



DSSK TALK

“People Focused & Service Driven”

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the McDowell County Department of Social Services is to respectfully assist families and individuals by helping them to maintain, and/or enhance their quality of life; and to prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable people in our community.



DIRECTOR’S EDITORIAL By Phillip Hardin

Recipe For Success

The current economic situation and fall out from that has made us rethink the way we do business here at DSS. With the downturn in the financial well-being of the citizens of this state, especially those in McDowell County, our caseloads have mushroomed. Our Economic Services area, Food Assistance, Medicaid, Child Care and Work First have been hit especially hard. With changes on the horizon such as Health Care reform, categorical eligibility in Food Assistance and Low Income Subsidy applications in Adult Medicaid it appears that there is no light at the end of the tunnel with these ever increasing caseloads, unless it is a train. The economic crisis also effects more than just families that need our services, it also effects county government as well. We have not been able to secure any new staff positions to help deal with the increased volume of our work.

With that in mind we have undertaken the initiative to look at how we go about doing business, especially in Economic Services area, but also as an agency as a whole. We determined that our processes now in place were not necessarily efficient when it comes to having people apply for benefits. Clients had to see multiple workers for multiple programs and tell their story more than one time while we gathered the same information. This has been necessitated by the complexity of the programs that we all work in. To that end we could see no real solution in making the program any less complex because most of the policy decision making is out of our control. We did look at automation to see if that would be a beneficial way of tackling this problem and have come up with a possible solution. In the very near future we are going to reorganize how we do business in Economic Services. We are investing in an automation program that will allow us to take applications for multiple programs with one staff member. This will also allow us to adhere to our principles of providing timely and quality service. It means that clients will spend less time in our offices and that staff will spend less time interviewing clients. We feel that this is a win/win situation for all involved.

This will be the start of the organization moving to a new level of service. I want for all staff to understand there will be more changes such as this in the future. We are looking at changing to an electronic format for the way we manage documents as this provides streamlined management of the documents we come into contact with. Benefits to this would be less paper used, less copies made and better efficiency to the way we handle and store records. I know there are other processes out there we improve on and welcome any suggestions you may have. I think it is more important than ever, considering what we are facing, to take a look at how we go about doing our business and to continually improve the process. I thank all of you for your input and willingness to change in an ever changing work environment.

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ECONOMIC SERVICES



FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

By: Denise Prewitt, Supervisor



The Food & Nutrition Unit started their food pantry back on August 18, 2008. The purpose was to help those families that come in and apply for benefits and are approved but they have nothing to eat until they get their EBT Card. Sometimes that takes 5 days. So we give them enough for their family for a few days to get them through that short waiting period.

So far this year we have been able to help 123 families. We have been able to maintain our pantry to help these families by donations and grants.

We would also like to thank the retirees of McDowell County DSS for their recent food donation. This group meets quarterly and when they met this month (June 2010) they all brought a bag of food to donate. Thank you Carolyn Reel, Donna Calvert, Joyce Cagle, Sheila Grindstaff, Melba Randolph, Floy Collins, Rose Wakefield, Mary Ann Combs, Shirley Arrowood, Mary Grindstaff, Charlotte Washburn, Nancy Clark, Pat Biddix, Norma Mauney, Margaret Gourley and Joanne Tanzer. We really appreciate your donations.

We would also like to thank Frances Martin-Standley who was a Food and Nutrition Income Maintenance Caseworker for over 25 years here at McDowell County DSS. Her church, Mt. Zion A.M.E. Zion Church made a nice monetary donation as well. Thank you for remembering us and we hope you are enjoying your retirement.

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S MEDICAID

By: Eileen Irish, Supervisor

MARP PROGRAM REACHES MILLION DOLLAR MARK

The MARP program has requested a Average Wholesale Price value of \$1,007,102 in medications as of 4/30/10. In the 21 months since August of 2008, when McDowell DSS began administering MARP, we have served 305 patients and requested 1,543 medications from various pharmaceutical companies.

The program is a grant program from the Health and Wellness Trust Fund through the North Carolina Office of Rural Health & Community Care. It assists those with no medical insurance or Medicaid, or on Medicare Part D but in the "donut hole" where they are required to pay for prescriptions. The income limit for eligibility is 150% of the Federal Poverty Level. Applications are by appointment and can be made by calling 652-3355 ext.126.

Medications are ordered directly from the pharmaceutical manufacturer and are shipped either directly to the patient or to the patient's doctor to be picked up, depending on the company's policy and the medication being dispensed.

ECONOMIC SERVICES

ADULT MEDICAID / TRANSPORTATION UNITS

By: Trish Fields, Supervisor

The Adult Medicaid Unit held a fundraiser for The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation on June 19, 2010. They had an Italian Luncheon. The menu consisted of Lasagna, Pasta Salad, Baked Spaghetti and fresh homemade Cookies. The lunch cost was \$7.00 per plate. They raised \$400.00 that they donated in the name of Brandon Scott Hinson Jr. His mom is **Michelle Hinson** who works as an Income Maintenance Caseworker II in the Adult Medicaid Unit. The money went towards Brandon's goal of \$1,000.00 for this year. The unit plans on having another fund raiser some time in July. Brandon has Cystic Fibrosis and was diagnosed before he was born.

Cystic Fibrosis (also known as CF) is a common disease which affects the entire body, causing progressive disability and often early death. The name *cystic fibrosis* refers to the characteristic scarring (fibrosis) and cyst formation within the pancreas. Difficulty breathing is the most serious symptom and results from frequent lung infections that are treated, though not cured, by antibiotics and other medications. A multitude of other symptoms, including sinus infections, poor growth, diarrhea, and infertility result from the effects of CF on other parts of the body.

CF is caused by a mutation in the gene for the protein cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator (CFTR). This gene is required to regulate the components of sweat, digestive juices, and mucus. Although most people without CF have two working copies of the CFTR gene, only one is needed to prevent cystic fibrosis. CF develops when neither gene works normally. Therefore, CF is considered an autosomal recessive disease.

CF is most common among Caucasians and Ashkenazi Jews; one in 25 people of European descent carry one gene for CF. Approximately 30,000 Americans have CF, making it one of the most common life-shortening inherited diseases. Individuals with cystic fibrosis can be diagnosed before birth by genetic testing, or by a sweat test in early childhood. Ultimately, lung transplantation is often necessary as CF worsens.

Thank you to everyone who helped and participated. It is truly appreciated and we know that Brandon appreciates it too!



HAPPINESS IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION... -SOUZA

For a long time it seemed to me that life was about to begin - real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be gotten through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life. This perspective has helped me to see there is no way to happiness. Happiness is the way. So treasure every moment you have and remember that time waits for no one.

BITS & PIECES



Congratulations to Jordan Fields, daughter of **Trish Fields** Adult Medicaid and Transportation Supervisor, who graduated from McDowell High School in June!

Congratulations to Kayla Bartlett who was accepted into the National Honor Society at West McDowell Junior High. Her sister Amber Bartlett made the Honor Roll at West Marion Elementary School and she also received an award for Perfect Attendance. Their brother Matthew Bartlett also made the Honor Roll at West Marion Elementary School. All three of these outstanding students belong to **Tonia Bartlett** who is and IMC II in the Food & Nutrition Unit.

Kasey Lynn Robinson, daughter of **Christi Estep** graduated from McDowell High School in June. She was a member of The Vocational Honor's Society, awarded the Excellence in Public Service at the 2010 Academic Banquet. She is a member of the FCCLA (Family Career Community Leaders of America). She was awarded 1st place in state 3 years in a row for FCCLA project: Chapter Showcase Display for Community Service. She went to National's and won 2nd place two years in a row. One in Orlando, Fl and one in Nashville, TN. She plans to finish her Cosmetology Degree @ McDowell Tech & a Bachelor's of Science in Criminal Justice at AB Tech.



Congratulations to **Rose Kuhl's** Granddaughter Janaia Herrera, she graduated from Kindergarten this summer.



Sandra Thorne's daughters Anna Thorne, age 12, was accepted into the National Honor Society and 9 year old daughter, Mandy Thorne, past her first EOG's with a 4. Way to go Girls! Sandra said "My 3 year old is working really hard on not getting suspended from day care again."

Savannah Shelton, 5 year old daughter of **Donna Shelton**, graduated from preschool at the Early Childhood Enrichment Center. She will attend West Marion Elementary in the fall.



CPS Supervisor **Jennifer Morgan's** 11 year old grandson Triston won the North Carolina State Jr. Bass Fishing Tournament for 11-14 year olds on Lake Norman. By winning this he has now earned a place to fish in the World Junior Bass Fishing Tournament in August at Lake Lanier Ga. Way to go Tristan!

Welcome Ciaus Brendan Uriah Guzman was born to **Cynthia Nettles** and Braden Guzman on 5/18/10. He weighed 7 lbs. 1 oz, and was 19 inches long.



Congratulations to Corbin Nettles who graduated from McDowell High School. He is the son of **Cynthia Nettles**, IMC II in the Food & Nutrition Unit.

Margo Monigle would like to announce that her son David Michael Parker will be marrying Ashley Nicole Wooten on Saturday July 17 at 1:30 pm. The wedding will be held outside at 116 Kids Way in Marion, NC. Congratulations!

Maekayla Bureson, daughter of **Ray Bureson**, graduated from the 6th grade at North Cove Elementary. She will be attending West Junior High in the fall.



Congratulations to Jenny Brown, daughter of **Misty Brown** who graduated from Elementary School on June 11, 2010. She will be attending West McDowell Junior High in the fall.



Congratulations to Brennan Rumpfelt, granddaughter of **Margie Tilley**, who graduated from McDowell High School in June 2010. She will be continuing her education by working on her BS in Nursing. Good Luck !

Can you guess who these two employees are?



Trish Fields & Teresa Duncan

Congratulations to Alex Estep, Son of **Christi Estep**, who graduated from Elementary School on June 11, 2010. He will be attending West McDowell Junior High in the fall.





ADULT SERVICES

BY: MIRIAM EARLY

Our unit has taken responsibility for providing case management for the In Home Aide program. Until a year ago this was done completely by the Senior Center. Donna Shelton has assumed these duties, and currently has an active caseload of 37. This program serves individuals over 60 years of age, and is funded by the Home and Community Care Block Grant (not Medicaid), thus individuals who normally do not meet income guidelines for many of our programs qualify. No payment for In Home Aide is required, but donations can be made to the program. Services include an aide going into the home and providing basic household chores and/or personal care. Interested persons can contact Donna Shelton for more details, or Dawna Ledbetter at the Senior Center. Dawna manages the waiting list and the billing for this program.



FOSTER CARE

By: Renee Barrier

The McDowell County Foster Parenting Program is proud to welcome our newest members to our team of foster parents:

Ronnie & Deborah DeHart, Rayburn & Tracy Killian, Jeff & Angie Nelson, Todd & Lisa Wildenberg, and Adam & Sarah Chrisawn

These couples have completed their 30 hours of pre-service training to become licensed foster parents.

We would also like to recognize Allen and Ellen Taylor who transferred here as foster parents from Macon County DSS.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a foster parent, please contact Renee Barrier at 828-652-3355 ext. 122 or by email at renee.j.barrier@mcdowell.nc.gov.



EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE NEWS

By: Renee Barrier

The McDowell County Employee Relations Committee has had a busy spring! Over the last couple of months the committee has had the opportunity to work with a great bunch of folks from around the county in order to complete the McDowell County DSS Emergency Procedures Manual. This manual will serve as a guide to allow the staff of DSS to respond in a professional manner should an emergency occur within our agency. Special thanks to Oren Benfield, Fire Inspector for McDowell County and Brad Ledbetter, Continuing Education Instructor for McDowell Technical Community College for their assistance in training and practicing emergency procedures with our staff.

In May, we held our second annual Employee Appreciation Picnic. We would like to thank the community members and businesses that were so generous and helped make this event a special day for our employees. Special thanks to:

Golden Fried Chicken, Shure Tan, Main Street Exxon, Pepsi Distribution Center, Phat Heads Salon, Hair That Rocks Salon, Spencer's Hardware, Pro Nails, Muscular Therapy, Countryside BBQ, Christina Wooten, YMCA

DSS Board Chair Term Expires

The Chairman of the Board of Social Services, Ms. Pat Faulkner, will leave her seat on the board at the end of June. Ms. Faulkner has served on the DSS Board from July 2004 and has been the Chairman of the Board for the last 20 months. She was appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and has served two full terms. Do to state law she was not eligible to be reappointed to her position.

Ms. Faulkner has been an outstanding advocate for the work the agency does and the staff at DSS. More important though is she has been a wonderful spokesperson for the families that we serve. She has shown true compassion for the plight of the citizens of the county and has pushed this organization to step to the plate when it comes to the services we provide. As Phillip Hardin, Director at DSS said, "I can think of no bigger advocate for the work that we do. She has been an ardent supporter to the agency and has pushed us to do bigger and better things. I appreciate the way she challenged me personally and professionally to do the right things."

The Department of Social Services salutes Ms. Faulkner for her service to the citizens of the community, the staff at the agency and for the leadership she provided for the work that we do. Because of her service our organization is better prepared to go about doing the things we are mandated to do as well as providing services that outside the sphere of our mandates. We thank Ms. Faulkner and wish her well.



Child Protective Services

Lisa Sprouse, Supervisor



McDowell Co. DSS placed Social Workers in the McDowell County Schools in November 2009. At the end of the school year the social workers in the schools had provided services to approximately 90 families in the community. The purpose of social workers in the schools were to work in collaboration with the schools to provide services up front to families in order to prevent referrals from occurring. In addition, to change perceptions in the community in regard to DSS and its social workers. Moreover, to show families that DSS is a helping agency instead of a punitive agency. This first attempt has been a great success and the agency would like to thank the following social workers who stepped out in faith to provide this service. The social workers are as follows: Rusty Watkins who was placed at the ALC, Linda Waters who was placed at West Junior High School, Alyson McCall at Glenwood Elementary School, Amy Snyder at Marion Elementary School, Jan McCall at North Cove Elementary School and Susan Wilson Taylor at West Marion Elementary School. Kudos to these social workers for stepping out of their comfort zone and trying something new, but more than that is meeting the needs of families before a referrals arise.

JULY BIRTHDAYS

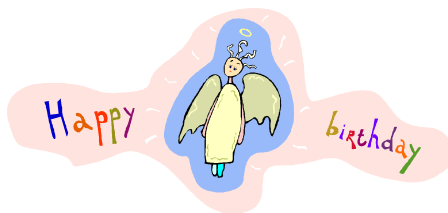
Cherish Morgan 7/1
 Shaneah McCauley 7/3
 Lynn Queen 7/6
 Larry Richards 7/9
 Debbie Street 7/12
 David Hogan 7/18
 Elizabeth Owenby 7/22
 Hanna Honeycutt 7/30
 Sabrina McIntyre 7/30
 Alicia Buchanan 7/31

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

Janice Hensley 8/7
 Rose Kuhl 8/9
 Connie O'Brien 8/13
 Felicia Norman 8/16
 Vanessa Conley 8/24
 Cindy Reel 8/24
 Betty McKesson 8/27
 Phyllis Revis 8/28
 Randy Lavendar 8/30

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Emily Lovik 9/3
 Angela Duncan 9/4
 Norma Foster 9/5
 Katrina Lambert 9/16
 Tim Gautney 9/18
 Michelle Hinson 9/23
 Ray Burleson 9/25
 Sharon Morrison 9/25
 Rob Farkas 9/27
 Dwana Ledbetter 9/30
 Shirley Ward 9/30

**FRAUD AND FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES PASS MAJOR M&E AUDIT**

BY: CONNIE O'BRIEN

May was a very busy month for the Fraud Unit and the Food & Nutrition Unit. The state conducted their M&E (Management Evaluation) Audit. This audit is done every two years. It evaluates all aspects of both programs to ensure that we are doing everything that is required by state standards and policy. It starts with a phone interview and then they actually come into the office and review records, interview employees, clients and other agencies that provide assistance in the county.

The Fraud Unit had 12 cases reviewed and the Food & Nutrition Unit had 30 Food & Nutrition cases and 15 Low Income Energy Assistance Program cases reviewed. All cases were correct. We are very proud of the work that we do and it is reflected with this audit. Way to go Program Integrity and Food & Nutrition Services Units. We are very proud of you!

NEW HIRES—WELCOME ABOARD!!!

Brad Taylor— Has filled the position of Income Maintenance Caseworker I in Family and Children’s Medicaid. He is supervised by **Eileen Irish**.

Marcie Ownbey— Welcome Back Marcie. Marcie has come back to McDowell County DSS as The Links Coordinator and is supervised by **Rob Farkas**.

Douglas Faulkner— He has been working as a Computer Administrator in the Clerical Unit. His supervisor is **Connie O’Brien**.

Johnny Martin — has been hired to work with the Work First Program in the Community Garden. He is supervised by **Shaneah McCauley**.

Keli Allen— has been hired to work in the Work First Program in the Community Garden. She is supervised by **Shaneah McCauley**.

Hanna Honeycutt— Hanna has taken the Attorney position that was vacated by Rachel Hawes. She is supervised by **Phillip Hardin**.

Elizabeth Owenby—is working in the Clerical Unit and assisting in the Adult Medicaid Unit with clerical support. She is supervised by **Connie O’Brien**.

Lea Smith— has taken the position of Social Worker I in the CPS Unit. She is supervised by **Betty McKesson**.

Jenny Millsaps— has been hired as a Social Worker II for the Foster Care & Adoption Unit. She is supervised by **Rob Farkas**.

JOB CHANGES—CONGRATULATIONS !!!

Katrina Lambert— Congratulations! Katrina is now working in the Food & Nutrition Unit as an Income Maintenance Caseworker. She is supervised by **Denise Prewitt**.

QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work. Aristotle

WEDDING BELLS FOR FOOD & NUTRITION SUPERVISOR

By: Connie O’Brien



If you haven’t had the chance to talk to **Denise Prewitt** in the past few weeks you may want to walk over to her office and ask her about that beautiful ring on her left hand. Yes, it is official, Denise is not longer on the market...Sorry guys! On June 2, 2010 Gary Lee Gaul Sr., proposed to **Denise Elizabeth Prewitt** in front of their entire church congregation. She accepted and they are still trying to decide on a wedding date. So, if you get the chance, go by her office and congratulate her.

We are all so very happy for you and Gary. Keep us posted on a Wedding Date!!!

