Human Services recommends that healthy adults include aerobic exercise and strength training in their fitness plans, specifically at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity (or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity) a week and strength training exercises at least twice a week.

Regular exercise can help control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if you haven't exercised for some time and you have health concerns, you should talk to your doctor before starting a new fitness routine.

When you're designing your personal fitness program, consider your fitness goals. Think about your fitness likes and dislikes, and note your personal barriers to fitness. Then consider practical strategies for keeping your fitness program on track.

Starting a fitness program is an important decision, but it doesn't have to be an overwhelming one. By planning carefully and pacing yourself, you can make fitness a healthy habit that lasts a lifetime.

#### **Stress Management**

Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the ever increasing demands of life. Surveys show that most Americans experience challenges with stress at some point during the year. In looking at the causes of stress, remember that your brain comes hard-wired with an alarm system for your protection. When your brain perceives a threat, it signals your body to release a burst of hormones

to fuel your capacity for a response. This has been labeled the "flight-or-fight" response. Once the threat is gone, your body is meant to return to a normal relaxed state. Unfortunately, the non-stop stress of modern life means that your alarm system rarely shuts off.

That's why stress management is so important. Stress management gives you a range of tools to reset your alarm system. Without stress management, all too often your body is always on high alert. Over time, high levels of stress lead to serious health problems. Don't wait until stress has a negative impact on your health, relationships or quality of life. Start practicing a range of stress management techniques today.

#### **Weight Loss Basics**

Your weight is a balancing act, and calories are part of that equation. Fad diets may promise you that counting carbs or eating a mountain of grapefruit will make the pounds drop off, but when it comes to weight loss, it's calories that count. Weight loss comes down to burning more calories than you take in. You can do that by reducing extra calories from food and beverages and increasing calories burned through physical activity.

Once you understand the equation, you're ready to set your weight-loss goals and make a plan for reaching them. Remember, you don't have to do it alone. Talk to your doctor, family and friends for support. Also, plan smart: Anticipate how you'll handle situations that challenge your resolve and the inevitable minor setbacks. The key to successful weight loss is a commitment to making permanent changes in your diet and exercise habits.

## **LGA Studies RBA, Agency Benefits**

The LGA unit completed the FY '13 mid-year review of their Results Based Accountability (RBA) data. Each LGA staff member has a performance measure they review to determine where we've been and where we're headed. Results, indicators, baselines, turning the curve, strategies and performance measures are used to determine the three performance measures: How much did

we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?

Eunice Stromberg reviewed the Usage of Paper and Supplies and determined we need to continue to conserve. She is developing a strategy to obtain more accurate information on the use of paper. Eunice recommends that we continue to use both sides of the paper and encourage staff to follow conservation of paper. One box of paper costs \$36.20

and 1 ream of paper is \$3.62!

Catherine Gray reviewed Invoice Processing and found that 562 invoices were processed and 90% were completed within 12 days. What works best is to submit receipts and invoices to fiscal timely. Fiscal could process invoices the first business day following the month end close instead of waiting until Thursday. She recommends invoices are given to Fiscal with correct and complete



*“Is anyone better off? We believe we are better off as a result of utilizing RBA.”*

information for timely processing.

Joanna Reynolds reviewed Contract Processing data. Beginning FY '13, she has sent quarterly reminders to managers to use funds for promotional and printed items. She recommends Managers request contracts using the local *Forms, Supplies, Equipment Request Form* and provide correct information.

Peggy Landskroener reviewed Volunteer and Senior Commodity Service Employment Hours. She tallied 118.3 hours volunteered at our agency. These positions provided clerical functions that allow workers to focus on direct services to customers. She will seek feedback from managers when volunteers are placed in their unit.

Laurie Marks reviewed IT Trouble Calls for the first six months of FY '13. She received 921 service requests and discovered that random spikes in trouble calls coincide with

the implementation of new technology initiated by DHR/OTHS. Additionally, an increase in the number of employees means an increase in the computer equipment utilized.

Judi Beskid reviewed Building Service Requests. Nineteen service requests were made the first six months of FY '13. Forty-three percent of the requests were completed within five days and fifty-eight percent were completed within ten days. What works best for the agency are vendors with routine schedules, i.e. electrician, exterminator, etc. This report is shared with the Property Manager to discuss improvements in service.

Is anyone better off? We believe we are better off as a result of utilizing RBA. Conservation of paper and supplies reduce environmental and fiscal waste. Timely processing of invoices results in vendors

receiving timely payments and satisfaction in working with our agency. Timely processing of contracts is a requirement of state procurement and results in vendor satisfaction. Volunteers allow staff to focus on direct customer service while clerical tasks are being completed. Reviewing IT service requests and providing timely response results in little to no computer down time for staff. Quick service delivery for building service issues provides an adequate working environment for staff. Reviewing this information provides the data necessary to make changes to existing procedures, create new procedures and know that our customers are better off because the programs are working the way they should.



**Nurturing Continued...**

Parents and children meet with trained Nurturing Facilitators 2 hours, one night a week for ten or twelve weeks, learning the same concept separately and simultaneously. Both the parents and the children learn how to handle feelings, communicate needs, understand each other, take charge of their own behavior, feel good about themselves and enjoy each other. The parent's group

provides a supportive and nonjudgmental environment conducive to open communication with other parents within the confines of a structured curriculum. The children's group encompasses structured group discussions, socialization and arts and crafts that enhance the abstract concepts. The curriculum is highly effective, structured, and research-based, focusing on the affective, feeling, cognitive, thinking, and sustaining parental attitudinal and behavioral changes. The activities outlined within

the lessons teach self-esteem, empathy, alternatives to corporal punishment, power and independence, and age appropriate expectations. Due to the complexity of the family structure, the Nurturing Parenting Program offers various adaptations to the curriculum including programs for military families, adoptive and foster families, families with prenatal, birth to infant, school-aged, and adolescent children, and families for single fathers and grandparents raising grandchildren.



# Taking Steps and Making Differences

**By Candace Jones**

Our individual PQI teams are a project that many of us put a lot of time and energy in. We each selected our team for our own personal reasons, and for many of us, that team has become more - it's become a way to give back and contribute to the agency and community. Several of our teams have accomplished great things in the past year! Unfortunately, not many of us know the amazing strides that are fellow peers have taken. I have met with each PQI leader to give them the opportunity to brag a little on all the hard work that each of you has been doing. It also gives you all a little insight into what's been going on right down the hall.

**Employee Appreciation Committee**

The Employee Appreciation Committee (EAC) has been busy planning and executing events throughout the year in an effort to maintain high staff morale and show appreciation the hard work and dedication of QACDSS staff. The EAC hosts two large events each year: the Winter Blast and the Employee Recognition Event. This year, the EAC hosted the Winter Blast in January, which consisted of a spaghetti lunch, salad, drinks and desserts. The Employee Recognition Event in May consisted of a spread of fried chicken, hot dogs, various picnic sides and fabulous desserts. The committee also brings agency staff together to separately honor each unit over refreshments during the course of the year. In order to generate funds to support the committee's

two large events, the EAC holds several fundraisers throughout the year. This year some of those fundraisers included a dessert cart, Soup Day, Meatball Sub Lunch, baskets raffles and Ice Cream Social to name a few. The Employee Recognition Committee always welcomes new members and is committed to implementing staff suggestions into their events.

**PQI-Action Planning/Projects/PIP/Corrective Actions**

“Can you provide financial assistance with rent?” “Do you know where the local food pantries are located?” Customers pose these and similar queries daily at Social Services. The Action Planning/Projects/PIP/Corrective Actions team, which consists of Heather Andrews, Cindy O., Amy, Eunice, Susie, Marge, and Dan, worked feverishly in the past year to constantly update the Queen Anne County Resource Guide located in the ALL Staff folder. The front receptionist, caseworkers, and Intake workers utilize the efforts of the team to provide and “empower residents to access resources [in the community] that will lead them to independence, self-sufficiency, and safe nurturing.” (Strategic Planning Goal for 2012-2015). In addition, the team researched and compiled a list of additional resources, such as the Family Support of Queen Anne’s County and School-Based Mental Health in order to increase the opportunity to educate the community about the valuable local resources available to meet their needs. Currently, the team is developing an effective way to

track and document the community resources that were utilized by our clients in order to validate the effectiveness of the resource list. When the team assembles at the end of May, we will be discussing a new project. If you have any ideas, please send them our way!

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

At first glance, it appears as if this year was much busier for Outreach than past years - logging in 28 Outreach Activities. The fact of the matter is that our agency has always been very active in the community; we just keep better data now. Last July, we started using an Outreach Questionnaire to collect information about the events that we were attending. The feedback helped us get an idea of how many people visited our tables and gave us suggestions of how to improve. We discovered a new venue to promote our activities. The QAC Calendar of Events website is accessible to us to post upcoming events and important dates to the agency. QACTV is also an important and sometimes overlooked way for us to get information into the

**“The fact of the matter is that our agency has always been very active in the community; we just keep better data now.”**



**The Maryland Charities Team front left to right: Gail Dadds, Katie Comegys, Nadine Menteccki. Back: Brittany VanBlargan, Candace Jones, Cathy Dougherty (Agency Director.)**



***"[The Maryland Charities Campaign] had a banner year – raising \$2,160. The Agency elected to donate all general funds that were collected to Queen Anne's County Hospice."***

community. If you are interested in advertising in either one of these venues, please see Nadine.

#### **2012 MARYLAND CHARITIES REPORT**

The Maryland Charities PQI Team would like to thank everyone for their generous contributions to the 2012 Maryland Charities Campaign. We had a banner year – raising \$2,160. The Agency elected to donate all general funds that were collected to Queen Anne's County Hospice.

The team continues to raise money for the 2013 Campaign by selling bottled water. Waters are located in the refrigerator in the kitchen and can be purchased for \$.50 per bottle.

#### **Program Evaluation**

Our team is trying to set up a "Homeless Day" outreach. At this event we will be working to get together our community partners all in one place. We are hoping to make a "one stop shop" for those members of our community that are down on their luck. Some of the partners that we are hoping to involve are: The Health Department; The Governors Wellmobile; Social Security; Motor Vehicle Administration; Eastern Shore Crisis Response; and Marylands Commitment to Veterans,



just to name a few. At the event there will be quick access to services ranging from food assistance to HIV testing, dental screenings, off-site birth certificates, blood pressure screenings, transportation, housing and aftercare follow up for persons seen by the Wellmobile medical staff. There is still a lot of planning to do, as this is the first event of its kind in Queen Anne's County, but we are hoping to have it sometime in the Fall.

#### **SERMA/Risk Management PQI Team**

The SERMA/Risk Management PQI Team has been busy this year working very hard to ensure the safety and well-being of all staff at QACDSS. In doing so, we have offered a number of trainings and wellness activities. Our largest attendance was in October, 2012, when a facilitator from the Injured Workmen's Insurance Fund, (IWIF), presented on Blood Borne Pathogens, Slips, Trips, and Falls, and Violence in the Workplace, two of which are required for accreditation. Also offered in March, 2013, was a wellness activity partnered with the QAC Department of Health. During this session staff was given information on the flu and the opportunity to have their blood pressure screened. The Department of Health also brought a DermaScan machine. This allowed staff to have their skin screened for any abnormalities that could preclude skin cancer.

The QACDSS Health and Safety manual has been updated and posted in the All Staff folder. The SERMA side of our team requested and completed having blinds installed in the reception area due to the severity of the sun glare at the reception desk.

The annual SERMA conference will be held this year on May 23, 2013, at the Sheppard Pratt Conference Center.

The SERMA/Risk Management Team works continuously with other agencies, departments and community partners to develop the most useful topics, trainings, and presenters pertaining to health and wellness. As always, your input is critical to our achieving this goal, so if there's a subject you would like to learn more about feel free to contact any of our members.

I would like to thank all of the team members for their time and dedication to keeping QACDSS a safe environment to work.

As you can see, each team has been hard at work throughout the year improving our community and agency. With any luck, this may have even made you a little more curious about another team that you may be interested in joining. Keep up the good work, and the Gateway Committee will be bringing you another update of our teams in our next issue.

# Gateway Fun Pages!

**Match the “Fun Fact” to the Director or Assistant Director you believe it is describing!**

1. This Director or Assistant Director lived in St. Thomas U.S.V.I. for 4 years!
2. This Director or Assistant Director took her first airplane ride to Hawaii for her job and it was paid for by the government!
3. This Director or Assistant Director biked an amazing 55 miles on May 18, 2013 for the Chesapeake Tour de Cure for Diabetes!
4. This Director or Assistant Director won first place in the state-wide Betty Crocker test taken by all high school seniors in her state!
5. This Director or Assistant Director played rugby in college!

Answers on Page 14

**Vera’s Quote of the Quarter:**

*Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude.*

**Thomas Jefferson**

**On March 25, 2013, the Child Support Unit had some fun in the snow by building their very own snowman mascot!**



## Agency Employees Get CPR/First Aid Certified

On May 16, 2013, Queen Anne’s County Department of Social Services employees had the privilege of taking a CPR/First Aid course provided by Joshua Ruby, a certified CPR/First Aid instructor who works for CPR Montgomery. Employees not only watched instructional videos on CPR/First

Aid, but also received hands-on training provided by Mr. Ruby and several of his “friends” - CPR training dummies and life-like babies in which staff used to simulate emergencies that would require usage of CPR or the Heimlich maneuver.



## Cook's Corner: Seafood Gumbo



### Ingredients:

2 cups chopped onions	1 pound cooked chopped boneless chicken breast
1½ cups chopped green bell peppers	1 pound peeled medium shrimp
1 cup chopped celery	1 dozen medium to large oysters in their liquor -the liquid in which they are packed) about 9 ounces
¾ cup vegetable oil	1 dozen little neck clams
¾ cup all purpose flour	1 dozen mussels
2 tablespoons minced fresh garlic	1 pound scallops
5-1/2 cups seafood stock	¾ pound crabmeat, picked over for shell and cartilage
1 large can crushed tomatoes	2-1/2 cups hot cooked white rice
1 large can diced tomatoes	
1 cup okra	
Old Bay seasoning, salt, black pepper	
2 tablespoons basil, oregano	
2 teaspoons File' powder	
2 teaspoons fresh dill, parsley, cilantro	
1 pound andouille (preferred) or top quality smoked pork sausage, cut into 1/2-inch pieces	

### Directions:

Combine the onions, bell peppers and celery in a bowl and set aside. Make a roux by heating the oil in a large, heavy skillet over high heat until it begins to smoke, about 5 minutes, then gradually whisking in the flour. Continue cooking, whisking constantly, until the roux is dark red-brown, about 2 to 4 minutes, but be careful not to let it scorch or splash on your skin. **Immediately** add half the vegetables and stir well (switch to a spoon if necessary). Continue stirring and cooking for 1 minute, then add the remaining vegetables and cook for two minutes. Add the garlic and herbs and spices. Cook for a minute more remove from heat.

Bring the stock to a boil in a 5½-quart pot or large Dutch oven over high heat. Add the roux mixture by spoonfuls to the boiling stock, stirring until dissolved between each addition. Bring the mixture to a boil; add the andouille, chicken and tomatoes. Return to a boil. Continue boiling, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes.

Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the seafood. Return to a boil over high heat, stirring occasionally for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and skim off any oil that appears on the surface. Serve immediately over rice.

“Homemade rolls and salad go great with this dish!”

## Baker's Nook: Zucchini Bread



3 cups unpeeled pureed zucchini (5-6 zucchinis)	1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup finely chopped nuts (optional)	3 teaspoons vanilla extract
3 cups all purpose flour	2 cups white granulated sugar
3 teaspoons cinnamon	1 cup brown sugar (light or dark)
2 teaspoons baking powder	4 eggs
½ teaspoons salt	1 ¼ cup vegetable oil

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 2 loaf pans with butter, shortening or cooking spray. Roast or steam zucchinis until tender, keeping skins on. Slice zucchinis in half and then use a spoon to remove the seeds. Puree in food processor until smooth. You will need 3 cups of the pureed zucchini. If you are short, like I usually am, you can substitute the rest with applesauce.

Combine all dry ingredients in a bowl (flour, cinnamon, baking powder, salt, baking soda). Combine all wet ingredients in a separate bowl (vanilla extract, both sugars, eggs and vegetable oil).

Add pureed zucchini to wet ingredients. Mix well. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients and mix until blended. Batter will be slightly lumpy. Pour into loaf pans and bake at 350 degrees for 55-60 minutes or until baked through.



# The Eyes of Our Children

By Vera Meredith

Letting your children bask in the glow of a television or computer in their bedrooms at night doesn't benefit their sleep or waistlines. Researchers from the University of Alberta in Canada say that electronic devices in kids' bedrooms are linked with both poor sleep and obesity.

Researchers used data from nearly 3,400 students in fifth grade (10-11 years old) in a survey of their nighttime sleep habits and access to electronic devices. Half of the children had a television, DVD player, or video game console in the bedroom, 21 percent had a computer, and 17 percent had a mobile phone.

Fifty-seven percent of students reported using their phones, watching television, or playing video games after they were

supposed to be asleep. Researchers found that students with access to one electronic device were 1.47 times more likely to be overweight than kids with no devices in the bedroom. That increased to 2.57 times for kids with three devices. Additionally, they found that as little as one hour of additional sleep each night decreased the odds of being overweight by 28 percent and obese by 30 percent.

A big question that comes up is the idea of babysitting with technology. I don't know how many parents I've seen having dinner at a restaurant with their kid watching videos on a tablet or phone. That's where technology becomes a problem. If you're together as a family unit, then communicate as a family. This is the only place your kids are going to learn to have

real, meaningful conversations with you in a public setting; take advantage of it. If mom and dad want to go out to dinner and talk, then get a babysitter and leave the kids at home.

I challenge you as parents to take away the iPods, the iPhones, the electronic games, and the iPads. Put them away for a week. How many of your kids know how to play checkers, Jacks or marbles? Have a Board game night, let them help you make dinner once a week, then email me or write me a note, and let me know the results.

You will be amazed at the results, as I was when I took away the "I's" from my children and opened their eyes to a new adventure.

*“Researchers found that students with access to one electronic device were 1.47 times more likely to be overweight than kids with no devices in the bedroom.”*



Assistant Director Denime McCain, along with employees from the FIP Unit, accept an award presented by Cathy Dougherty for Excellence in Service in November 2012.

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Assistant Director Kathy Nolan attempts to highjack a patron's bicycle outside of Annie's Steakhouse in December 2012.



## Queen Anne's County Gateway

The Gateway team would like to thank the Assistant Directors and Supervisors in each unit for taking the time to submit articles and photos for the July 2013 issue of the Gateway newsletter! Our team has been thrilled to help in re-launching Gateway and are fully committed to bringing you the most current, up-to-date and exciting stories, events, and achievements, personally and professionally, throughout the agency and the community. The Gateway team is always looking for new members to join the team! Please see any member of the Gateway team to learn how to join! The Gateway Team meets every first Monday of the month at 8:30AM in the lunchroom. We want your ideas!

### Advisory Board Members

**Kate Tumulty and Sharon Robertson**, Co-Chairs  
**Bob Simmons**, County Commissioner;  
**Sharon Addison; Bobby Helfenbein; Bonnie Larrimore; Gay Gunther; Margaret Sisk; Rev. Genevieve Brown and David Quinn**, Foster Parent.

The Advisory Board meets on the second Thursday of each month.



# Extra Extra! Gateway Wants Your Good News!

The Gateway Team wants to publish your good news! We are now accepting articles for the November 2013 issue of the Gateway newsletter. We want to hear about your unit's or PQI Team's events, accomplishments, achievements, and general fantastic news! All articles must first be approved by



The Gateway Team from left to right: Candace Jones, Dawn Seward, Robin Day, Vera Meredith.

2013 issue. Any personal news or achievements from employees that might not be published into an article may be submitted to a member of the Gateway team to be printed in an upcoming "Employee News" column of the newsletter. Give us something to talk about!



your unit's Assistant Director before it's submission to a member of the Gateway Team. Articles may be submitted at any time, but are due no later than September 3, 2013 to ensure its publication in the November



**Answers to "Fun Facts" : (1) Denime McCain/ (2) Cathy Dougherty/ (3) Judi Beskid/ (4) Kathy Nolan/ (5) Susan Coppage**