



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**

**Choices**



A lot of you have probably wondered about these two pictures that are on the bulletin board outside of my office. There is a story as to why they are there. I think most of you as a child or even as a parent have read stories about the fictional bear, Winnie the Pooh. I believe there is much that can be learned by some simple stories.

Two of the characters in the story are pictured here. On the left you have Tigger and on the right you have Eeyore. Tigger is characterized in the stories as cheerful, outgoing, competitive in a friendly way, and completely confident in himself. Eeyore on the other hand would be characterized as a pessimistic, melancholic, depressed, old grey stuffed donkey who is a friend of the title character, Winnie-the-Pooh. Eeyore's best friend is Tigger.

I find it interesting that two such entirely different personalities could be best friends. But in reality this is an everyday occurrence. We all gravitate to people who are upbeat, optimistic, out-going and happy. I think it is human nature to want to associate and be friends with people who are happy.

The point here is that we all have choices about our attitude and how we go about our work, interact with people and live life. The better your attitude, the more likely you will be able to overcome difficulties, grow and move forward. Your attitude can be your greatest asset or liability. So you make the choice, do you want to go through life as a Tigger or as an Eeyore. An agency full of Tigger’s will achieve so much more for the families that we serve. But I think more important than that is the Tigger in you will individually bring out the best in all of us.

**WORDS OF WISDOM**

**WATCH YOUR THOUGHTS; THEY BECOME WORDS.  
WATCH YOUR WORDS; THEY BECOME ACTIONS.**

**WATCH YOUR ACTIONS; THEY BECOME HABITS.  
WATCH YOUR HABITS; THEY BECOME CHARACTER.**

**WATCH YOUR CHARACTER; IT BECOMES YOUR  
DESTINY.      --FRANK OUTLAW**

**Inside this issue**

Director's Editorial	1
Foster Care Services	5
Senior Story	6
Quote of The Quarter	8
Birthdays	7
Economic Services	2 & 3
Bits and Pieces	8

## ECONOMIC SERVICES



### FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

By: Denise Prewitt, Supervisor



The McDowell County DSS Food Pantry has had a very busy year. We received 3 grants this year that has helped to keep the shelves stocked. Two grants were from the The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina totaling \$7,500.00. We also received a grant from Wal-Mart for \$1,000.00. There has also been a tremendous amount of help from many churches in McDowell County. Some of those donations have been monetary and some have actually donated food.

The employees of this agency has stepped up on several occasions and helped out by participating in several raffles that were held by the Food & Nutrition Unit. And just when we thought that the shelves were going to go empty, the Employee Relations Committee made two donations that totaled \$800.00.

We served 323 families from January 2009 to November 2009 and we couldn't have done it with out all of this support.

I would just like to say "Thank You" to everyone in this agency for making sure that the McDowell County DSS Food Pantry continues. I would also like to express a special "Thank You" to the Food & Nutrition Unit for all the raffle donations, the work that goes in to getting those donations, the shopping for food and then restocking the shelves. Without dedicated employees we would not have a food pantry that can benefit the people of McDowell County that may have a need during these tough economic times.

## FAMILY & CHILDREN'S MEDICAID

By: Eileen Irish, Supervisor

A yearly monitoring of the Medicaid Units was completed in October 2009. A sample of cases was selected from the period of 9/1/08 through 8/31/09. We had thirty denied cases reviewed and a compliance rate of 96%. Ten withdrawn cases were included in the sample, all of which were found to be in compliance for 100% correct.

All denied and withdrawn cases were also reviewed to determine if applicants were discouraged from completing an application for relevant services on the date of application and none of the cases showed any sign of discouragement. Twenty-five approved cases and sixty-five inquiries were also monitored for any indications of discouragement and none showed such evidence.

The County met the 80% threshold for processing inquiries for the monitoring period required by the state. The caseworkers should be congratulated for their excellent work and it shows in the findings of this monitoring.

## ECONOMIC SERVICES

### ADULT MEDICAID / TRANSPORTATION UNITS

By: Trish Fields, Supervisor

#### A New Beginning for Clerical

The Clerical Team has a new Supervisor, Connie O'Brien who is also the Fraud Investigator, assumed the supervisory duties as of December 1, 2009. The team is very excited to have her and is ready to be an *Extra Ordinary Unit* of their own!! She has started out with 5 members of the Clerical Staff. She is doing a wonderful job and is looking forward to increasing efficiency and Customer Service to all clients and workers. "Hands Up" to her and her new Unit!! They all work very HARD and deserve everyone's upmost respect. I know we will see GREAT things come from this Unit in 2010 !!



### WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE UNIT

By: Shaneah McCauley, Supervisor

On November 16, 2009 the DSS Team welcomed Misty Brown and Christi Estep. Housed within the Child Care/Work First Unit, these young ladies with the rhyming names and same birthdates will be jointly responsible for administering the Housing Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). This program is a federal grant providing assistance with housing related needs.

Misty (Office 158) has a background in banking, finance and management while Christi (Office 157) brings a wealth of experience including an exceptional background in criminal justice.

Housing referral forms may be obtained from the front desk reception area. Applicants for the program must be homeless (or eminently at risk of homelessness). Additionally, applicants must be able to be successfully housed with the assistance of the grant funds.

Welcome Misty and Christi!

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE NEWS

By: Renee Barrier

The McDowell County DSS Employee Relations Committee (ERC) has been busy these past few months! In October the committee held an appreciation luncheon for all of the supervisors for Bosses Day. We truly appreciate all of the supervisors and the extra efforts they put in to make the day-to-day work place a joyful place to be! In the middle of the month we were able to run a booth at the County Health Fair to share information with all county employees about what services our agency has to offer.

We also held our second Silent Auction at the agency with items donated by staff members. This auction generated over \$500 which was subsequently donated to purchase food to refill the agency's food pantry. In November, the ERC helped with other areas of need throughout the agency. The committee voted to sponsor two children in foster care for Christmas and we were able to purchase most items on those children's wish lists. We also were able to assist the Adult Services Unit by purchasing items for the Christmas gift bags that are given to clients they serve. Along with raising funds, the committee has been updating and developing new agency policies, working to complete a new employee orientation program, and developing an agency Emergency Procedures Manual, among other things.

We were sad to see several of our committee members retire from the committee; however we would like to recognize Jill Kehler, who is now serving as the ERC Vice-Chair. Thank you to Jill for taking on this commitment. We want to wish the best to our past members and we are looking forward to the new year and the challenges that are to come!

### As you travel through life

- \* Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.
- \* Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- \* Always read stuff that makes you look good if you die in the middle of it.
- \* Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.
- \* If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- \* If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- \* It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
- \* Never buy a car you can't push.
- \* Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
- \* Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
- \* The second mouse gets the cheese.
- \* When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- \* Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- \* You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- \* Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.
- \* We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.
- \* A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

## ADULT SERVICES

BY: MIRIAM EARLY

Just when we think we couldn't get any busier, or do any more, we're proven otherwise! Christmas is always a busy time, and this year is no different for us. With donations from churches and individuals, we have been able to provide gifts and treat bags to over 300 individuals. Thanks to any of you who helped in this endeavor. We wish for all of you a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year!



Miriam & Gwen Conley hard at work!



TEAM WORK!

## FOSTER CARE

By: Renee Barrier

### Christmas for Kids

Every year our office has the joy and challenge of making sure that all of the children that are in foster care are able to have gifts under the tree on Christmas morning. This year has been no different. We were concerned about how it would happen this year, as the economy has been so bad, but our community has once again truly stepped up to the plate! We have nearly 70 children that might not have had Christmas without the support of the generous residents of McDowell County. Individuals, as well as many businesses, have been wonderful to sponsor all of our children! Our children will now have a wonderful Christmas morning and we would like to thank the following for their support:

Marion Correctional Institution Service Club, Redeemed Freewill Baptist Church, American general Finance, Ingles District Stores, Skillful Behaviors, McDowell Home Health, First Presbyterian Church, Carolina Interiors, IAC, Bi-Lo Pharmacy, YMCA Swim Class and Instructor, East Jr. High Band Class, RDM Industrial Electronics, Mountain Glory Quilters Guild, Picture Perfect Salon and Clients, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Sharon Long and Patrons of Babe's Restaurant, The Clerical Team of DSS, The Adult Medicaid Unit of DSS, The Transportation Unit of DSS, The Employee Relations Committee of DSS, William & Jill Kehler, Teresa Duncan, Connie & Calvin O'Brien, Elizabeth Gartner, Emily Lovick, David Ramsey, Gail Fields, Stacy McKinney, Sharon & Dean Young, Leo Cozart & Family, Freddie Ward, Becky Garrou, Cindy Reel and Pat Cantey.

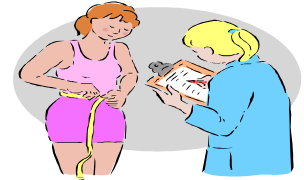
## SENIOR CENTER NEWS AND INFORMATION

A new program is coming to the McDowell Senior Center and a new you is within reach.

### EAT SMART MOVE MORE WEIGH LESS

**Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less** is a program that will:

- Explore behaviors that help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Identify strategies to help you eat smart and move more.
- Show you how living mindfully can help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Help you create new, lifelong habits!



**Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less** is not:

- A prescriptive weight loss plan.
- A diet with special foods.
- A physical activity prescription.
- Something you will ever finish.

**Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less** provides:

- A program based on proven strategies for effective weight loss.
- A friendly, supportive environment.
- Weekly classes for 15 weeks.
- A full-color magazine with helpful tips, exercise ideas & recipes.
- A journal for tracking your progress.

#### PLAN. TRACK AND LIVE MINDFULLY

Classes Begin: Thursday, January 7, 2010 @ 6:00 pm

Classes Held At: McDowell Senior Center

Program Fee: A one time \$10.00 fee.

For more information call: 652-8953



#### Questions?

Contact: Cheryl Woody/Brenda  
Monosso at 652-8953 or Mary  
Smith at 652-6811 ext. 1344.



McDowell Health Department, The Corpening Memorial YMCA, and McDowell Senior Center are partnering to offer the Walk to Jerusalem activity challenge again in 2010.

The Walk to Jerusalem program goal is to organize teams at the senior center, with your family, a club, or in your church and walk the number of miles from Marion to Jerusalem (approximately 6,267 miles) between New Years and Easter.

"Health leaders" are needed to organize teams to participate and be responsible for turning in the number of miles walked each month to Cheryl Woody or Brenda Monosso. ALL AGES CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE WALK. 20 minutes of physical activity is equal to walking one mile.

The Walk to Jerusalem is an imaginary walk that encourages walkers to increase physical activity and spiritual growth. Walking is mentioned 247 times in the Bible. Our bodies were made for walking. We were built to stand erect. Our organs function best when given room to work. Our joints need movement to maintain good range of motion. None of this is accomplished by sitting in a chair or lying on a couch.

This program was created by Nancy Evans, RN, BA a St. John Health Parish Nurse.

# Happy Birthday

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Debbie Williams - 1st	Susan Wilson-Taylor - 1st	Ian Allen - 10th
Jamie Bryant - 11th	Denise Freeman - 11th	Becky Burleson - 13th
Shannon Jones - 14th	Barbara Gautney - 16th	Trish Fields - 19th
Lisa Sprouse - 19th	Stacy Poteat - 21st	Charity Anderson - 27th
Robin Ayers - 29th	Roger Elliott - 31st	

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Ann Carroll - 1st	Jennifer Morgan - 1st	Donna Wilson - 2nd
Linda Jackson - 5th	Alison McCall - 13th	Amy Brooks - 20th
April Pope - 26th		

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Weyland Prebor - 6th	Barbara Braswell - 14th	Judy Hartman - 25th
----------------------	-------------------------	---------------------

## AVOID GOSSIP

THE 360° LEADER

### DO NOT ENGAGE IN GOSSIP OR ALLOW ANYONE TO DRAW YOU INTO IT.

It's been said that great people talk about ideas, average people talk about themselves, and small people talk about others. That's what gossip does. It makes people small. There really is no upside to gossip. It diminishes the person being talked about. It diminishes the person who is saying unkind things about others, and it even diminishes the listener. That's why you should avoid not only spreading gossip but also being a recipient of it. If you stop people from unloading gossip on you, it will make you feel better about the person who's being talked about, as well as about yourself. Besides, whoever gossips to you will gossip about you.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said. " When the eagles are silent, the parrots begin to jabber." Good leaders are like eagles: they soar; they inspire; they fly high. And they don't talk just to hear themselves. They don't vent about someone to others to make themselves feel better. If they have a problem with a person, they go to that individual and address the issue directly—never through a third party. They praise publicly and criticize privately. And they never say anything about others that they wouldn't want them to hear—because they probably will.

## NEW HIRES &amp; PROMOTIONS

**Stacy Poteat**— Stacy has taken the position of Income Maintenance Caseworker I in the Adult Medicaid Unit.

**Lynn Freeman**— Lynn Freeman has been promoted to Lead Worker in the Adult Medicaid Unit.

**Vanessa Conley**— Vanessa has taken the position of Property Clerk with the Clerical Team.

**Martha H. McNeely** - Income Maintenance Caseworker II in Food & Nutrition - Temporary Part-Time. Martha is a former employee.

**Janice L. Boone**— Janice has taken the Income Maintenance Technician (Transportation Coordinator) position. This position was vacated by Stacy Poteat who was promoted to an IMC I in Adult Medicaid.

**Cherish Morgan**— Cherish will be working with the Clerical Team as a Processing Assistant. II.

**Phyllis Revis**— Phyllis has taken the Processing Assistant IV position in the CPS Intake Unit.

**Brenda Monosso** — Brenda has come on board as the Human Resources Aide at the Senior Center.

**Misty Brown**— Misty has taken the Human Resources Placement Specialist position in the Work First Unit. This is one of two grant funded positions

**Christi Estep** — Christi has taken the second Human Resources Placement Specialist position in the Work First Unit.

**Connie O'Brien**— Connie O'Brien has been promoted to Clerical Supervisor. This promotion is an addition to her current position as the Income Maintenance Investigator and Local Hearings Officer.

## QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

By: John Dewey

*The self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action.*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS!!!

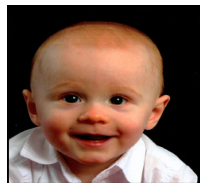


Corbin Hester, son of **Cynthia Nettles** who is an IMC in the Food & Nutrition Unit, just placed third in the Mountaineer Invitational Wrestling Tournament. This is one of the largest wrestling tournaments in our region. Corbin is a Senior at McDowell High School and is the captain of the Varsity Team. Congratulations Corbin!

Congratulations to **Debra Smith**, CPS Intake Unit, on the birth of her first grandchild. Hannah Paisley Smith was born in December with a head full of hair. Debra is so proud of her and very happy to be a new Grandma!



**Cindy Laughter Reel** in Adult Services is proud to announce that she is an Aunt again. Her brother Denny and his wife Kristy welcomed Keaton Denson Laughter on October 24, 2009. He joins big sister Sophia Kate who is 3 years old and loves having a baby brother.

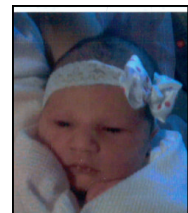


Happy 1st Birthday !

We love you Little Buddy!  
Jackson Graham, Nephew of **Jill Kehler**, Family & Children's Medicaid.



Congratulations to Caleb and Holly McCauley, son and daughter in-law of **Shaneah McCauley**, Supervisor of the Work First Programs, on the birth of their first child! Caylin Jean McCauley was born on 11/16/09 and weighed 7 lbs. 12 oz. They live in Fort Bragg, NC.



On November 24, 2009 Kennedy Michal Grooms was born to Levi and Summer Grooms. She weighed 7 lbs. 8 oz. Levi is the son of **Denise Prewitt**, Supervisor of the Food & Nutrition Unit.