

# SEEN & HEARD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & THEIR FAMILIES • THE DELAWARE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

## COMMUNITY YOUTH MAPPING A SUCCESS IN WILMINGTON

**T**hirty-five young adults, participating in the Community Youth Mapping (CYM) project, walked the streets of Wilmington and beyond this summer to gather information about available resources for youth and families. Block-by-block, "mappers" and their team leaders visited government agencies, community and faith-based organizations, and small and large businesses to solicit input needed to complete a comprehensive survey. The information they gathered was entered into a searchable database and made available to the public.



**Mappers enter data they collected from non-residential establishments throughout the City of Wilmington.**

This project offered the youth, one-third of whom have been involved in Department programs, a myriad of opportunities. Not only did this project allow them to work and earn a paycheck, but they also gained valuable skills while doing something positive for the community.

"[This was] definitely a great experience," said DeSchelle Booker, a youth mapper. "It's not only an opportunity to make money for the summer, but also an opportunity to travel to places outside of our immediate community and to learn about unknown places and resources in Delaware."

"Overall the job is good," added youth mapper Aaron Collins. "I have learned work ethic, social skills, and how to communicate with people, as well as, walk in the heat."

Now that the City of Wilmington has been mapped, the Department is looking to expand throughout the state.



**Mapper John Torrence talks to community members about the CYM project.**

"This project truly fits with our vision to think of the child first—and we've only just begun," said Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis. "We hope we've created enough interest in others to generate the resources needed to map the entire State of Delaware. Not only would our youth benefit from the experience, but also we would have a comprehensive, one-stop location to find resources for children, youth and their families."

In addition to the Department, numerous community partners were vital to the success of the project. Community partners included: The Governor's Office, Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League, Nemours Health & Prevention Services, Springfield College of Human Services, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Delaware, Wilmington Parks & Recreation, Wilmington Police Department, Criminal Justice Council, Department of Education, Office of Volunteerism, Nehemiah Gateway, Verizon Wireless, Delaware Helpline, Ministry of Caring, Wilmington Mayor's Office, Wilmington Trust, United Way and EMC2.

"We received a lot of internal support for the project as well," said Tracy Pearson, site coordinator. "We're grateful for everyone's assistance and encouragement."

Anyone interested in utilizing the information gathered by the youth mappers can visit [www.communityyouthmapping.org](http://www.communityyouthmapping.org), select Wilmington on the first page and begin searching.



**Mapper Shameika Carroll reviews the comprehensive survey with a businessman.**



## VILLAGE AWARDS HIGHLIGHT PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION CONFERENCE

**O**ver 300 people participated in the 2005 Prevention and Early Intervention Conference, which took place on April 27 and May 24. Participants were provided with best practices in and prevention and early intervention while emphasizing organizational management skills.

This year's keynote speakers were Michael Lowther, Division Director for the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) and Dr. James Garbarino, author of the *New York Times* Best Seller, "Lost Boys: Why our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them." Reverend Eugene Rivers, III, co-founder of Boston's Ten Point Coalition in Boston, Ma., also spoke at a pre-conference reception on April 26 and again on April 27.

Conference coordinators Sandy Clark, Yvonne Bunch and Dwight Woodard (OPEI) worked with a team of dedicated staff members to provide participants with many learning opportunities as well as a selection of twelve Fast Track and Learning Track sessions, which included "Signs and Symptoms of Behavioral Health Problems in Children and Youth" and "Using Positive Behavior Support in a System of Care."

Highlights of the April 27 conference day included the presentation of the 2005 Village Awards. These awards celebrate the success of unpaid volunteers and spotlight the impact that various individuals have made in their communities in the field of prevention and early intervention. Winners of the Build the Village Award were: Reverend Tyrone Johnson, Sr., Founder/Director of Churches Take A Corner (Wilmington, Del.) and Donald B. Scholfield, Capital Park Civic Association (Dover, Del.). The winner of the Live the Village Award was Lavaida Owens-White, Parish Nurse, Christ Our King Church (Wilmington, Del.).

## WHO'S WHO, WHOS' NEW?

**F**ormer Deputy Warden of the Howard Young Correctional Center, Perry Phelps began his role as the Deputy Director for the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services this May. Perry joins the Department with a strong background in correctional practices. While at the Department of Corrections, he managed a 1500-bed adult detention/correctional facility.

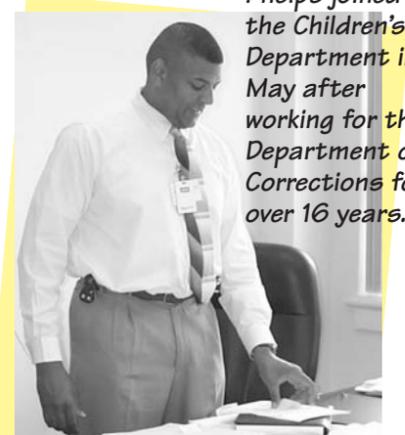
"The focus at YRS is more on getting everyone involved—adopting the system of care philosophy," Phelps says. "With increased parental involvement, continual support from members of the community and more mentors for the kids, I'm confident that when youth leave our care, they'll be truly ready to succeed. I want to end the cycle of recidivism and see the youth become productive."

Although she isn't new to the Department, Dana Sawyer has taken on new and exciting roles as Manager of the Office of Prevention and Early Intervention. Dana came to the Department in 2001 as a family service program support supervisor and had previously worked for the Department of Health and Social Services as a social service administrator in the Division for the Visually Impaired.

"OPEI has some exciting times ahead as a key component in the Department's System of Care initiative," Sawyer said. "We plan to enhance our community presence through technical assistance and capacity building efforts, while building our social marketing strategies to engage a wider audience around prevention and early intervention. I'm honored to be associated with such a team of dedicated people."



**Dana Sawyer, Manager of OPEI, has been with the Department for 4 years.**



**YRS Deputy Director, Perry Phelps joined the Children's Department in May after working for the Department of Corrections for over 16 years.**

**MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY**



**T**hese are changing times in children's services as we strive to meet increased expectations and pressures from the federal government, our partners and advocates, and, frankly, from our own desire to do right by our kids in crisis. Although hard to address all at once, we welcome the opportunity to better serve the children and families who depend on our good work.

We are engaged with our many partners in children's services in building a system of care in which everyone—community partners, families, co-workers—come together around a child in crisis to work seamlessly within and across agencies, emphasize a child's strengths and involve the child's family as respected allies. We have over 200 employees from throughout the Department participating on workgroups to address the challenges we face today.

This is the way of the future for child welfare and all children's services in America and in Delaware. We fully embrace this 21st century approach, one that will truly enable us all to Think of The Child First.

In recent months, we have made significant strides within the Department and in the community to put into practice the ideal of a children's services system transformed. In these pages, you will see examples of that progress and the people who make it possible—from the Community Youth Mapping project to the opening of the Grace and Snowden Cottages, which provides a robust therapeutic environment for kids needing a staff secure placement, from the creation of a true continuum in foster care to our Department employees of the year to the first Delaware child to benefit from a new partnership with Milton Hershey School.

When she took office in 2001, Governor Minner made child safety the priority consideration for the Delaware Children's Department. From her leadership came our vision to Think of The Child First. Every child needs to be safe, live in a stable home, develop positive self-esteem and embrace a sense of hope about the future. These are more than just words to us. Thanks to you, the creative, hardworking, committed people in the Department and among our partners, the transformation to a children's services system of care that meets the needs of 21st century kids is becoming a reality.

Cari DeSantis,  
Cabinet Secretary

**FOSTER CARE REFORM – SERVING 21ST CENTURY CHILDREN WITH 21ST CENTURY SERVICES**

**I**n order to meet the complex and challenging needs of children in Delaware's foster care system, a new Request for Proposals (RFP) for foster care, group care and shelter care services was issued in November 2004. The RFP was based on recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Foster Care and the community-based Blueprint for Excellence in Foster Care, and followed a reassessment of the state's foster care system. Data analysis showed that a growing number of children entering the foster care system are teens and children with developmental delays. Analysis also showed an increase need for long-term group care settings for teens in southern Delaware and services for sex offenders.

Utilizing a system of care approach, new specialized and treatment services were selected from 20 providers who submitted proposals. Over \$58 million of services were proposed for an RFP for about \$9 million worth of contracted services. The RFP review committee that consisted of Department staff from DFS, CMH, YRS and DMSS and Julia Pearce, Executive Director of the Child Placement Review Board, weighed each proposal for their ability to meet the demands of the 21st Century needs of children. On April 1, more services for children were made available through the providers.

Foster care reform continues to grow in Delaware and provide children with the services they need to lead lives of promise in safe, stable and nurturing homes.

**DEPARTMENT AND DIVISIONS  
RECOGNIZE EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR**

**C**ongratulations are in order for the 2004 Department Employees of the Year. John Carver, a program administrator with the Division of Child Mental Health Services, and Frank Perfinski, an adoption program manager with the Division of Family Services, were selected based on their exceptional leadership skills and strong commitment towards thinking of the child first. In addition to



Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis (center) awarded Frank Perfinski and John Carver with the Employee of the Year award for 2004.

being recognized as an employee of the year for the Department, Carver was also named employee of the year in the CMHS division.

Other employees who received recognition as divisional employees of the year included:

- DMSS—Donna Holmberg;
- DYRS—George Chambers;
- DFS—Janet Spina;
- DCMHS—Carver and Bob Cole.

All of the recipients were acknowledged at an annual employee recognition event held Wednesday, June 8, 2005.

"Our department is filled with compassionate and dedicated employees, all of whom continually think of the child first," said

Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis. "It's always a pleasure to praise individuals who surpass expectations and strive for excellence in caring for our children."

**DEPARTMENT HOSTS FIRST ANNUAL  
"WALK FOR KIDS" WALKATHON**

**W**ith their walking shoes on and the sun shining, approximately 100 people turned out for the first "Walk for Kids" walkathon on Saturday, May 14. Walk for Kids, a DFS staff-inspired idea, brought staff, families, friends and volunteers from every corner of the state together in Dover to raise money and awareness for foster care well-being programs.

Many familiar faces were there to show support for the worthy cause. Child Mental Health Director Susan Cycyk and Youth Rehabilitative Services Director Nancy Pearsall came out and walked the full five kilometers with DFS Director Carlyse Giddins. Governor Minner graciously took time from her busy schedule to kick off the walkathon and make a generous donation to the cause. Senator Carper also stopped by, said a few words to the crowd, made a donation and even stayed to run the course.



Volunteers gather to welcome participants to the first Walk For Kids walkathon.

"We appreciate all the generous support we received from Governor Minner and Senator Carper, as well as the community and our colleagues," said Director Giddins. "It was really enlivening to see families and friends walking together to support our kids."

Money raised through the walkathon, which totals over \$11,000, will help provide opportunities for kids, such as summer camp or dance lessons.

"The Walk for Kids was a step forward in the Department's efforts to help our kids and there will be more steps," Director Giddins added. "It is the steps forward that will get us where we want our children to be."



Laura Miles brought her kids along for the first Walk For Kids walkathon.



## DSCYF FOSTER CHILD ACCEPTED TO PRESTIGIOUS MILTON HERSHEY SCHOOL

In its first partnership with the State, the prestigious Milton Hershey School (Hershey, Pa.) has offered admission to a foster child from Delaware. MHS has been in operation for almost a century and currently serves 1,300 boys and girls in grades K-12 from families with the greatest financial and social needs. First to be considered for admission to MHS are children in foster care.



Milton Hershey School campus. (Photo courtesy Milton Hershey School)

Jacob, the twelve-year-old foster child from New Castle County, will enter the seventh grade at MHS and will live in a house with nine other middle school aged children and two house parents. He will have daily assigned chores, attend school and have his choice of

dozens of activities. Jacob will also be able to maintain contact with his siblings and foster mother with transportation provided by MHS.

"We could not pass up the chance to give our kids in care access to the great educational and life opportunities the Milton Hershey School offers," said Governor Ruth Ann Minner. "When I was asked to help Jacob, I immediately wrote a letter of support urging his admission. He worked so hard to raise his report card grades; he deserved to have this chance."

Ninety-three percent of students who graduate MHS go on to attend two or four year school programs with the entire tuition paid for by the Milton Hershey Foundation. If a graduate chooses vocational training, it is also paid for. The entire MHS program is free of charge to the children, their families or the state.

"This is such a wonderful example of our guiding philosophy—embrace a child's strengths while maintaining focus on the family," said Children's Department Cabinet Secretary, Cari DeSantis. "It shows that everyone involved in making this possible for Jacob was truly 'thinking of the child first' with their actions, and we look forward to watching him thrive at his new school and in his new life."

Jacob's permanency worker, Nicole Rose, was instrumental in advocating for his admission and said that in all of her years of working with children, this was a time she was keenly aware that her efforts have the potential of changing a child's life forever.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CAMPAIGN INFORMATIONAL FAIR A SUCCESS

Rain didn't stop visitors from taking a look at the various materials presented at this year's Child Abuse and Neglect (C.A.N.) Campaign Informational Fair, held on Friday, June 3, at Rodney Square in Wilmington. Prevent Child Abuse Delaware partnered with DSCYF to host the fair in an effort to raise community awareness on the issues surrounding child abuse and neglect, as well as resources available within the State.

There was an abundance of entertainment throughout the day: Mr. Skipp, a children's entertainer, performed an interactive sing-a-long with children, singing theme songs that provided simple messages about safety and emotional well being; Hwhodini the Magician built his performance around safety tips and phrases kids should use when faced with difficult situations; and Born Again, the band that performed, brought many professionals to the square during the lunch hour.



(L to R) Department employees Eileen Welsh and Joe Smack and Carly Twilley of Prevent Child Abuse-Delaware show off puppets at the 2005 C.A.N. campaign.

Thirteen agency exhibitors turned out for the event to team up with Department volunteers. They included: Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disability; Joining Generations Program; Department of Health's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program; DPH Tobacco Prevention Program; Child, Inc.; Family Information and Resource Services; Children and Families First Teen Mother program; Division of Family Services Office of Child Care Licensing, Office of Prevention, Foster Care and Adoption; Prevent Child Abuse Delaware; YMCA Resource Center; People's Settlement Association; and Nemours, Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Informational Fair attracted many people traveling through the downtown Wilmington area and everyone that participated in the fair felt they had a successful event and are looking forward to next year.



Multi-cultural puppets like this were on hand at this year's C.A.N. campaign as a giveaway to children and as a tool to teach self-expression.



The hard work and dedication of the maintenance and grounds keeping staff was recognized on April 29 at the Maintenance Utility Building dedication on the main administration campus. From left to right: back row, Mike Alfree, Chuck Boring, Merle Wanamaker, Tracy Mumford, Brian Bernero, Dave Hardican, Dave Neeld and Joe O'Hanlon; front row, Henry Smith, Luz Cintron, Peggy Timko, Eryl Roth, Luis Ortiz, Paul Ivins and Jeff Ryan.

# TEAM SPIRIT AWARD

Teamwork is essential in order to accomplish the many goals of this agency. 1,200 people throughout the state are responsible for numerous tasks throughout the day, month and year.

The "Team Spirit Award" strives to recognize a group of team members who have gone beyond the call of duty, with enthusiasm and zest for their work.

**T**he Children's Department reached another milestone through legislative support with the opening of Delaware's first State-run Level IV residential treatment programs designed to address the needs of adjudicated adolescents that are having difficulty successfully completing community-based services – Grace and Snowden Cottages.

The residential treatment programs at Grace and Snowden Cottages are designed to address the needs of adjudicated adolescents that are having difficulty successfully completing community-based services. The Cottages allow the Department to keep youth closer to home. They receive education, individual and family counseling, psychological and psychiatric services, aftercare and transition services, outside and gender specific programming.

"There is an investment in this program because it was designed and developed by staff based on insight gained from research and their own experiences and knowledge," said Nancy Pearsall, Director of Youth Rehabilitative Services. "According to our research, there is no national, research-based model that is providing service for Level IV



The successful re-opening of Grace and Snowden Cottages is the product of core team members Nancy Pearsall, YRS Division Director, Kim Pepper, Darryl Dawson, Joe Vattilana, Rick Shaw, Amy Benjamin, Tamara Walker-Gladney, Jameelah Dennis, Tom Olson and Terry Senio. Shown here (L to R) are Director Pearsall, Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis, Governor Ruth Ann Minner, Stephanie Guiswite, Program Manager for the Cottages, and Shaquita Brinson, a Grace Cottage resident, stopping for a photo before touring Grace Cottage at an open house held in August.



Their commitment to this mission was unique and as a result, Grace and Snowden Cottages were open for business on January 18, 2005, just 10 months after the planning process began.

"[Being a member of] the Grace/Snowden Advisory Team provided a terrific opportunity to work collaboratively with another Division," said Tom Olson, Child Mental Health. "I gained a much better appreciation of the types of concerns and problems encountered while planning for YRS programming."

youth. Therefore, we've set a precedent for the design, development and implementation of such a program."

The planning process began in February 2004 with the creation of the Advisory Team made up of Departmental staff that brought many years of experience, commitment and dedication to providing quality services to the youth served by the Department.

They worked tirelessly to develop the programmatic and educational needs, establish the best staffing pattern and interview teams, coordinate building renovations, and begin the process of community support.

## EAT, DANCE AND BE MERRY! DSCYF HOLDS ANNUAL DEPARTMENT PICNICS

**S**eparated by a few days and many miles, this year's annual Department picnics provided employees with great weather, good food, fun games and upbeat music.

Downstate employees held their picnic on Tuesday, June 21, at the Redden State Forest Lodge. With games like water balloon toss, "Let's Make a Deal" and musical hula hoops, along with door prizes from generous sponsors including Auntie Anne's Pretzels, Walmart, and Domino's Pizza, everyone was able to relax and have a great time.

"I have heard more positive comments than I have ever heard before, which is great," said Vicky Smith, Child Mental Health.



and horseshoes. But along with fun in the sun, came fun in the shade.

The music inspired people of all ages to get on the dance floor and put their best foot forward!

Coordinators of the upstate picnic were Marge Lloyd, DFS and Kim Gabrielli, OPEI.

(L to R) Janet Agosto, Julie Sammons and Dan Celia enjoy a game of musical hula-hoops at the downstate employee picnic.



Upstate employees heat it up on the dance floor at the annual employee picnic.

Along with Smith, committee members for the downstate picnic included: Dwight BoNey, Michelle Darling, Joe McCorquodale, Cindy Ritchie and Pam Unruh of YRS; Cynthia Bryant-Harrell and Jessica Guy of DFS; and Marilyn Hollenbeck of CMH.

Chestnut Run Park provided the setting for the Department's upstate picnic on Friday, June 24. The sun was shining and the wind was blowing as picnic attendees enjoyed friendly games of volleyball

### TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, CALL THE 24-HOUR REPORT LINE:

**1-800-292-9582**

For information on becoming a foster parent, call the Delaware Helpline: **1-800-464-4357**

"Seen and Heard" is the quarterly newsletter of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (The Delaware Children's Department).

Tell us what you think: **1-302-633-2500**  
e-mail: [kelly.savacool@state.de.us](mailto:kelly.savacool@state.de.us)

Ruth Ann Minner, Governor, State of Delaware

Cari DeSantis, Cabinet Secretary

Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

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**WWW.STATE.DE.US/KIDS**



State of Delaware  
The Department of Services  
for Children, Youth and  
Their Families

### MISSION STATEMENT

OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY FOR DELAWARE'S CHILDREN.

OUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IS TO PROVIDE AND MANAGE A RANGE OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ABANDONMENT, ABUSE, ADJUDICATION, MENTAL ILLNESS, NEGLECT, OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE; AND WE ENDORSE A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ENABLE CHILDREN TO REACH THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL.

### VISION STATEMENT

THINK OF THE CHILD FIRST!

