



**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.*



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**DIRECTOR'S EDITORIAL**  
**By Phillip Hardin**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE: NOT A THING OF THE PAST**

We have come to the end of another year. In reflecting back about the past 12 months it is important to note that despite the ever increasing caseloads in all of our programs, we survived. But more than that, not only did we survive, but we prospered as an agency. I am truly amazed at the resiliency for people who work for DSS, especially this organization. The one thing that really stands out for me about this agency is our willingness to help individuals and families and to do it in a respectful, professional, quality and timely manner.

Webster's says that "**Customer service** is the set of behaviors that a business or organization undertakes during its interaction with its customers. I think the important word here is "behaviors". It is during my interactions with companies or organizations that it seems that these behaviors have seemed to have lost their way. I have untold numbers of experiences over the last couple of years in my personal dealings with business that have been most unpleasant, time consuming and fruitless. I read a poll the other day that said the worst companies to deal with were cell phone providers, cable or satellite companies and phone service providers, in that order. I for one can believe it. It seems that most people you deal with are very disengaged in their jobs. It is just a job and they could care less if they help you or not. Most of you understand my philosophy in dealing with the clients we do. Our customers have nowhere else to turn to when it comes to the services we provide, that doesn't give us the right to treat folks badly. What I am impressed by is that it is not just something I say; it is something that this agency lives every day. That makes me very proud to say I work at McDowell County DSS.

I will give you some recent examples. I was in a meeting with mental health providers and consumers the other day. A lady who was a consumer came up to me after the meeting and stated that she had recently moved to McDowell County. She stated that she had lived in many states and she just wanted to thank me for the service she had received at DSS. She stated that she had been in many DSS's across the country but had never run into staff like we have in our agency. She said we were friendly, helpful and cared about the people we were working with. She stated this was evident all the way through the agency. We also are running a customer service survey once again. We started about one month ago. We give our survey out to anybody who walks in the door, regardless of program. They can complete it here or mail it back. So far there have been about 100 survey cards returned. There was one lone negative comment in all of those surveys, and that wasn't about the agency, just one staff person. I believe that is remarkable considering the type of work we do. Many interactions we have with clients will not have the best of outcomes, because of the rules and regulations we have to follow. So to have only one negative comment is amazing.

I think it is simple when you talk about customer service. It is about being treated like you would want to be treated in a similar situation. My hat goes off to all of you for making this agency stand out in its dealings with clients, community partners and each other. This is one area that takes a team effort from an organization to stand out in, and we have accomplished that and more. Thanks for all that you do for the citizens of McDowell County.

## ECONOMIC SERVICES

### FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

By: Denise Prewitt, Supervisor

In September 2009 McDowell County Department of Social Services had 2,931 Food and Nutrition cases. In September 2010 we had 3,534 and this year in September we have 4,284. In 2009 we had one Supervisor, one lead worker, one clerical person and eight case workers. In 2011 we still have one Supervisor, one lead worker, one clerical person and now we have nine case workers. With the economy failing our case loads were going up each month but because of the failing economy our County has not been able to give us any new positions. The new position we did get was from within the agency and thanks to Mr. Hardin. We had to find a way to keep up with the growth of our workload with the resources that we had available to us.

Sometime in 2010 Mr. Hardin and I had talked about Task Management. This is where we have one huge case load and we manage it with everyone having different tasks. This is very different than a worker having their own case load to manage, as well as all the other tasks on their own.

We were not able to move forward with Task Management at that time due to not having a room to house our active and pending files in. In May of 2011 the topic came up again and we decided we had to do something to keep up with the growth. So in June we sent one worker home to process applications from home and used that office for our file room. We started Task Management in July of 2011. No one else in the state was doing this so we had to come up with our own processes. Now we have one large case load and every week the eight case workers alternate between the following tasks:

**Phones-** one worker takes all calls and answers questions for clients or makes the appropriate changes that are reported.

**Walk-ins-** one worker sees all clients that walk into the agency with questions or changes to their FNS case.

**Intake-** three workers are available to see clients that need to apply for FNS benefits.

**Processing-** three workers work on processing the reviews for the month.

Our collaboration for implementing task management was internal. We had to let our front desk know how this was going to work since this is a big change from each case having its specific worker. Now each case has a whole unit.

The benefits have been numerous so far. Case workers can take time off and not come back to a stack of mail and numerous phone calls to return. With everyone working on the case load it is like a continual 2<sup>nd</sup> party review, what one worker might miss the next worker will see. I have gotten 90% fewer client complaints. Processing reviews without numerous interruptions from phone calls and clients dropping by has decreased agency errors.

Change can be scary but this change while in the beginning was very scary has been a positive change for the FNS unit. We are still in the tweaking stage with Task Management but we are full steam ahead.

## ADULT MEDICAID / TRANSPORTATION UNITS

By: Eileen Irish, Supervisor

On October 16th Wanda Wilson joined the Adult Medicaid Unit. Wanda was working as the Property Clerk in the Clerical Unit. She also provided clerical support for the Adult Medicaid Unit.

For those of you who have been wondering but were afraid to ask, the answer is Yes, Alicia Buchanan is expecting her second child. She is due on April 9, 2012 and has learned that she is having a little girl. She will be named Karizma Ruby Dawn Laughridge. Congratulations Alicia we are sure that Hayden will be a wonderful Big Brother.

The Adult Medicaid Unit has survived another year of Mass Change Updates for SSA/SSI and VA recipients. This involves reviewing cases that will be affected by the Cost of Living Adjustment that affects Medicaid. Way to go Team!

The new Medicaid Transportation Regulations will go into effect on January 1, 2012. McDowell County implemented many of the changes effective July 1, 2011 as a part of our county policy in preparation of the upcoming changes so that the impact will not be as great as it may be in other counties. Eileen Irish, Adult Medicaid/Transportation Supervisor, Janice Boone, Transportation Coordinator and Trish Fields, back up Supervisor, will attend training on January 6, 2012 that will cover the new policies and forms.

## ECONOMIC SERVICES

### FAMILY & CHILDREN'S MEDICAID CORNER

By: Trish Fields, Supervisor

Task Management's purpose is to do more work with less Case Workers by organizing your work flow with time management. The objective is giving the client better quality service at a higher efficiency rate. Clients actually get their benefits quicker using the Task Management process. Everyone meets their dead-lines, and work takes on more meaning. The stress for each worker goes away.

Another objective for Task Management is to ensure that the Case Workers can have more time to spend with the client and to complete the reviews and applications that they are assigned to process. This objective has resulted in fewer errors, less phone calls, and more quality services that the client receives.

The morale of the Task Team has multiplied. Case Workers can now take off vacation time, or be out sick without having to worry about their work piling up at the office. There is more communication, sharing of job skills, sharing of knowledge, and interaction among the Task Team. They like having the tasks assigned to them, and accomplishing those tasks in a more quality and efficient manner. It changes the old way we use to do work, to a new and innovative way of serving the client's needs for the future. They use their ideas for creativity in making a dull process a motivating one. Everyone has a voice, and each idea has meaning. This moves the Task Team to being a self-managed team ready of the future challenges that they face with Health Reform.

In summary, since September 2011, the Family & Children Medicaid Task Team has:

Keyed 400 reviews in three days; reduced the application processing time by 30%; reduced irate phone calls to 0% (I have not one in two months); quality has went up 3%; overdue reviews and applications are almost non-existent; 100% improvement in attendance mentality; 35% improvement of computer skills; and 15% increase of knowledge (from existing policy & procedures). Case Workers now have more time to concentrate on policy and procedures. We have more time to sharpen our skills on EIS, NC FAST, Microsoft office, Outlook, and basic keyboarding techniques. We enjoy learning from each other, and I think that this is the key. When you quit learning, you grow dull. So, when you change, you grow. When you grow, others grow, and the process marches on.

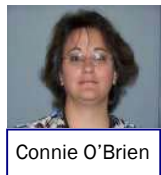
*Thank You Family & Children for "kicking dirt, and taking names in the past few months..."*



Jiselda Lingerfelt



Melinda Cooke



Connie O'Brien

### Clerical Team

By: Connie O'Brien, Supervisor



Lori Ledford



Phyllis Revis



Candy Hollifield

During the last year the Clerical Team has been through a tremendous amount of changes. In July of this year the Food & Nutrition Unit implemented the Task Management way of doing business. This has caused the front office operations to change because each week every workers responsibility changes not to mention that all of the other units were doing things the "old way". Then in September the Family and Children's Unit started doing business with their version of Task Management. It is a little different but with the same concept. So we had to adjust the flow of business in the front office according to their way of doing business. Add into the mix that we have been through two new Receptionist (due to promotions) and lost two positions, you can imagine just how overwhelmed we have been. And I know that I do not even need to mention the increase in demand for services. For each unit that has an increase in clients you can add each one of them to the increase that we see in the front office.

Our primary focus is Customer Service. As a team we are the first line of contact with the client and often we are the last. First and last impressions always leave a memory in a persons mind, so our goal is to make sure that when we interact with a client it is in a positive and sincere manner. Even though we have been through all of these changes, we still provide that kind of quality customer service and that is reflected in the Customer Service Surveys. The feed back has been extremely positive. I am very proud of the Clerical Team. You continue to amaze me. Keep up the great work and I look for even greater things from you in 2012.



## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE NEWS



The Employee Relations Committee challenged everyone to a door decorating contest for the Christmas Season. We certainly have a large amount of talented people within this organization.

The Employee Relations Committee would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please enjoy these photos that were taken by Connie O'Brien.



**Janice Hensley** - IMC II worker in the Food & Nutrition Unit won first place in the ERC Sponsored door decoration contest.



**David Grant** – Transportation Driver received second place.



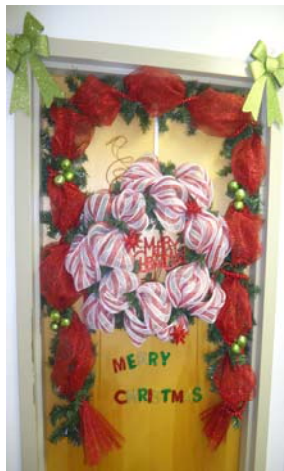
**Robin Conley** - CSST Worker got third place with this adorable penguin themed display.



**Connie O'Brien**— Program Integrity Investigator and Clerical Supervisor kept it simple .



**Phyllis Revis & Candy Hollifield**— PA IV with the Clerical Team worked together on this candy cane / snow theme.



**Denise Freeman** - CPS Intake worker had an absolutely gorgeous door. Everyone commented on its beauty and class.



**Shawn McCabe**— IT Supervisor had the right idea with this beach scene. He even added a little touch of some Jimmy Buffett music to make things festive.



**Margie Tilley** - IMC II with the Food & Nutrition Unit put together this "Merry & Bright " door.

# DECK THE HALLS...



**Misty Brown**—Human Resource Placement Specialist...Wait a minute that's not chestnuts roasting on an open fire.



**Christi Estep**—Human Resource Placement Specialist had this beautiful angel watching over her.



**Eileen Irish** - Adult Medicaid / Transportation Supervisor had her door topped off with some bows.



**Stacy Poteat**—IMC III Adult Medicaid Worker decorated her door with her Christmas cards.



**Vicky Styles**— IMC II Family & Children's Medicaid worker 's door. "Santa Claus is coming to town. "



**Laura McCurry**—IMC II Family & Children's Medicaid worker has Frosty on her mind. Look at Frosty go!



**Wanda Wilson**— Adult Medicaid IMC I was "A walking in a winter wonderland" when she decorated her door.



**Alicia Buchanan**—Adult Medicaid IMC III was "A rocking around the Christmas Tree" with her beautiful door.



**Donna Wilson**—Family & Children's Medicaid IMC II has a beautiful present for a door.



**Rhonda Wheeler**—PA IV with the Food & Nutrition Unit broke out the gold for her door.



**Mary Kay Wilson**—LINKS Coordinator use candy to create this masterpiece.



**Lynn Freeman** - Adult Medicaid Lead Worker says, "Let it snow, let it snow!"



**Cindy Reel**— Adult Medicaid IMC III did a great job with her door.



**Michelle Hinson**—IMC with Family & Children's Medicaid did great too.



**Brad Taylor**— IMC with Family & Children's Medicaid used his resources.

# EMPLOYEE RELATIONS COMMITTEE NEWS



Your Employee Relation Committee continues working for you and our agency. This past quarter we held a Halloween Contest in October. Ray Hemphill won with an old man costume. (Yes he wore a costume). Also in October some of the Staff and Foster parents took time off to assist in a Fundraiser to aid Mr. Tieman (a longtime Foster Parent) with his medical expenses with a Hot-dog fundraiser. The fundraiser raised \$531.50. The Employee's honored Mr. Hardin with a donation in his name to the Paws on a Mission Program.

November brought the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter Silent Auction, Chili Fundraiser, and a Thanksgiving Cake Walk. During our November's Agency Staff Meeting the employees donated a canned soft drink and a box of honeybuns to assist Adult Services (AS) with the Christmas treat bags. We had such an abundance of donations which allowed the Adult Services Unit to fill all the treat bags without any additional money from their limited funds. 600 treat bags were given out this Holiday season. Thanks in part to the generosity of our agencies staff.

In December we continued in the fun- fun- fun mode. We challenged employees to a "Decorate Your Office Door" contest. This was a great success and enjoyment to see all the creative people we have in our agency. The winner was Janice Hensley with a "Christmas Tree" door. Congratulations, Janice on your \$25 Wal-Mart gift card.

Our Agency Christmas Luncheon was held on December 16<sup>th</sup> at the Presbyterian Church Fellowship building. Numerous retirees attended and we had delicious covered dishes. The staff enjoyed fellowship and a meal with one another. We handed out \$400 in door prizes this year. The ERC added all employees' names into the pot for a chance to win a door prize. Employee's names that were unable to attend had an equal chance to win this year. This was a change from the past years.

We would like to Thank, Caleb at Smokey Que's for preparing our Turkeys and Hams for this year's Christmas Luncheon. Also, "Thank you!" to Mr. Hardin for a donation of \$200 toward the Door Prizes.



DINNER IS SERVED...



Shannon Jones, Neva Galle and Cindy Reel of Adult Services are ready to eat.



Donna Wilson is getting the desserts ready...with a smile!

# Employee Christmas Dinner

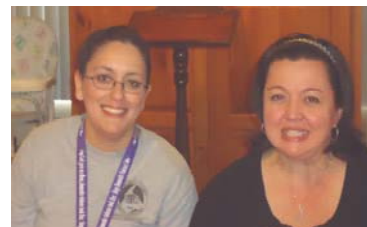
By: Connie O'Brien



Lisa Sprouse and Dawna Ledbetter pose for a quick picture.



Could that be Larry, Curly and Moe... Oh No! It's Jay, Mel and Ann. I guess they could be the female version of the three stooges. Regardless, they are three peas in a pod and enjoying the festivities.



Double Trouble— Tonia Bartlett and Cynthia Nettles both from the Food & Nutrition Unit.



I think this is one of Santa's Elves. No, It's Cindy Reel from Adult Services having a good time.



Barbara Stroud (Ret. Program Integrity Investigator) spent time with new employees Candy Hollifield and Lori Ledford.



Lord, Thank you for ... Christi Estep.



Michelle Hinson—Family & Children's Medicaid is happy to be here!



Adult Medicaid & Transportation Supervisor Eileen Irish is having a great time.



Looks like Phyllis Long of the Food and Nutrition Unit has some back up singers behind her.



Rusty Watkins—CPS worker is enjoying his dinner.



Mike Gibson (Ret. DSS Director ) and Lisa Sprouse ( Program Administrator for CPS) enjoy a few minutes reminiscing about the good old days.



Jiselda Lindgerfelt and David Grant sharing some holiday cheer.

## Child & Family Team's

By: Linda Waters

A Child and Family Team meeting, otherwise known as a CFT, is a meeting planned around the family's time and willingness to meet with DSS to develop a plan with the family that is currently involved with Child Protective Services. The family is encouraged to invite anyone who is a support to their family to every meeting. At the meeting the team discusses strengths of the family, their needs and concerns or issues that are affecting their family.

These meetings are held at the family's convenience, often after our regular work hours. The family also decides where these meetings will take place. They are often held in the family's residence, schools, The Senior Center, The YMCA, hospitals, jails, the library and even here at DSS.

These meetings are led by a neutral person known as a Facilitator. This person is responsible for making sure the discussions stay on task, are organized and ensures that everyone person present at the meeting has an input into the development of the family's plan.

In certain Child Protective Service cases CFT's are mandatory. McDowell County has been conducting CFT's since 2007. We have gone above and beyond state standards and CFT's are offered to every family in case management. They are also mandatory in every Foster Care case. CFT's are also being offered during Investigative and Family Assessment cases where a case decision of services needed or a substantiation of abuse or neglect are found and the case will be going into case management.

In 2011 a total of 287 CFT's were conducted with an average of 24 meetings per month. Starting in January 2012 all cases the agency accepts involving child abuse or neglect will be offered a CFT. This could increase the average to 80-90 meetings per month.

In preparation for this surge in meetings, We have taken steps to train workers to facilitate these meetings. Each of them have full time jobs at this agency and have volunteered their time to lead these meetings. Often they are asked to facilitate a meeting at the last minute due to an emergency with the family. These workers go above and beyond their regular duties to assist families in need. I, Linda Waters, am the only full time CFT Facilitator in the Agency and the other active facilitators are: **Susan Wilson-Taylor, Misty Brown, Christi Estep, Linda Randolph, Judy Hartman, Connie O'Brien, Eileen Irish, Rob Farkas, Robert Lodwick, Renee Barrier, Denise Prewitt, Trish Fields, Jenny Millsaps and Melinda Cooke.** There are also several other employees that are currently in the process of being trained facilitators and will hopefully be able to start leading meetings in the next few months.

Recently I have attended several forums and trainings where I heard the state trainers of CFT's, as well as workers in other counties, brag about the excellent work and attitudes of the facilitators of McDowell County. They indicated that McDowell County is one of the leading counties in the state utilizing CFT's.

CFT's have helped to change the perception of DSS in the community. Families usually walk away from the meeting feeling better about their situation with DSS than before they entered the meeting. In fact, many families have requested the meetings on their own because they see the benefit of these meetings. Due to the family having input into the development of their plan, they are more likely to follow the plan.

If you are interested in learning what these meetings are about or would like to be a part of these meetings please feel free to contact me, Linda Waters, at extension 149. We are always looking for workers who are willing to donate their time to this valuable tool.



## Foster Care

By: Jenny Millsaps



I would like to thank everyone for helping get donations for the children in foster care for Christmas presents. And to those employees that sponsored a child I would also like to say Thank You! Every year the employees of this agency really step up and help these children have a wonderful Christmas.

Between sponsors and donations from the community our foster children really had a great Christmas this year.

## WINTER BIRTHDAY'S

### January

Debbie Williams - 1/1  
 Susan Wilson-Taylor - 1/1  
 Nicole Bolick - 1/8  
 Sarah Brewer - 1/9  
 Ian Allen - 1/10  
 Jamie Bryant - 1/11  
 Denise Freeman - 1/11  
 Becky Burleson - 1/13  
 Shannon Jones - 1/14  
 Barbara Gautney 1/16  
 Trish Fields - 1/19-  
 Lisa Sprouse - 1/19  
 Stacy Poteat - 1/21  
 Robin Ayers - 1/29  
 Roger Elliott - 1/31

### February



Ann Carroll - 2/1  
 Jennifer Morgan - 2/1  
 Donna Wilson - 2/2  
 Lea Smith - 2/4  
 Linda Jackson - 2/5  
 Amy Deaton - 2/20  
 April Pope - 2/26

### March

Jaclyn Schlette - 3/4  
 Weyland Prebor - 3/6  
 Jenny Millsaps - 3/12  
 Barbara Leonard - 3-14  
 Judy Hartman - 3-25



## ADULT SERVICES

BY: MIRIAM EARLY  
Adult Services News



We are very busy collecting donations for our Christmas treat bags. Thanks to all those in the community, as well as DSS employees who have given sodas, crackers, candy, chips, cookies, Little Debbie cakes, Honey Buns, and monetary donations to assist with this effort. We plan to put together 400 or so bags, and we could not do this alone.

We are also waiting for what changes are to come with the IMD and 1915(i) initiatives. There is potential for many of those receiving SA payments or personal care services to lose Medicaid funding. If this happens, some could be forced to leave their current assisted living placement, with few alternatives available. Meanwhile, our numbers continue to rise, especially for Protective Services, Guardianship, and Payee programs. We expect the result of the IMD and 1915(i) initiatives to raise them even more. As we wait though, we are enjoying the anticipation of the holidays, and the fun that comes with making treat bags!

Adult Services would like to wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year!

*Cindy L. Reel, Neva Galle, Carole Markum, Sandy Freeman, Gwen Conley, Miriam Early, Ray Burleson, Donna Shelton, Shannon Jones, and Robin Hartman*

# Thank You Mr. Hardin

By: Connie O'Brien

On December 16, 2011 The Employee Relations Committee Chairperson Misty Brown presented Mr. Hardin with a plaque acknowledging him as a huge asset not only to our agency but also to the people that we serve.



During that last five plus years that Mr. Hardin has been the Director of this agency, he has accomplished many goals that truly have benefited this county and the people that this agency serves. He has a strong belief in the success of Child and Family Team meetings. He bought into this process long before we did as an agency. Because of his faith and support in this process, it has become a huge success. He has also been successful with the following:

- 1.) Taking on the MARP Program. This program helps citizen in the community with their prescription coverage if they do not have any kind of other coverage or resource. He took this on as an agency because he thought this would be a huge benefit to our clients.
- 2.) The HPRP Program has been able to help some clients with their housing issues. He took on this program due to the benefits it offered our clients.
- 3.) He encourages training on programs and program changes. He also provides the management team with management training.
- 4.) He has been very supportive of outreach in the community with our Economic Services Programs (Medicaid, Food & Nutrition & Work First). We have had outreach workers who work offsite and take applications for these programs. This reaches people who may have transportation issues or simply just do not know about the help that we offer.
- 5.) He has also taken on the Job Boost Program to try and help people with getting a job.
- 6.) He has sent out Customer Service Surveys every year to find out from our clients how we are doing and if there is any area that we need to work on to make their experience a positive one.
- 7.) He has been open and active with the implementation of the Task Management way of doing business. He liked the idea of the client only having to tell their story one time to one person. We were the first agency in North Carolina to implement this method of doing business and he is always willing to share with other agencies our way of doing business. He is now taking it to the next level by putting an Intake Unit in place. He has had this in his sights for several years and it is now becoming a reality.
- 8.) He has updated the equipment used in the agency, everything from computers to programs to servers and is even looking at a phone tree. This phone tree will place calls to clients to remind them that their review is due so that they will know it is time to get their paperwork in.
- 9.) He has implemented the ERC (Employee Relations Committee), he has established our website and is always looking for grants that will benefit our community.
- 10.) Over the summer we had an employee lose her life due to a domestic violence incident. Mr. Hardin got a Quilt Block for our agency in her memory.

I could go on about so many other achievements however I would run out of space on this page. So, on behalf of the entire agency, I would like to say "Thank You" to Mr. Hardin. Since you have become our Director there has been so many great changes that have taken place that could not have happened without you. You make a difference every day in the lives of our employees and the people that we serve.

## NEW HIRES—WELCOME ABOARD!!!

**Michelle “Candy” Hollifield** - Welcome back Candy! If you have been with this agency for a few years you will remember Candy Hollifield. She was an IMC II in the Family and Children’s Unit for several years and then went to work at Buncombe County DSS. Well, she is back and is now the Processing Assistant IV for the Adult Medicaid Unit on the Clerical Team and is supervised by **Connie O’Brien**

**Lori Ledford** - There is a new face at the front desk and her name is Lori Ledford. Lori comes to us with a tremendous amount of experience and the Clerical Team is very happy to have her on board. She is supervised by **Connie O’Brien**. Welcome to McDowell County DSS Lori!

## JOB CHANGES

**Vicky Fantry** - Congratulations to Vicky Fantry who is now working at the Child Support Office. She was hired a few months ago as the Receptionist at our main office. She is now supervised by **Roger Elliott**.

## QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

The future depends on what we do in the present. - Mahatma Gandhi



## BITS & PIECES



We would like to acknowledge Chapel Hill Baptist Church for their contribution of 20 Christmas Dinners that they donated to our agency. These dinners were given to families that we serve who were in need. This is not the first time that they have made donations to this agency in the interest of providing a family with a nice warm dinner for the holiday. Not only do we thank you but so do those twenty families that you helped make their holiday a more enjoyable event. After all, it is better to give than receive.

**Sharon Morrison, Work First Social Worker**, would like to acknowledge her granddaughter Valerie Byrd who won third place for her fifth grade Science Fair Project at Eastfield Elementary and her Grandson, Isaac Williams won second place for his sixth grade Science Fair Project. Congratulations goes out to both of them. Way to go!

**Dawna Ledbetter, Outreach Coordinator** at the Senior Center graduated from the Ann Johnson Institute for Senior Center Management on October 6, 2011. Congratulations Dawna!

**Cynthia Nettles IMCII worker in the Food & Nutrition Unit** would like to give an update on her son Caius: I am not sure that some of you are aware but when Caius was born, we were told by “Dr. Doom” that he would most likely never be able to do many things...walk, talk, think, or even know us and possibly not even survive. Well...Caius will be two years old on 5/18/2012 and continues to amaze everyone. Although he will always face struggles in his life, he is defying the odds! Caius is finally up to 20 lbs and is nearly 33 inches long! He still has his feeding tube but he is now able to eat and drink some by mouth...we hope to say good-bye to “Mr. Tubey” someday soon. He is able to sit up a little, unassisted, and does really well on his own in his Bumbo seat. He is trying to crawl, but has not quite mastered that so, instead, he rolls all over the house! We hope that, with his therapy, he will be able to walk and talk someday soon. He loves to play with his toys, pet our dogs and read books. He knows all of us and recognizes us by name and has survived more adversity than most adults I know! Take that, Dr. Doom!!... (Whom has since become one of Caius’ biggest fans and one of our favorite physicians).



Shirley Ward, Child Support would like to announce that her granddaughter is finally here. Kylin Della Turner was born Tuesday, November 8, 2011 at 5:19 p.m. She weighed in at 8 lbs 5 oz and was 22 inches long and is a beautiful baby girl!! She has a head full of hair, she is a good sleeper and is absolutely beautiful and sooooo sweet!!!! Shirley says “She is the light of my life right there next to my own two children.”

Congratulations to you and your family.