

## TEAM SPIRIT AWARD

Teamwork is essential in order to accomplish the many goals of the Department. About 1,200 persons 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 above the call of duty with enthusiasm and zest for their work.

I am only one,  
But still I am one.  
I cannot do everything,  
But still I can do something;  
And because I cannot do everything  
I will not refuse to do the something  
that I can do.

These words were spoken many years ago by the great author and educator Helen Keller but she could have been speaking about the individuals who are this quarter's recipients of the Team Spirit Award. In the face of challenging times and a poor economy, State Employees Charitable Campaign (SECC) Committee made a strong commitment to work together to help those less fortunate — those in the community who have missed sharing in the American Dream.

The SECC committee worked hard this fall to motivate their coworkers to dig down deep and do their part to help feed the hungry, care for the sick, educate children and improve the quality of life for many people in the state of Delaware.



SECC Division and Site Captains (from left): Norwood Coleman, chairperson, DMSS; Bob Harity, YRS; Kim Gabrielli, DFS; Lisa Greene, CMH; Liz Clementoni, DMSS; Kim Martino, YRS; and, Glenn Garrett, DMSS

Not pictured: Catherine Kearns, DFS; Candice Fairburn, DFS (Dover); Diane Henderson, DFS (Elwyn); Allyson McGonigle, DMSS; John Dowell, YRS; Robert Kacperski, DMSS; and, Deborah Kelly, Office of the Secretary



Members spent countless hours organizing ways to engage employees in the fall fundraising campaign through department-wide activities such as hot dog days and bake sales. They also distributed collection canisters created by Ferris School students throughout the buildings.

Because of the committee's efforts, employees were able to make individual contributions and pledges of \$17,192.50. The SECC group also collected \$358 through the fundraising activities. A total of \$17,550.50 has been raised so far exceeding the group's campaign goal of \$15,000.

"These team members went above and beyond in doing their part to make a difference in someone else's life by motivating others to give generously to the many worthwhile organizations in our state," Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis said. "Overall, our state employees have demonstrated a wonderful spirit of caring during the campaign. We have this team to thank for bringing out the best in everybody. They truly led by their example."

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## SYSTEM OF CARE UPDATE

Over the last several years, Delaware has made substantial progress toward improvement of how services and supports are delivered to children. Now, a diverse group of state and local stakeholders have come together to reflect on the lessons of history, strengths and needs within each major sector of services and realize the challenges to establishing an integrated System of Care (SOC).

During the fall, the Children's Department staged a two-day retreat to pull together a state team and develop an operational plan for Delaware's implementation of SOC. Approximately 40 participants came together in September to work with national experts on SOC principles and practices.

Participants included Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis; Health and Social Services Deputy Secretary Karryl McManus; family members and youth; service providers; and, representatives from the Children's Department, Governor's Office, Attorney General's Office, Family Court, Department of Education, Developmental Disabilities and Adult Mental Health. The group came away with draft timetables and action plans for moving Delaware children's services forward toward embracing the system of care philosophy.

The retreat launched a core state-wide team of members from the Children's Department, departments of Education and Health and Social Services, Delaware Legislature, Delaware Federation of Families Chapter, and Grassroots Citizens for Children.

Fifteen of these team members participated in a Policy Academy sponsored by Georgetown University in December to formalize agreements and commitment for implementing SOC statewide. At the academy, the group began refining the path forward by using the goals and plans developed at the retreat. They also worked on completing the composition of the state-wide SOC team to make sure that all key stakeholders, including those who participated in the retreat, are included. The team is paying particular attention to expanding the number of families and youth who are involved to achieve a better balance of participants between organizational and consumer representation. The team also identified pockets of effective SOC currently being implemented in Delaware that can be the catalysts for stimulating broader use.

With the experience gained from the Policy Academy, the team will now look to connect the dots to bring a coordinated effort to life quickly over the next few months.



### 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**

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Ruth Ann Minner, Governor, State of Delaware

Cari DeSantis, Cabinet Secretary

Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

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State of Delaware



## SEEN & HEARD

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

### ANOTHER DELAWARE FIRST!

Transitional House for Juvenile Justice Graduates Opens

It was a chilly September morning outside but smiles kept everyone warm as Governor Ruth Ann Minner helped dedicate House of Joseph III, a transitional living program for juveniles who have successfully completed juvenile justice treatment with the Delaware Children's Department. The program is thought to be the first of its kind in the nation developed in partnership with Ministry of Caring, Inc.



Deputy Directory Mary Anne Matarese receives Dedicated Partners Award from Governor Minner on behalf of the Ministry of Caring

"My administration is committed to preparing children for school, work and life. The House of Joseph III, through public and private resources, provides a much-needed resource to benefit not only the boys involved but the community as a whole," said Governor Minner. "The Ministry of Caring has chosen once again to fill an unmet need in the community and we are most appreciative of this collaboration."

The Department had identified the lack of a supportive home as an obstacle to continued success for boys leaving the Ferris School program, a maximum secure care facility for young males adjudicated delinquent and committed by Family Court. The Department learned through the Criminal Justice Council of a federal grant opportunity for innovative juvenile justice programming. The House of Joseph III was made possible by a federal grant from the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) awarded through the CJC. The program will provide housing for up to five adolescents, ages 16-19, who are exiting Ferris School for Boys. The program will allow up to 18 months of residency coupled with a network of supportive services tailored for each individual's



Guests enter House of Joseph III for a tour during the day's events

needs including life skills, job placement, substance abuse programming, parenting classes and mental health counseling. Currently, three youth are residing in the home.

"The transitional living program is a significant, much-needed antidote to our antiquated system of care that ignores the plight of socially challenged youth," said Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis. "The Ministry of Caring's program will offer safety, stability, self-esteem and a sense of hope for these teens, which is our vision for all children in Delaware. We saw a need, we called for help, and not surprisingly, the Ministry of Caring responded beyond our expectations to allow each young man to maximize his chances for becoming a productive member of the community, rather than a throw-away child."

Brother Ronald Giannone OFM Cap., executive director of the Ministry of Caring, says challenges for the transitional program still lie ahead. "As we address the needs of the troubled youth who are released from Ferris School into our care, the major barrier will be to overcome the scars of the past," he said.

### DEDICATED PARTNERS OFFER CHILDREN OPPORTUNITIES TO SUCCEED

The Delaware's Children's Department seeks to ensure children get what they need to succeed even if the State cannot provide it. Under its Dedicated Partnerships initiative, the Department seeks the support of community and corporate groups to provide children in its care with opportunities for well-rounded development.

On any given day, the Department provides services to approximately 8,200 children who have been abused, neglected, are dependent, have mental health or substance problems, and/or have been adjudicated delinquent by the Courts. Of those children, 86 percent live with their own families. Another 9 percent live with foster families in the community. Those families need the support of not only the State, but other family members, friends, and the community as a whole.

The Department recently recognized Discover Bank and Delaware Community Foundation for making summer camp a reality for 12 girls involved in child welfare services. John Hollis, the director of the Southern Office of the Delaware Community Foundation and long-time child advocate, had connected Roger Pryor, vice president of Discover Bank, with the Department. In recognition, Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis presented both entities with the Department's first Dedicated Partnership plaques in August. In addition to the plaques, Mr. Hollis and Mr. Pryor received shirts and thank-you notes from the campers, some of whom were present and shared their thanks and experience at the event.

"Our vision is to 'Think of the Child First' in all we do, but we know we can't do it all and we can't do it alone," said Secretary DeSantis. "The Delaware Community Foundation heard our call for assistance. They helped us to make the connection with Discover Bank. They responded with a generous contribution from their Discover Bank Fund for Women to make it possible for a dozen girls to go to camp this summer."

Other contributions through the Dedicated Partnership initiative have included backpacks, school supplies and personal items so foster children returning to school could share the excitement of the new school year (AstraZeneca, local schools); support for creative educational programming as well as a fitness trail for the adolescents at the Silver Lake Treatment Center in Middletown (MBNA); and, sponsorship of the HOSTS mentoring program and mentors at Ferris School for Boys (Dupont). Many other community partners have contributed in big and small ways, allowing children to participate in scout programs and music lessons, attend a Blue Rocks game or the zoo, or learn how to prepare for a job interview.



Dedicated Partners Team and Discover Bank: (from left) Mary Jo Begley, Child Mental Health Services; Kathleen Hildebrand, Office of Case Management; Secretary Cari DeSantis; Joyce Hawkins, Family Services; Gwen Angalet, Office of the Secretary and Roger Pryor, vice president of Discover Bank

## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



As we move toward the close of 2003 we can look upon our 20 years of service as a remarkable period of growth and accomplishment. This milestone reflects two decades of dedication and commitment on the part of this Department and its staff in promoting the rights and welfare of Delaware's children. Looking back, we sadly realize these 20 years of progress have been built on the heart-rending life stories of our children. Some of our memories reflect the sorrow and pain of the children we have served, but we are buoyed by those memories of renewed hope in their eyes and a rediscovery of the joys life has to offer.

Transformation into the effective, proactive children's services system we envision has not been easy. Many small steps have brought us to this point where we can focus on a comprehensive, child-focused system of care. Back in 1983, the State sought to avoid duplication and fragmentation of its integrated child protective, rehabilitative and mental health services and created The Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families. This consolidated existing yet disparate government agencies under one roof; but resources were needed to carry them out. An information system, professional development, facilities, personnel and new services were added. The focus became quality in service, but a more complete statewide system of care remained elusive.

In the last three years, we have developed our vision to "think of the child first" and are committed to safety, stability, self-esteem, and a sense of hope for every child in our care. We have pledged to lead a system of care that is child centered and assures effective, timely, and appropriate support for Delaware's children. We also believe that we can only achieve our mission when families, community partners, and other stakeholders think of the child first as well, and it is our leadership in this arena that will facilitate that thinking and help us to engage the whole village in raising our children here in Delaware. We are transforming a 1970 child welfare system into a children's services system that will meet the needs of 21st century children. We have come a long way by following the path of our strategic initiatives that include a child-focused system, holistic services, an inspired workforce, leading-edge management and dedicated partnerships in the community.

These next few years also hold promise for the continued transformation of the Children's Department. Our paramount concern remains the safety and well being of a child. We will continue to expand or develop new services that incorporate the principals of system of care and truly meet the needs of today's children. We value safety, excellence, respect and caring, integrity and teamwork in our work with each other, our partners, families and children.

I want to share with you what a privilege it has been to work with some wonderfully creative people to do what's best for Delaware's children. That includes the 1,200 people who are the Delaware Children's Department, but also the advocates and providers, and our partners in the private and non-profit community, as well as leaders in state government. What we can achieve by unity of purpose is far greater than what we could ever achieve acting on our own.

Although we have made great strides in improving our services, we anticipate more challenges and demands on us as we face the needs of 21st century children. We envision community partnerships so wide, so powerful and so determined that no barrier will be allowed to slow down the path of progress as we all "Think of the Child First."

*Cari DeSantis*

## CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT MARKS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Governor Ruth Ann Minner, Senator Harris McDowell (D-Wilmington) and Representative Pam Maier (R-Newark) joined Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis in June to mark the 20th year of Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families including the cutting and sharing of a large birthday cake.

"We have mapped out and are implementing Foster Care Reform, and we are further reforming juvenile justice in this State. We are serving more children in their homes and in their state, and we are providing improved services to ever more children against a backdrop of economic decline," said Governor Minner. "The team at the Children's Department is truly committed to the children and now, as this Department is approaching its 20th birthday, the children's services system in this state is truly coming of age — growing up — rising to the challenge of its times."

The Governor was joined by Senator McDowell, an original champion of creating the Children's Department who continues to chair the Senate Committee on Services for Children, Youth and Their Families as well as Representative Maier, chair of the House Committee on Health and Human Development, member of the Governor's Task Force on Foster Care, and the Child Protection Accountability Commission. The legislators sponsored a concurrent resolution noting that "the Delaware Children's Department has achieved many milestones since its inception, including the creation of a national model for juvenile justice treatment in the new Ferris School; accreditation of its juvenile justice detention and treatment institutions; accreditation of its child behavioral health services system as well as its residential treatment programs; reforming foster care services to better support children whose families cannot care for them safely; and receiving the Delaware Quality Consortium's Commitment Award and Award of Merit."

Governor Minner proclaimed July 6, 2003 "as a day of recognition and appreciation for the commitment and achievements of the members of the Children's Department staff on behalf of Delaware's children," urging "all the citizens of Delaware to recognize and appreciate the achievements of the members of the Delaware Children's Department and to embrace their vision to 'Think of the Child First.'"

Secretary DeSantis accepted the resolution and proclamation "on behalf of the 1,200 members of the Children's Department who have worked arduously to transform a 1970s child welfare system into a holistic continuum of services that meet the needs of 21st Century children. Our wish is that we fulfill our vision of 'Thinking of the Child First' in the hope that one day our services will not be necessary."

The General Assembly hereby declares that the purpose of this chapter and the policy of the State is to achieve the consolidation of services to children, youth and their families within the jurisdiction of a single agency in order to avoid fragmentation and duplication of services and to increase the accountability for the delivery and administration of these services; to plan, develop and administer a comprehensive and unified service delivery system to abused, neglected, dependent, delinquent and mentally ill or emotionally disturbed children and youth within a continuum of care, which shall include the involvement of their family, within the least restrictive environment possible but consistent with the child's health and safety; to emphasize preventive services to children, youth and their families, in order to avoid the costs to the State of individual and family instability.

— From Intent and Purpose of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families as Written in the Delaware Code (Chapter 90, Sec. 9001 b)

## FINE ARTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT FERRIS SCHOOL

Behind locked doors, a little program has gained great momentum and is changing the lives of young men. It has allowed troubled teens to challenge themselves and discover their hidden talents.

Since 1996, Ferris School for Boys, has incorporated the arts into its school curriculum largely through the efforts of the Ad Hoc Arts Committee chaired by Carl Schnee and co-chaired by Janet Leban. The committee consists of advocates from Delaware Center for Justice, The Delaware Theatre Company, Delaware Center for Contemporary Arts, Delaware State Arts Council, Delaware Art Museum and Jewish Family Center.

Fine Arts students learn varied forms of contemporary and modern creative arts designs. The students' projects are placed on display in the Ferris School Carp Center Art Gallery. Graphic Arts students learn to use computer graphics, including navigating applications and programs to do high tech transition and creative design in PowerPoint. Advance Arts students learn how to use the current professional art software to create graphics for various PowerPoint presentations, invitations, ads, brochures, logos, and business cards.

At the conclusion of each nine-week semester, the students participate in a presentation to exhibit and discuss their completed work. The students, peers, parents, staff and guests are invited. The presentation is an opportunity for the students to showcase and discuss their art work. This process has been therapeutic for the students, as they communicate their life story through their arts.

"Our program has given the students the necessary awareness and exposure that fosters creative development and appreciation for the Arts," said Ferris

School Superintendent Diane Gadow who advocated for the committee to bring the Arts to Ferris School. "The youth are encouraged and inspired by their hidden talents and skills. This new discovery of their art ability enriches the education and treatment involved in their rehabilitation. The youth resourcefulness in learning new skills and abilities can be helpful in their transition back to school, or work within their communities."

Art teacher Jesse Roy has been working with the students for two years. Her creativity and ingenuity has made all the difference in tapping the potential of the students, according to Ferris Principal Dolores Allen-McIntyre.

"Ms. Roy's enthusiasm is contagious. She has taken this program to a new level and has motivated the students

### FERRIS SCHOOL NEW GENERATION POETS

#### Down The Longest Road

No signs just intersections.  
Even though I am lost,  
I can't stop for directions  
Down the longest road.

I've been on this road once before.  
I've traveled the same journey,  
But never more down the longest road.

I've made wrong turns.  
I've lost my map and gone too far.  
Only to turn back down the longest road.

When I find my way,  
I'll know where I am headed.  
Never to turn back down the longest road.

— Ryan C.

#### Change

I'm not talking about dimes and nickels  
I'm talking about letting Pine and fifth loose  
CHANGE

I'm tired and sick of you  
Put me through pain and misery  
I know it's the Game, but listen to me  
CHANGE  
Tired of jail cells and courtrooms  
Pleading the Fifth Degree  
Judges... Know them all and they all pity me  
Hand down their verdict and mumble "I'm sick of He"  
Bang down the mallet and get rid of Me  
CHANGE

But it's time to change this path and be a kid again  
Guess I am too old for that  
But deep down inside I want to CHANGE  
Look into my eyes, look into my face  
Open my brain and find that CHANGE

— Ernest P.

## PERFINSKI RECEIVES AWARD FOR COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN

Family Services Adoption Program Manager Frank Perfinski received a pleasant surprise recently from members of Adoptive Families with Information and Support (AFIS) at the Celebration Adoption Day and Culture Fair in Mill Creek. Although Perfinski normally helps with the annual fall event sponsored by AFIS, the Children's Department and Interagency Council on Adoption, he certainly didn't expect to receive an award.

The long-time Children's Department employee was honored as the first recipient of the Nancy McKenna Award for Commitment to Children. The award was named for McKenna, an adoptive parent and member of AFIS who died in August 1996. She was a devoted parent and dedicated advocate for growth and change in the Delaware child welfare system. The award will be given each year to a Delaware resident who has carried on the work that McKenna began.

Perfinski was recognized by the group for his collaborative efforts within the child welfare community in helping children find permanent homes through adoption. "Frank has worked diligently with all segments of the child welfare community. He is a sensitive, caring man who articulates his desire to have all kids in permanent families," said Interagency Council on Adoption's Mary Lou Edgar, who was part of the AFIS awards selection committee. "Frank is a strong supporter of families struggling to provide permanency for challenging children who have been badly wounded by the experiences of their lives. He is a leader, a person who cares deeply and works diligently to improve the lives of waiting kids. In our minds, Frank carries on the legacy of Nancy McKenna and we are pleased to present this award to him."



Frank Perfinski, pictured with his granddaughter, is recipient of the McKenna Commitment to Children Award

## PROJECT REDIRECT: Youths Adopt a Highway

Kent County Probation Officer Alyshia Tam who coordinates the Project Redirect groups has set up a standing community service project for her clients in which they take ownership in cleaning a strip of highway that they have adopted in Dover. The Adopt-A-Highway sign does not draw attention to the fact that these youth are on probation but shows youths participating in keeping their city clean. The Sussex County group is also in the process of adopting a stretch of highway. The youth from both Kent and Sussex Counties Project Redirect groups have performed other community service projects where they have cleaned parks, assisted as volunteers in bike-a-thons and Special Olympics, worked in a soup kitchen and several other activities.



## 2003 EMPLOYEES OF THE QUARTER

The children of Delaware are fortunate to have access to the talents, dedication and professionalism of the nearly 1,200 dedicated employees who make up the Children's Department. Each quarter, the Department recognizes just one individual who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to "Think of the Child First" in all aspects of their work.

### FIRST QUARTER

**Kathleen Devine** has worked for more than six years as a special education teacher at the Silver Lake Treatment Center. Ms. Devine was nominated for her numerous innovative ideas, exceptional service, continuous self-improvement and professionalism in providing services to emotionally challenged students from the 4th to 12th grade levels with a wide range of ability levels, the majority classified as in need of special education. She was recognized for her dedication and determination to provide the best possible educational services to her students. Her initiatives to meet the needs of such a diverse population have included winning five grants from MBNA. She has also created a school website to display student poetry and developed web-quests to promote student collaboration on activities. Ms. Devine has also mentored new teaching staff and has represented her principal and her division (Division of Management Support Services) in leadership activities.

### SECOND QUARTER

**Dr. Marc Richman** is a valued member of the Child Mental Health Services staff, serving as a psychologist in the Intake & Assessment Unit. Dr. Richman was nominated for his effective collaboration with the local courts; championing causes in which he believes and ways which engender support; spearheading the development of SENS; contributing to the development of the Department's Holistic Services approach; special expertise in the area of services to sex offenders; active involvement with the Delaware Psychological Association, particularly as Continuing Education Chair; ongoing committee work to improve assessment protocols; close collaboration with Youth Rehabilitative Services; and, thorough assessments of youth with serious legal charges and help to Department staff in developing service plans for these youth. He was recognized by his colleagues as an individual who is flexible, fair, strong but compassionate, supportive, goal-oriented, and dedicated to the children served by the Department.

### THIRD QUARTER

**Helen Reader** has been a beloved cook and youth care worker for Middletown RTC/Silver Lake Treatment Center for over 16 years. She was nominated for her numerous innovative partnership ideas, exceptional service and initiative. She takes extreme pride in the elaborate and delicious yet nutritious meals she prepares for 45 students. She also raises money to buy holiday presents for the students and makes sure all of the students receive some sort of gift for Halloween and Easter, as well. She has planned and funded several outings to restaurants to allow the children to experience fine dining. Ms. Reader is known as an excellent role model to staff and students. She always goes above and beyond the call of duty to make the kids in the program feel at home, loved and cared for.



Artwork created by Ferris students

first step, staff attended a seminar at the Delaware Theatre Company focused on playwriting, which they plan to integrate into the school curriculum.

The Ad-Hoc Art Committee will continue planning and working on this collaborative effort to enrich and enhance the Ferris School Art Program. This committee has been the foundation of providing networking resources, such as the financial support of the Laffey McHugh Foundation and the Delaware Museum. As a result of their support, Ferris School Arts Program has provided the opportunity for students to have fine, graphic and advance arts classes. That's thinking of the child first!