



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

Press Releases for 2001

March 5, 2001	SECRETARY OF CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT SHARES HER VISION AND GOALS OF AGENCY WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS
March 6, 2001	STATE DIVISION OF CHILD MENTAL HEALTH IS RE-ACCREDITED BY NATIONAL ORGANIZATION
March 7, 2001	STEVENSON HOUSE DETENTION CENTER EARNS NATIONAL RE-ACCREDITATION
March 30, 2001	STEVENSON HOUSE TEACHER HONORED FOR IMPROVING THE DETENTION CENTER'S LIBRARY
March 31, 2001	CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT AND WEST END NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE COLLABORATE TO HELP FORMER FOSTER CARE YOUTH
April 3, 2001	NATIONAL FOSTER CARE AUTHOR SHARES HIS MESSAGE WITH DELAWARE'S FOSTER CARE PARENTS AND YOUTH Nearly 300 foster parents honored for work with foster care youth
April 6, 2001	CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT PARTNERS WITH COMMUNITY AGENCIES TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION
April 17, 2001	STATE'S DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES NAMES NEW DIRECTOR Carlyse Giddins to lead division effective May 1
June 21, 2001	HELPING YOUTH MOVE EARTH
June 26, 2001	Governor Minner Endorses Foster Care Task Force Recommendations Gov. Minner Pledges \$550,000 To Creating Foster Care Communities
October 26, 2001	FERRIS SCHOOL TO HOST DUPONT EXECUTIVE FOR "PRINCIPAL FOR A DAY" PROGRAM
November 2, 2001	NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH In Delaware, several agencies are working together to offer a variety of events for adoptive families and those who wish to learn more about adoption options
November 14, 2001	THE DELAWARE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT HOSTS FIRST "STATE OF THE STATE'S CHILDREN" SUMMIT Governor and Cabinet Secretary call upon business, community and ecumenical leaders to partner together to help Delaware's most vulnerable and troubled children



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

March 5, 2001

Contact: Karen Murtha
(302) 633-2502 pager: 784-0490

SECRETARY OF CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT SHARES HER VISION AND GOALS OF AGENCY WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

New Castle, DE – Governor Minner joined legislators and child advocates on Friday, March 2 in welcoming Cari DeSantis as the new Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.

Following a swearing-in ceremony administered by Family Court Judge Barbara Crowell at the Terry Children's Psychiatric Center in New Castle, Secretary DeSantis shared her vision and goals for the agency with those in attendance. The Children's Department cares for children who have been abused or neglected; are mentally ill, emotionally disturbed; or who are delinquent, and have been adjudicated by the court system.

"We must 'think of the child first' in everything we do – what is best for that child?" said Secretary DeSantis. "What can we all do to keep children safe, in a stable environment, build their self esteem, and give them hope for the future?"

"It's time we take child welfare services to a new level," said DeSantis. "We must emphasize the child and child safety first, enhance our public/private partnerships in community-based services, focus on prevention and early intervention services, and strengthen our foster care system."

The safety of children in the State's care was noted as a top priority for all employees of the Children's Department. "No matter where a child in our care is residing," said DeSantis, "foster care, extended relative or kinship care, detention centers, residential care, group homes, or if they reside in their own homes while receiving our services -- their safety will always remain our paramount focus."

- more -

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT
Page 2 of 2

In addition to safety, DeSantis challenged those in attendance and public in general to support her department to help support children. "We want to strengthen our ties to you – our community partners – to help us serve our most vulnerable children. "

DeSantis encourage "all community members to get involved in activities that support children: Be a mentor. Be a coach. Be a foster parent. Be a Big Brother or Sister. Read to kids. Reach out to them.

"It has often been said that children are our future. The future for Delaware's children starts today."

###



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

March 6, 2001

Contact: Karen Murtha
(302) 633-2502

STATE DIVISION OF CHILD MENTAL HEALTH IS RE-ACCREDITED BY NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

Becomes first child mental health system in nation to be re-accredited

Wilmington, DE – The State’s Division of Child Mental Health Services (DCMHS), which provides mental health and substance abuse services to more than 2,000 children and their families each year who are covered by Medicaid or are without insurance, was recently re-accredited for a three-year period by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).

DCMHS, a division of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, was the first child mental health system and the first public system in the nation to receive this accreditation in December of 1997, and is the first to be re-accredited under the same standards.

The JCAHO accreditation team reviewed the following criteria in DCMHS: assessment and care; education and communication; improving delivery system performance; behavioral health wellness; continuum of care; rights, responsibilities and ethics; and management of the environment of care, human resources and information.

“We seek accreditation for our organization because we strive for excellence in providing children’s behavioral healthcare,” says Nancy Widdoes, Director of Administration, DCMHS.

-more-

DCMHS/page 2 of 2

“Achieving accreditation demonstrates the Division’s commitment to provide the highest quality care to children and families in Delaware,” said Widdoes.

Both the central operations of the Division and its statewide network of behavioral health care providers were included in the accreditation survey. Division services range from outpatient to psychiatric inpatient care, with 18 levels of care to serve children.

Founded in 1951, JCAHO is dedicated to continuously improving the safety and quality of the nation’s health care through voluntary accreditation.

###



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

March 7, 2001

Contact: Karen Murtha
(302) 633-2502

STEVENSON HOUSE DETENTION CENTER EARNS NATIONAL RE-ACCREDITATION

Milford, DE – The Marion Stevenson Detention Center, also known as the Stevenson House, recently earned a three-year accreditation by the American Correctional Association. It is the facility's fourth re-accreditation since 1988.

The detention center serves pre-adjudicated youth from Kent and Sussex counties, and is operated by the State's Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families. The Stevenson House provides a safe, secure, residential environment for detained youth while they receive a program of education and professional counseling.

The ACA reviewed several "quality of life" factors at the detention center including security, environmental conditions, academic and vocational education, social services, fire safety, medical care, food service, conditions of confinement, among others.

The accreditation program is a professional peer review process based on national standards that have evolved since the founding of the ACA in 1870. The standards were developed by national leaders from the field of corrections, law, architecture, healthcare, and other groups interested in sound correctional management.

-more-

Stevenson House Accreditation
Page 2 of 2

“The Stevenson House staff work hard to provide a safe environment for youth and employees, as well as one that will foster growth in the residents,” said Ed Rigsby, administrator of the Stevenson House. “We’re proud of our re-accreditation, and we’ll continue to explore ways to improve our services and programs.”

Sherese Brewington-Carr, director of the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services, said earning the re-accreditation is “a credit to the dedication of the Stevenson House staff and their commitment to the youth they serve.”

ACA standards address services, programs, and operations essential to effective correctional management. Through accreditation, an agency is able to maintain a balance between protecting the public, and providing an environment that safeguards the life, health, and safety of staff and youth. Standards set by the ACA reflect practical up-to-date policies and procedures and function as a management tool for agencies and facilities throughout the world.

###



NEWS

March 30, 2001

Contact: Karen Murtha
(302) 633-2502
pager: 784-0490

STEVENSON HOUSE TEACHER HONORED FOR IMPROVING THE DETENTION CENTER'S LIBRARY

Milford, DE – Faye Faraone, an educational diagnostician at the Stevenson House Detention Center, was recognized Thursday by MBNA for improvements she has made to the facility's library in the past two years.

The detention center serves pre-adjudicated youth from Kent and Sussex counties, and is operated by the State's Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services. The Stevenson House provides a safe, secure, residential environment for detained youth while they receive a program of education and professional counseling.

Through Faraone's efforts, the Stevenson House received a \$25,743 grant from the MBNA Foundation in 1999 to make improvements to the detention center's library. Faraone was one of nine finalists out of 500 in MBNA's "Best Practices in Education" award, which honors past grant recipients whose projects exemplify outstanding models for education.

Ann Coleman, grants program director for the MBNA Foundation, congratulated Faraone during a ceremony at the detention center's library. "Faye is an educator who took the time to recognize a need for these youth," Coleman said. "She has helped the students connect with reading, and helped them to grow during a turning point in their lives."

-more-

Faraone said when she first came to the center, the library was in need of new shelves, a fresh coat of paint, and new books.

“You appreciate the hand-me-down books that you get,” said Faraone, “but when books say “rejected” or “discarded,” that doesn’t inspire students to read.”

Through MBNA’s grant, Faraone was able to set up some new shelves in the library, slap a fresh coat of paint on the walls, and more importantly, order new books.

“The kids helped to pick out some of the books,” said Faraone. “They also helped to process them, stamp them – they got involved in the whole process of the grant.”

The books selected also targeted the students’ reading levels and interest levels, Faraone said. “We chose books that captured their interest, and that also had some instructional themes. Those types of books help you take a non-reader, and get them to at least enjoy turning the pages of a book.

Edward Rigsby, administrator of the Stevenson House, commended Faraone for her initiative and enthusiasm for the project. “The grant gave us more resources for kids, and it has helped them to improve their academic skills.”

Said Faraone, “There’s been a tremendous increase in the amount of reading taking place here. Students, who before would not consider opening a book, are beginning to appreciate books and enjoy reading.”

###



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

March 31, 2001

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT AND WEST END NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE COLLABORATE TO HELP FORMER FOSTER CARE YOUTH

Wilmington, DE – Governor Minner welcomed foster care youth into one of their new homes today, as part of the State's first transitional housing program specifically designed for youth exiting the foster care system. It is the first of its kind in the State, and the third program of its kind in the region.

The "Life Lines" program is sponsored by the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, which oversees the foster care program in Delaware. The new program, which is operated by the West End Neighborhood House, offers affordable housing and transitional living skills to foster care youth, ages 18-21.

"It is important that we provide youth leaving our foster care system with transitional services that will help them to lead responsible, productive lives," said Governor Ruth Ann Minner, who toured one of the Life Lines homes after the news conference. "Life Lines is a perfect example of how community agencies can work together with the State to help support our youth," the Governor added.

By May, four youth will move into two homes on the 1600 block of West 8th Street in Wilmington. By the end of June, a statewide system of seven homes will be able to accommodate 14 youths leaving the foster care program. Youth can stay in the program for 18 months to three years, depending upon their job status or educational enrollment status.

- more -

“This program fills a gap that has existed for foster care youth,” said Cari DeSantis, Secretary of the Children’s Department. “By enhancing the continuum of care,” said DeSantis, “we can help to ensure that these youth will remain safe and will become self-sufficient.”

Life Lines is funded through a collaboration of public, private, and not-for-profit agencies. The houses were donated by St. Francis Hospital, developed by Cornerstone West, and constructed with funding from the corporate and foundation community. West End Neighborhood House is implementing the program in partnership with First State Community Action, and with program funding from the Children’s Department.

Youth who participate in the program will be expected to attain several goals including:

- Achieve their high school diploma or GED, or a college degree;
- Maintain a part-time or full-time job;
- Develop and improve their study and/or work habits;
- Develop financial management skills (budgeting, banking, savings, credit use, and tax preparation);
- Develop home management skills (cooking, shopping, safety, etc.)
- Develop the capacity to negotiate healthy roommate relationships.

Life Lines program manager Susan Barton is confident the youth will achieve personal growth. “Our expectation is that these youth will graduate from the program having accomplished their educational goals, acquired financial self sufficiency, and developed a clear sense of career aspirations,” said Barton. “We believe this program

###



NEWS

April 3, 2001

Contact: Karen Murtha
302-633-2502

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE AUTHOR SHARES HIS MESSAGE WITH DELAWARE'S FOSTER CARE PARENTS AND YOUTH Nearly 300 foster parents honored for work with foster care youth

Dover, DE -- Dave Pelzer, author of three New York Times best-sellers' (*A Child Called "It"*; *The Lost Boy*; and *A Man Called Dave*) was the keynote speaker at the 14th annual Foster Parent Recognition Day in Delaware recently.

As a child, Pelzer endured child abuse, which included physical torture, mental cruelty, and near starvation. When he was 12, he was rescued and placed in foster care until he joined the Air Force at age 18. Pelzer paid homage to social services, foster care, educators and law enforcement and volunteers - those who make a difference in the lives of children.

"If you think you don't make a difference, think again," said Pelzer. "I'm standing here today because of foster care and people like you."

Nearly 300 of Delaware's foster parents and foster care agencies were honored for their efforts and dedication for their work with foster care children at a ceremony at the Modern Maturity Center in Dover at the end of March. In addition, 70 foster care youth, ages, 14-18, were special guests during the ceremony and participated in a closed interactive session with Pelzer.

Brenda Tonge of Frederica, was recognized as Delaware's nominee for the National Foster Parent Association's "Foster Family of the Year" award. "This is my life," said Tonge. "I love it. I don't know where I would be without 'my girls,' " she said,

-more-

referring to the 24 teenage girls she has fostered during the last eight years, and the five girls who currently reside in her home. "Being a foster parent is the best thing that ever happened to me."

Pelzer shared some of his childhood experiences with the foster parents, and thanked them for doing what can often times be a difficult job. "You do this because you care," he said. "When I was 12 years old, I weighed 68 pounds, and couldn't speak right or walk right... You became foster parents because you said to yourselves, 'We will not let this happen to you (children),' " said Pelzer.

His message for youth in foster care is one of responsibility and resilience. "Pick yourself up and hate no one," said Pelzer. "I totally forgive my mom for what she did. When you hate, it spreads like cancer. I believe in honesty, dignity, and honor," he added.

Following Pelzer's address, foster care parents were honored by the State's Division of Family Services. "You provide hope, home, and healing," said Kathy Goldsmith, foster care program manager. "You live out every day of every month of every year, your commitment to the children in Delaware who need you most."

Jesse Goodman, a former foster care youth, who resided with Tonge, the Division's nominee for the National Foster Care Family of the Year award, praised Tonge for her help throughout the years. "She is one of the greatest people I have ever met in my life," said Goodman. "She is our mom, our friend, and our constant companion."

Tonge said her only regret is that she didn't become a foster parent earlier in life. "I started in my '50s," she said. "There was a big void that I needed to fill. I had the perfect house, the perfect car, the perfect job. But there was something missing -- There's nothing greater than being a foster parent."

###



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

April 6, 2001

Contact: Karen Murtha
Community Relations Coordinator
(302) 633-2502

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT PARTNERS WITH COMMUNITY AGENCIES TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Wilmington -- The State Children's Department is partnering with several community agencies to raise awareness about child abuse. April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. This year's theme is

"Keep Kids Safe: Prevent Child Abuse."

A number of events will take place in April throughout the State of Delaware to educate community members about parenting skills, preventing abuse and neglect, and promoting positive family functioning.

"Child welfare agencies have a responsibility to keep children safe, and to educate adults about the physical and behavioral signs of abuse and neglect," said Cari DeSantis, secretary of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF).

Last year, the State's (DSCYF) Division of Family Services investigated 5,891 reports of child abuse or neglect, and substantiated 1,263 of these reports. The Division, in partnership with the community, provides treatment to about 3,000 families a year where child abuse or a high risk of abuse and neglect exists. To ensure the safety of these children, they are sometimes removed from their homes and placed in foster care. Last year, 933 children were placed in out of home care due to abuse or neglect.

-more-

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION
PAGE 2 OF 2

“These children are our future,” said Tania Culley, of the Office of the Child Advocate. “We all need to think about what we can do to ensure that children are safe, have permanent families who will love them, nurture them, and help them become confident, productive adults.”

There are several ways parents and other community members can help a child, including:

- ✓ Offering to help a neighbor or friend who has children;
- ✓ Becoming a foster parent or an adoptive parent to an abused or neglected child (633-2650)
- ✓ Reporting suspected child abuse or neglect (1-800-292-9582)
- ✓ Becoming an educational surrogate parent (577-3545)
- ✓ Becoming a mentor: (633-6226)
- ✓ Sponsoring a “Life Book” for a Foster Child (368-5788)
- ✓ Volunteering to be a Court Appointed Special Child Advocate (577-2245)
- ✓ Participating in a local parenting course (762-8989) or (658-5177)
- ✓ Donating money to the Children’s Trust Fund for prevention programs
- ✓ Volunteering, if you are an attorney, to represent a child in court (577-6830)

###

Attachment: Calendar of Events

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Open to the Public

4th Annual Night of Magic

Saturday, April 7th, 7:00 p.m.

Dickinson High School - foster families admitted free with flyer

Contact: Janice Mink, Grassroots Citizens for Children, (302) 368-5788

Child Abuse Information Day

Thursday, April 12th, 1:00 p.m.

Legislative Hall

Contact: Karen DeRasmo, Prevent Child Abuse Delaware, (302) 254-4611

Catherine Hamill, Grassroots Citizens for Children, (302) 368-5788

Child Abuse Prevention Night @ the Blue Rocks

Wednesday, April 18th, 7:00 p.m.

Contact: Jane Pierantozzi, State Division of Family Services, (302) 633-2605

Annual Care for Kids Walk/Run

Sunday, April 22nd

Rockford Park, Wilmington 8:00 a.m.

Contact: Karen DeRasmo, Prevent Child Abuse Delaware, (302) 254-4611

Other Events: Open to Media Only/Closed to the Public

11th Annual "Prevention and Early Intervention" Forum

Monday, April 23rd and Tuesday April 24th

Ruddertowne, Dewey Beach area

Contact: Karen Murtha, State Children's Department, (302) 633-2502

Employee Parenting and Stress Brown Bag

Wednesday, April 25th at Chase Bank in Wilmington

Thursday, April 26th at JP Morgan in Stanton

Contact: Karen DeRasmo, Prevent Child Abuse Delaware, (302) 254-4611

or Julia Alsobrook, Children & Families First, (302) 658-6134

###



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

April 17, 2001

Contact: Karen Murtha
Community Relations Coordinator
(302) 633-2502

STATE'S DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES NAMES NEW DIRECTOR Carlyse Giddins to lead division effective May 1

Wilmington, DE – Carlyse Giddins has been named director of the State's Division of Family Services (DFS) by Cari DeSantis, Secretary of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF). Giddins is currently the administrative deputy director of DFS and the administrator of its Office of Prevention and Early Intervention.

The Division of Family Services manages the State's foster care and adoption services, abuse and neglect investigations and treatment plans, child care licensing, and prevention and early intervention programs. Giddins will replace Trine Bech, who has been acting director since early February.

"Carlyse will be a welcomed addition to the department's new leadership team, bringing a fresh perspective on children's services, excellent senior management experience, and interpersonal skills that will be invaluable as we manage the transition of the Children's Department," said DeSantis.

Giddins came to DSCYF with more than 25 years of experience with a large managed-care organization. As a manager of large service units, her responsibilities included quality service, human resources, and strategic planning.

-more-

FAMILY SERVICES DIRECTOR
PAGE 2 OF 2

Managing family service issues will always be a challenging task, DeSantis said. “One must be able to strike a balance between the organizational tasks of overseeing social workers, supervisors, and foster care coordinators, with the emotional and sensitive nature of the child welfare business,” said DeSantis. “Carlyse’s strong management skills and her customer-service approach make her very well-matched for this leadership position.”

Said Giddins, “I share Secretary DeSantis’ vision of safety for children, the significance of prevention and early intervention for youth and families, and a child-centered focus for all our services -- all of which are necessary as we continue to strengthen the successful programs and services in DFS and throughout the Children’s Department.”

“If we are going to make a long term impact on youth in our care, we must focus on what is best for the child,” said Giddins, “and how we can partner with the community to become involved with helping children at-risk.”

Giddins earned a bachelor of science degree in sociology from Virginia State University. She has completed numerous leadership training seminars including Duke University’s Strategic Leadership for State Executives, the Quality Improvement/Quality Coach program at the University of Delaware, and the Dale Carnegie Customer Relations Skills and Employee Development program.

She is a member of the Delaware Collaboration for Youth, a former member of the Delaware State University Board of Visitors, and a former honorary commander for Dover Air Force Base, and a volunteer/parent support aide.

Giddins and her husband, Eugene, reside in Dover.

###



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

HELPING YOUTH MOVE EARTH

Wilmington, DE - Eight youth residing in a State rehabilitation care facility participated in a six-week career exploration program, learning about horticulture and landscape design. The young men, ages 16-18, were placed in the training about six weeks prior to their placement back into the community. The goal of the program is to provide basic skills that will lead to summer employment.

The program was also designed to help youth learn a job skill and better prepare for the workforce. It is funded by the Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and sponsored through the State Departments of Labor and Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.

Eight residents of Mowlds Cottage, a stepdown rehabilitation facility of the Ferris School for Boys in Wilmington, a juvenile rehabilitation site, received 90 hours of training throughout the program, including:

- **30 hours of classroom work**, focusing on maturity skills; curriculum consisted of job search skills, interviewing techniques, drugs in the workplace, sexual harassment, self-esteem, interpersonal skills/work ethic, and conflict resolution. The first 15 hours also included an orientation to ground maintenance and a class on hazard material handling and procedures;

- **60 hours of hands-on landscaping experience**, supervised by a licensed landscaping contractor and accompanied by Mowlds Cottage staff; The landscaping work was conducted on-site at Mowlds Cottage.

Upon completion of the program, participants are required to complete a competency checklist. A score of 75% on the checklist will garner the participants a certificate of achievement.

“The Workforce Investment Board looks for unique opportunities to enhance the economic development of individuals throughout the state. This program will introduce 10 individuals to one of the fastest growing service fields and give them the knowledge to start a very successful career,” said WIB chairman and Commerce Bank President Fred Sears.

“This program enhances the transitional living skills at our stepdown facilities,” said Cari DeSantis, Secretary of the State’s Children’s Department. “It will help youth develop a base understanding of work principals, while teaching them a skill that will allow them to transfer into the working community.”

The CEP program is a pilot program coordinated through efforts of the WIB and departments of Labor and Services for Children, Youth and their Families. The success of this program will initiate further programs to benefit youth who leave Ferris School and are making the transition back into the community.

###



**State of Delaware
Office of the Governor**

**For Immediate Release:
Tuesday, June 26, 2001**

**Contact: Michelle Reardon
(302) 577-8229**

**Karen Murtha, DSCYF
(302) 633-2502**

Governor Minner Endorses Foster Care Task Force Recommendations

-- Gov. Minner Pledges \$550,000 To Creating Foster Care Communities --

Dover – Governor Ruth Ann Minner announced today that \$550,000 from the Fiscal Year 2002 General Fund has been committed toward implementing several recommendations from the Governor’s Foster Care Task Force.

“The Foster Care Task Force has created a new vision of what foster care in Delaware should look like – foster families as a community,” Gov. Minner said. “Many of the recommendations center around the idea that we can improve the quality of foster care by creating a feeling of community for foster parents and children, treating them as neighbors and colleagues rather than names on a case list.”

The Task Force overwhelmingly endorsed the creation of a community model for foster care. The Task force called for the establishment of foster family clusters whereby foster families within a localized geographic area come together as a community-based support network to share information, experiences and resources. The intention is to provide stability to foster children by assuring that if they have to change homes they don’t necessarily have to change schools, make new friends and other life changes that impact a child’s development.

The Task Force made more than ten funding recommendations. Several initiatives will receive start-up funding, including:

Designation of “Emergency Homes.” Selected foster families will be provided special training and resources will run short-term homes for kids who cannot immediately be placed. These homes are expected to be operational by Spring 2002;

Training for Challenging Foster Children. This will provide new training for foster parents who will be caring for foster children with special behavioral problems;

Foster Care Staff and Funding to Support “Community Model.” Gov. Minner has approved funding for four new Division of Family Services (DFS) employees to coordinate the foster care community model. The State will also provide slightly higher stipends to those foster parents who agree to be the head of their twelve-member foster family ‘cluster’;

Volunteer Coordinator. The Task Force noted not everyone has the time or ability to be full-time foster parents, but they still want to help. Gov. Minner has recommended the

More...

Gov. Minner Endorses Plan to Create Foster Care Communities

Tuesday, June 26, 2001

Page Two

creation of a Volunteer Coordinator position within DFS to organize the people who want to help foster children on a part time basis and to assist in recruiting new foster families.

Kinship Care Funding. Start-up funding is provided for an emergency fund to meet short-term needs for blood relatives that provide kinship care. Funding is also provided for training for Delaware HelpLine staff in kinship care services.

Group Home Funding. Gov. Minner will increase funding for the hardest to place foster care children by increasing group home funding.

Sylvia Dorsey, a foster mother and chair of the Task Force said, "Children in crisis need foster parents who are confident and well trained to deal with their special needs. The Foster Care Task Force has recommended a course of action that will create a greater community for these extremely vulnerable children. I am proud of the recommendations we are providing to Gov. Minner today."

"We discovered very quickly that we have 21st century kids stuck in a 1970s foster care system," said Cari DeSantis, Secretary of DSCYF, which will implement the foster care recommendations. "With these initiatives, we can better support foster parents and provide foster children with homes that are well-matched with their needs."

Representative Pamela S. Maier (R-Drummond Hill), a member of the Foster Care Task Force, said, "Serving on this Task Force has given me even more understanding into why it is so important that more support be provided to the hundreds of foster families in Delaware. I look forward to begin working with the Administration on implementing these recommendations, including my first priority, to provide foster families with the additional training they need to address the challenging needs and behaviors of foster children."

In January of 2001, Gov. Minner commissioned the eight-member task force to review the strengths and weaknesses of the State's foster care system and make recommendations on how to improve it. Members of the Foster Care Task Force included Dorsey; Sec. DeSantis, Rep. Maier; Tania Culley, Office of the Child Advocate; Hope Green, foster mother; Cathy Hamill, Grassroots Citizens for Children and co-chair of the Senate Kinship Care Task Force; and Alvin Snyder, Children and Families First. Kathy Goldsmith, foster care program manager for the State's Division of Family Services, provided technical assistance and information.

Approximately 1,300 children enter the state's foster care system every year, with about 700 children in foster family placement on any given day.



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

MEDIA ADVISORY

October 26, 2001

Contact: Karen Murtha
(302) 633-2502 (office)
(302) 784-0490 (pager)

**FERRIS SCHOOL TO HOST DUPONT EXECUTIVE FOR
“PRINCIPAL FOR A DAY” PROGRAM**

WHO/WHAT: James Porter, Jr., vice president of engineering for DuPont, will act as “principal for a day” at the Ferris School for Boys, a juvenile justice rehabilitation facility. Mr. Porter will “shadow” Dolores Allen-McIntyre, principal of Ferris, by observing classes, meeting students, and interacting with staff.

WHEN/WHERE: **MONDAY, OCTOBER 29**
* Media are encouraged to stop by between 11:10 a.m to 12:15 p.m. to interview Mr. Porter and staff. Students will be in classes before 11 and from 12:30 to 1:50 p.m. at which time, you may take footage and photos.*

Ferris School for Boys
959 Centre Road (Route 141, near DuPont Barley Mill)
Wilmington

WHY: “Principal for a Day” exposes business leaders and other community representatives to education issues and concerns of students, teachers and administrators. For the past several years, employees from DuPont have mentored Ferris students one-on-one as part of the H.O.S.T. program (Helping One Student to Succeed.) “DuPont employees have been mentoring our youth for years in math and language arts, so it is fitting that Mr. Porter be able to act as the “principal” observing what youth are learning and how DuPont staff have helped to make a difference in their lives,” said Dianne Gadow, superintendent of Ferris School.

OTHER: Ferris School is a maximum secure care facility for 72 males who have been adjudicated delinquent by Family Court, and require rehabilitative programming and treatment. Ferris is part of the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services of the Delaware Children’s Department.

**Media, please note: Youth attending Ferris School are in the State’s custody, so you will not be able to photograph their faces. Thank you in advance for complying with this confidentiality and privacy policy. When you arrive at Ferris, please leave your pocketbooks in the car; you will need to show identification (driver’s license, e.g.) as you sign in to enter the School.*



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

November 2, 2001

Contact: Karen Murtha
Community Relations Coordinator
(302) 633-2502 (office)
(302) 784-0490 (pager)

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

November is National Adoption Month, a time to celebrate and explore adoptions and what they mean for children across the nation. In Delaware, several agencies are working together to offer a variety of events for adoptive families and those who wish to learn more about adoption options:

Saturday, November 3, 12-4 p.m

10th Annual Culture Day and Interagency Adoption Fair

St. Catherine's of Siena Hall, 2503 Centerville Rd, Wilmington

Local adoption agencies will again come together to celebrate families, cultures and adoption, and to share information with the community. For information, call Mary Jo Wolfe at 302-571-8784; cell phone: 354-0203.

Saturday, November 10, 12-4 p.m.

6th annual Southern Delaware Adoption Fair

Calgary Methodist Church, 301 SE Front St., Milford

For information, call Donna Walton at 302-422-0182.

Sunday, November 10, 7- 9 p.m.

"Celebrate Adoption" Gospel Concert

Clayton Hall, University of Delaware, Newark Campus. The Delaware State University and the University of Delaware gospel choirs will be featured. For more information, call Reverend Jonathan Hunter at 302-376-0110.

Thursday, November 15, 6-8 p.m.

Adoptive Families of Color with Information and Support Group

Simpson United Methodist Church, near the GM plant in Newport. Call 302-995-2294 for more information.

Saturday, November 17, 10:30 a.m.

Symbolic Adoption Ceremony

Delaware Family Court, Wilmington. Call Anne Lardear at 475-6207 for more information.



*The Department of Services
For Children, Youth and
Their Families*

NEWS

November 13, 2001

Contact: Karen Murtha
Community Relations Coordinator
(302) 633-2502 (office)
(302) 784-0490 (pager)

THE DELAWARE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT HOSTS FIRST "STATE OF THE STATE'S CHILDREN" SUMMIT

Governor and Cabinet Secretary call upon business, community and ecumenical leaders to partner together to help Delaware's most vulnerable and troubled children

Delaware's child welfare system is entering a new era of services for children and would like to expand its partnerships with businesses, faith-based communities, non-profit and private organizations, schools and individuals in order to meet the needs of children in the 21st century.

That was the message shared by Governor Minner and Cari DeSantis, cabinet secretary of the Delaware Children's Department (Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families) during Delaware's first "State of the State's Children" address on November 13 in Newark.

More than 150 community leaders from businesses, churches, child advocacy and philanthropic organizations attended the executive summit to hear about the issues and challenges facing youth in Delaware's child welfare system, and what role the community can play to the State's most vulnerable and troubled youth.

"It is time we recognize that we can no longer continue to serve 21st century kids in a 1970s child welfare system," said Secretary DeSantis. "Their needs are different; therefore, our system of care must be different. We must take children's services to a new level, with new ideas, new partnerships, and a new vision for caring for our children today...and tomorrow."

-more-

Children's Department Summit
Page 2 of 3

Nearly 7 percent of Delaware's children suffer a crisis critical enough to bring them into the child welfare system. On any given day, the Delaware Children's Department serves approximately 8,000 children who have experienced abuse, abandonment, mental illness, neglect or substance abuse:

- Approximately 4,000 children have suffered physical or sexual abuse, or gross neglect;
- Nearly 3,200 of the youth who come into the care of the Children's Department through the family court system are ordered to participate in juvenile justice programs;
- 900 of the 8,000 children are receiving mental health treatment services through the Department.

"Despite the alarming statistics and the sad nature of our business, there is hope," said DeSantis. "It is in the dedicated staff, foster and adoptive parents, contracted caregivers, volunteers, mentors, and community partners who have already joined with us over the years in nurturing and helping our kids."

Governor Minner, who presented opening remarks at the summit, said her commitment towards children has been a top priority since she took office in January.

"During my inaugural address, I said something that I want to repeat here today, because it is still one of the principles that guides every decision I make as Governor – I said, 'I promise to treasure families. Mine has meant everything to me. Just as I sacrificed for my children, we must all be willing to put the children of this State first.' My commitment has not changed since I said those words when taking office."

Said Secretary DeSantis, "Delaware is in a unique position to help its most fragile children. We need all of us working together to help them be safe, live in a stable home, learn self-esteem and reach their fullest potentials with a true sense of hope about the future."

In addition to the comments shared by the Governor, Secretary DeSantis and John VanDenBerg, a child psychologist, and president of Vroon VandenBerg, Inc. a consulting firm

-more-

Children's Department Summit

Page 3 of 3

that specializes in human services, the summit attendees also heard poetry readings from several boys from the Ferris School, and were entertained at lunchtime by elementary school students who sang for them.

The attendees also participated in one of three panels regarding child welfare issues: **Lil'Orphan Annie Doesn't Live Here Anymore**, moderated by Carlyse Giddins, director of the Division of Family Services of the Children's Department.

"The reality of today's abandoned, neglected and orphaned child is that they struggle with serious emotional, mental and developmental problems," said Giddins. Experts in the child welfare field discussed what service gaps exist for foster families, and for those who care for kids living in group homes and other types of residential treatment sites.

Today's Twist on Oliver: Juvenile Justice in a World of Drugs & Violence, moderated by Vincent Poppiti, Chief Judge of Family Court. Today, drugs, alcohol, and violence – in the home, in schools, and in the neighborhoods – lead more people to the state's juvenile justice system than ever before. State and private agencies addressed what communities and corporations can do to keep children and youth on the right track and what can be done to reduce recidivism rates in Delaware.

Alice Through the Looking Glass: Beyond Safety & Stability, moderated by Nancy Wilson, associate secretary of curriculum and instructional improvement for the Delaware Department of Education. A safe place to live and a nurturing, stable homelife are only the beginning of the challenges facing many of Delaware's children. "Separation anxiety and grief over loss of family life are real issues our children carry into their school lives and into their adult lives," Wilson said.

"As we at the Delaware Children's Department, forge ahead into this new century," said DeSantis, "we invite you – communities, business, ecumenical, philanthropic and non-profit organizations -- to partner with us in nurturing and helping the children and youth of Delaware."

###