

# Mississippi Department of Human Services

## BEACON

May 2013



### *A Message from the Executive Director*

May is always a busy month. The school year is over and Memorial Day is the "unofficial" beginning of the summer season. Please do not forget to honor those who have given the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

I ask everyone to please keep the folks in Moore, Oklahoma in your thoughts and prayers. A donation to the American Red Cross will help them meet their needs after the tragedy they have suffered. The Oklahoma Department of Human Services employees were extremely generous to us after Katrina, establishing a fund for our MDHS employees that suffered the loss of their homes. It is time for us to return their kindness.

Congratulations to the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College/Gautier for achieving a 5 Star Rating in their Early Childhood Center. Congratulations are also in order for Lawrence County Director Alvis Everett for recognition as this month's Character First award and to Pearl River County ASWS Beth Zoeller for being named the Social Work Student of the Year at USM.

I went to the grocery store last evening. The "sticker shock" from the recent increases in

food prices was alarming to say the least. I didn't sleep well last night thinking about our employees who may be struggling to make ends meet in this economy. I don't have any magic words to say other than we are aware of the challenges that you are facing. Even though there was no pay raise this year, the Legislature did invest in employees by funding the increase in PERS contribution rates that was supposed to have been borne by the employees.

I encourage you to respectfully interact with your legislators while they are home and let them know the challenges that working families are facing after seven years without an increase. I will continue to speak on your behalf at this level. Hopefully tax revenues will improve from the strengthening economy and the stock market will remain strong so that we can experience better days ahead.

I once again must call on you to remember that the people that we serve are in even greater need than any of us. We must remain vigilant. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2.

Richard A. Berry  
Executive Director

### **Hurricane Season Ahead. Are You Prepared?**



As we age, time seems to speed up. It seems as though just yesterday we were wrapping up the 2012 Hurricane Season which proved to be quite horrific for the United States, particularly the East Coast.

Mississippi has also seen its share of storms—Camille, Katrina, Gustav and Isaac just to name a few.

In Mississippi, the Department of Human Services is charged as the lead state agency to assist Mississippians and those evacuating from disasters. In recent years the agency has been instrumental in coordinating sheltering and mass care with the American Red Cross.

To assist the agency with this function, a new addition to the MDHS family, Alynda Ponder, has joined us as the Emergency

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Management Coordinator.

Housed at the State Office, Alynda will be working with MDHS staff to help coordinate services and communicate information regarding preparedness.

Alynda said, " As an agency who provides vital services to citizens of the state of Mississippi on a daily basis and during disasters, it is important that we ready ourselves and our families in preparation for the 2013 Hurricane Season. We cannot appropriately serve our clients if we are concerned about our family members and pets at home. Please let me encourage you to take this time to develop or review emergency plans with your family. And ensure each member of your family knows how to execute both plans. These plans should include an Evacuation Plan and a Communication Plan, as well as a Disaster Kit. Provide printed copies of your plans to every family member as well as a family friend."

To help you prepare, the following links are provided to assist you and your loved ones prepare before a disaster occurs. Remember prepare now, because it's not "if, but when" that the next disaster will strike our state.

- [Make a plan.](#)
- [Build a kit.](#)
- [Care for animals.](#)

Also available for download is [FEMA's mobile app](#) so you can access important safety tips on what to do before, during and after a hurricane. The app contains disaster safety tips, interactive lists for storing your emergency kits and a map with open shelters and FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs). The app is free to download through either the RIM, Google or Apple Stores.



*Alynda Ponder, Emergency Management Coordinator joins MDHS after serving for over six years at MEMA. Many at MDHS are familiar with Alynda and have participated in classes as she tutored staff in the ways of emergency management and the incident command system. We welcome her to the MDHS family. She is pictured with her newly adopted shelter dog, Breeze, and she urges everyone to include in their emergency plan how they intend to care for, not only their families, but their pets as well.*

## OYDC Awarded Whole Kids Foundation Grant



Recently, Oakley Youth Development Center was awarded a \$2,000 grant from the [Whole Kids Foundation](#). The foundation was created by the [Whole Foods Market](#) with a mission to improve children's nutrition and wellness with the goal of ending the childhood obesity epidemic. Through partnerships with innovative organizations, schools and educators, Whole Kids Foundation works to provide children access to healthier choices and reach their full potential through the strength of a healthy body.

OYDC's garden has the capacity to accommodate 31,450 square feet (or .75 acres) of crops but currently only utilizes about half that capacity. The grant will help OYDC improve the quality of the soil, as well as, the quality of seeds planted.

Traditionally, OYDC has planted collard, turnip and mustard greens during the cooler months and melons, cucumber, squash, tomatoes, peppers, peas, beans, peanuts, okra and eggplant in the spring and summer. Cabbage and onions are planted and harvested year round. One hundred percent of the vegetables harvested is utilized by the OYDC cafeteria for consumption by the youth.

OYDC is grateful to Whole Foods and the Whole Kids Foundation for awarding this much needed grant to OYDC. The youth are looking forward to a fruitful and healthy harvest.



# RETIREMENTS



*Rosa Donaldson, Jones County DFCS*



Rosa Donaldson retired May 31 and enjoyed a celebration in her honor at the Jones County DHS office. Rosa has been employed with the agency for over 32 years. While in the agency she has held positions in the Divisions of Child Support Enforcement and Economic Assistance and currently serves in the Division of Family and Children's Services as an area social work supervisor for Jones and Lauderdale counties. Rosa is married with three children and a grandchild. She is active in her community and in her church in Laurel where she enjoys singing in the choir and playing the piano. Rosa's motto is to treat each individual with respect, no matter what their socioeconomic status. She said "Everybody is somebody." After retirement, Rosa plans to spend time with her elderly parents and take a long awaited vacation.

*Linda Blakely, Montgomery County DFO*



Linda Blakely retired from Montgomery County Division of Field Operations as secretary principal after 29 years with the agency. Linda is a newlywed and celebrated her one year anniversary in April. She has two sons, two stepdaughters and four grandchildren. She enjoys working on home and outdoor projects with her husband and children. Her plans after retirement included gardening and traveling with her family. Thank you, Linda, for your dedication to the people of Mississippi.

## **Pearl River County ASWS Beth Zoeller Honored as MSW Student of the Year**

Our own Beth Zoeller, Area Social Worker Supervisor in Pearl River County, was recognized at the University of Southern Mississippi, School of Social Banquet and chosen for the MSW Student of the Year for the Gulf Coast campus. Nominees are chosen by school staff who noted that Beth's GPA, work history, support of other USM students and overall positive and professional demeanor helped make her stand a head and shoulders above others. Congratulations, Beth, on this recognition and thank you for serving the families and children of Mississippi.



## Volunteer of Year - Juanita Turney

At a recent ceremony to show appreciation for those who have helped Medicare beneficiaries choose the best plans to cover their insurance needs, the Division of Aging and Adult Services recognized Juanita Wright Turney as the State Healthy Insurance Program Volunteer of Year. Ms. Turney was presented a plaque and a gift basket for her commitment and dedication to the SHIP program.

Ms. Turney was born August 14, 1919 and was a teacher in the Greenville Public School System for over 40 years. She is a very energetic volunteer in her community assisting in whatever capacity that is needed to make her community better.

She continues to volunteer for other programs that serve the elderly through the South Delta Area Agency on Aging. SDAAA Director Sylvia Jackson said, "All anyone has to say is, 'Let's' and Ms. Turney says 'Go!'" She is certainly making the best of her retirement years by giving back to her community. As a SHIP volunteer, she has assisted and referred over 125 Medicare beneficiaries to the local SHIP coordinator in Greenville for counseling services.

SHIP volunteers assist coordinators to provide free, impartial counseling, assistance and education about fraud, abuse, Medicare and other related insurances to Medicare beneficiaries and their families.

DAAS encourages those in the community to volunteer their efforts to help in this capacity. For more information about SHIP or to volunteer, call 800-948-3090.



At a recent event, Juanita Turney was recognized as the SHIP Volunteer of the Year. From left: SHIP and Senior Medicare Patrol Program Administrator Carolyn Boutte, Turney, DAAS Director Melinda Bertucci and SDAAA Director Sylvia Jackson.

## Flu Season - Did you get the shot, the flu or both?

The 2012-2013 influenza season is drawing to a close. Reports are that this was an active year of infections compared to last year's mild flu season.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention compiles data on outbreaks, inoculations and deaths. This season the pneumonia and influenza diagnoses was the highest recorded numbers in nearly a decade which included 110 pediatric deaths.

The age old rumor for many is that the flu shot causes the flu. The myth is further compounded by those who say they took the shot, but ended up sick with the flu anyway.

We looked at this and other myths surrounding the illness and the shot.

**MYTH: The flu shot causes the flu.** The vaccines contain only inactivated flu viruses and are unable to cause infection. In studies with a placebo, the only difference was recipients of the shot experienced redness and soreness at the site of the injection, but there was no higher incidence of flu symptoms. And people who do get sick after getting the shot were probably going to get sick anyway. It takes up to two weeks before you're fully protected by the vaccine.

**MYTH: Flu shots don't work.** It's been proven that the flu shot can reduce the chance of getting the flu up to 90 percent. The vaccine seems to be less effective in those over 65 and young children but getting the flu shot is your best defense against the sometimes fatal illness.

**MYTH: Healthy people don't need to be vaccinated.** While it is true that chronically ill people should be vaccinated—it is equally true that healthy people can benefit from the preventive measure.

**MYTH: The flu is just a bad cold.** It is true that many times the flu is accompanied by cold symptoms, however the flu is quite different. For example, in the U.S., 36,000 people die and more than 200,000 are hospitalized from the illness, which is not typical of the common cold.

**MYTH: You can catch the flu by going out in cold or wet weather or being in a draft.** The only way to catch the flu is by being exposed to the flu virus. You cannot catch a cold or the flu from inclement weather.

So when it's time to get your flu shot, consider the facts and get vaccinated. When you protect you, it protects those around you.

For more information on the flu, go to: [CDC Flu](#).



## SPOTLIGHT REPORT ON LEFLORE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S SSBG PROGRAM

Social Services Block Grant funds are awarded directly to states to fund programs that assist needy individuals and families, reduce dependency on government assistance and promote self-sufficiency. These programs are designed to strengthen education; prevent neglect or abuse of children and adults; and provide a limited range of services to individuals in institutions.

Leflore County School District is one of the many recipients of SSBG funds across the state. Leflore County's SSBG program consists of three components designed to target areas of greatest educational needs with at-risk students including strengthening educational foundations, improving literacy and intervention skills training.

In the Leflore County School District, all students are designated at-risk, as evidenced by a free and reduced lunch rate of 100 percent. The Leflore County program was designed to: assist students who will fail to graduate if they do not pass the state mandated SATP English test for graduation; meet the requirements for abstinence-plus education and other character and coping strategies; and teach early literacy skills to pre-k and kindergarten students.

Tracks were selected to address the needs of at-risk students at a variety of levels, particularly junior and senior high students at the two high schools where students must pass the SATP English test to graduate. To improve success rates, retired teachers with a demonstrated success in dealing with at-risk students were employed to tutor students. Low reading comprehension hinders students, so tutoring sessions consisted of small groups to ensure adequate levels of individual attention which resulted in great success.

The success ratio for the tutored group at Leflore County High School last year was 60 percent compared to a 29 percent pass rate in other tutoring programs. This year the rate climbed to 64 percent.

When students fail English II in the 11th grade at Amanda Elzy High school, they are placed in a daily remediation class or Compensatory Reading. If they still do not pass, they must repeat the class and attend tutoring. The SSBG program was implemented in October of 2012. Ten students, some of whom were attempting the class for the sixth time, were enrolled in the program. After one month of intensive tutoring and intervention, eight of the 10 passed.

Another track in the program is the at-risk intervention component, open to grades 6-12, which includes training in abstinence-plus, bullying prevention, conflict resolution, goal-setting, drug and alcohol abuse prevention and other character and coping "real world" skills. This year 1,455 units of service were provided to students in the school district. With the highest teen pregnancy rate in the state, this intervention component was deemed essential to the future success of Leflore County students.



*Above, Jauretta Silas (right) presents student Kaifter Holston with a reading certificate recognizing her achievement in the literacy program. Also pictured is David Morgan of the Mississippi Humanities Council.*

The third track is the early literacy component which strengthens the foundation for students to prevent future problems in school and life. It has been found that if a child's deficiencies, both educational and emotional, are not addressed at an early age, future success for the student can be difficult. Many Leflore County students come from homes in which literacy levels are low.

To promote literacy, a tutor is assigned to read high quality children's books to students in pre-k and kindergarten and engage them in critical thinking exercises following the readings. Research supports that the earlier children are engaged in critical reading, the better their future educational success will be.

Another part of the program to strengthen literacy, Family Reading Bonds, is scheduled for Summer 2013. This whole family approach to literacy reaches children ages six to 10 and their parents through a weekly program where high quality, award winning children's literature are read and discussed. Weekly meetings include a presentation by a storyteller who acts out the books followed by discussion. Each family is issued three books a week to read together prior to the next week's session. The books, from Caldecott Award Winning children's literature, address ethical and moral issues such as environmental responsibility, fairness, courage, coping and determination.

The program also helps parents and children bond around the act of reading and learning together and encourages low-literacy, low-income parents to enter or continue their own educational programs, whether GED or other training, and enter the workforce.

The program is administered in partnership with the Mississippi Humanities Council, Family Literacy Project.



**Department of Homeland Security Promotes: If You SEE Something, SAY Something.**



Did you **SEE** something suspicious commuting to work or grabbing some lunch?

Then **SAY** something to local authorities to make it right.

Report suspicious activity.  
Call 888-4SAFE-MS  
(888-472-3367)

if you  
**SEE**  
something  
**SAY**  
something™



In July 2010, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, under the direction of Secretary Janet Napolitano, launched the campaign, "If You See Something, Say Something." This simple program seeks to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime, and to emphasize the importance of noting suspicious behavior and reporting that behavior or activity to local law enforcement or, in the case of emergency, calling 9-1-1. Factors such as race, ethnicity, national origin or religious affiliation alone are not suspicious.

We can be diligent and take note of our surroundings even when we are at home or in the workplace. Understand that it may be your tip that helps to save a life.

Remember homeland security starts with hometown security. Be a hero, not a zero. Report suspicious behavior. Whether you're at a ballgame, at work or school, **if you SEE something, SAY something.**

**Elderly Need ESAP ASAP**

We've all seen the reports: an elderly person who is choosing between food purchases or paying for needed prescriptions and energy bills. Though they may be eligible for the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**, many who are at or below the poverty level and living alone, may not choose to apply because they feel the time and effort it takes to get approved may not be worth the amount they may receive for a monthly supplement.

The **Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP)** was designed to reinvent the **SNAP** process for elderly households which have traditionally proven to be a stable population with fixed incomes and few reportable changes in household composition or deductions.

The program is designed to enhance SNAP's goals by providing food assistance to low income, elderly persons, simplifying the SNAP process and increasing access to appropriate nutrition. ESAP does not have a set benefit level and eligibility is determined the same as regular SNAP.

ESAP households are certified for a three year period. An Interim Report is mailed annually to the household for recertification and once completed can be returned via mail or dropped off at the local county office. A face-to-face interview is not required but will be honored if requested by the client.

Eligibility requirements include:

- All household members are age 60 or over.
- No receipt of earned income.
- Not receiving SNAP through MSCAP.

Households meeting ESAP criteria must receive SNAP benefits through ESAP. There is no "opt out".



Fredrick Ward, supervisor for the ESAP Unit said, "ESAP is a program designed to help Mississippi's elderly get food on the table. Call us and let us help."

For information on ESAP, call 1-800-948-4060.





## County Corner - Marion and Marshall Counties

This month, our travels take us to Marion and Marshall counties.

**Marion County** is located in the southern portion of Mississippi. As of 2010, the population was 27,088. Marion County is named for American Revolutionary War guerrilla leader **Francis Marion**.

**Columbia**, the county seat, was formed six years before Mississippi was admitted to statehood. The town was named for Columbia, South Carolina from which many of the early settlers had migrated. The population was 6,582 as of the 2010 census.

Columbia served as the temporary capital of Mississippi from November 1821 until 1822 when a special session of the legislature met in Columbia, inaugurating **Governor Walter Leake**, and selecting **LeFleur's Bluff** (now Jackson) as the permanent capital. As a side note, former two-term Mississippi governor and Columbia native **Hugh L. White** introduced **white squirrels** to the area. These furry anomalies are still common in Columbia City Park.

In the mid-1930s, two Columbia cowboys – **Earl and Weldon Bascom** – made Columbia the historic "Home of Mississippi Rodeo." Known as the "Founding Fathers of Mississippi Rodeo," the Bascom brothers pioneered the sport in Mississippi and hosted the first rodeo in Marion County in 1935.

In 1935, the Bascoms helped to host the world's first outdoor night rodeo held under electric lights at Columbia's City Park. In 1936, Earl Bascom, an inventor as well as a trained artist, designed and supervised the construction of Mississippi's first permanent rodeo arena in Columbia. Bascom has been called the "Father of Modern Rodeo," having helped to pioneer the sport with his many rodeo innovations.

### Notable People:

**Charles Cassidy Bass** (1875 - 1975) was a medical doctor and researcher on tropical medicine with significant contributions to understanding malaria, hookworm and other diseases. Later Bass studied the relationship between dental health and general well-being. Bass articulated and promoted the "Bass Technique of Toothbrushing" and developed an improved means of flossing teeth for which some refer to Bass as the "Father of Preventive Dentistry." He subsequently became a university administrator, serving as dean of the Tulane University School of Medicine for 18 years.

**Walter Jerry Payton** was a football legend and running back for the Chicago Bears for 13 seasons. Payton was known around the NFL as "Sweetness" and is remembered as one of the most prolific running backs in the history of American football. A nine-time Pro Bowl selectee, Payton once held the league's record for most career rushing yards, touchdowns, carries, yards from scrimmage and all-purpose yards. His eight career touchdown passes are an NFL record for non-quarterbacks. He was elected into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1993. After struggling with the rare

liver disease, **primary sclerosing cholangitis**, for several months, Payton died on November 1, 1999 at age 45, from **cholangiocarcinoma**. His legacy includes the Walter Payton Award, the Walter Payton Man of the Year Award and a heightened awareness of the need for organ donations.

**Marshall County** was one of the original and the largest of the 16 counties formed in 1836 from lands secured from the Chickasaw Indians. The 2010 Census counted 37,144 people.

This county suffered great damage during the Civil War. Holly Springs, the county seat, was for a time General Ulysses S. Grant's headquarters and is famous historically as the scene of **Van Dorn's** raid on the Federal stores. On December 20, 1862, the Southern general, with a small force, surprised the Federal troops left behind by Grant, who was miles away marching on Jackson. Grant's immense stores of supplies and ammunition were entirely destroyed. The medical supplies had been hidden in a large building used as a foundry and the ammunition in a stable. The loss inflicted on Grant was enormous, amounting to millions of dollars and necessitated his return and dramatic change in his plans for the campaign.

**Holly Springs** was developed as a center of trade and court sessions and served the Mississippi Delta region. Holly Springs was founded in 1836 and suffered a **yellow fever** epidemic in 1878 which killed 2,000 area residents. The existing Marshall County Courthouse which sits in the town center, was used as a hospital during the outbreak.

### Notable People:

**David Shepard Smith, Jr.**, known nationally as Shepard Smith, is an American television news anchor. He is host of Fox Report with Shepard Smith and Studio B weekdays on the Fox News Channel.

**Syl Johnson** (born Sylvester Thompson), a blues artist, was born near Holly Springs and migrated to Chicago in 1950. Johnson sang and played with blues artists Magic Sam, Billy Boy Arnold, Junior Wells and Howlin' Wolf in the 1950s, before recording with Jimmy Reed for Vee-Jay in 1959. Beginning with his first hit, "Come On Sock It to Me" in 1967, Johnson dominated the label as both a hitmaker and producer. In 1994, he released the album "Back in the Game" on Delmark Records. The album featured the Hi rhythm section and his youngest daughter Syleena Johnson. Syl Johnson is also the father of former NFL wide receiver Chad Johnson (previously known as Chad Ochocinco). Syl Johnson recently appeared on an episode of TV ONE's "R&B Divas," which starred his daughter Syleena.

Next month we visit **Monroe** and **Montgomery** counties. Until then, take some time and enjoy a day trip through scenic, historic Mississippi.





## The Practice Model Corner - It's a New Day



*The Practice Model Social Worker of the month for May is Debbie Holmes from Region 2-West. Above from left: ASWS Danette Clark, Holmes and PM Coach Mary Randall.*

MDHS, Division of Family and Children's Services has a vision for a new day in Mississippi's delivery of social services. This vision helps staff: see a clean slate; create new opportunities for clients, staff and stakeholders; think with imagination and creativity; ask how cases can be handled better; and begin to ask not why, but why not.

The vision is apparent throughout the Practice Model where DFCS staff strive to make lives better for the families they serve through engagement and a fresh perspective.

Recently a group of staff was polled to see, **"What does the Practice Model mean to DFCS?"**

LeMarick Green, Coahoma County: "The Practice Model is all I know. I like the fact that it's family based. Families have input about what's going on in their lives."

Latarsha Toy, Washington County: "Engaging the

family and structured family team meetings are what the Practice Model is all about. It is a guide to keep all of us on the same page."

Trina Scott, Washington County: "Engaging the family and getting their input is important and it helps us focus on the fathers."

Tenorris Rhymes, Washington County: "The Practice Model is about the family. Families should have input on how to correct the issues in their lives. Individuals are different and their tasks and goals should be individualized to meet the specific need of the family."

Debbie Holmes of Washington County believes, "Preserving and maintaining connections along with providing services to the family in a timely manner is what the Practice Model represents."

Debbie said, "Giving up Mother's Day with my family is not a sacrifice when I'm making sure that siblings and mothers are able to spend that day together and that sibling visits are held. I keep the module on Preserving Connections close as a reminder of how important it is to preserve and maintain connections. Sometimes, if a family is low on resources, I share what I can with them until they are able to stand on their own. I just want to see them succeed so the agency won't have to be a part of their lives."

For her selfless service, Debbie was recognized as the Practice Model Social Worker of the Month for May.

For Mother's day, one of Debbie's special youth in care presented her a hand-illustrated short story that the youth had written as a tribute. Thank you, Debbie, for sharing your gifts and talents with the families and youth in MDHS care.



### From [AdoptUSKids](#):

*Children in foster care are regular children who, through no fault of their own, had to be removed from their families due to abusive or neglectful situations. More than 250,000 children in the U.S. enter foster care every year. While more than half of these children are returned to their parents, the remainder stay in the system. Most of these children live with a foster family, but some live in group facilities. Each year more than 20,000 children age out of the foster care without being adopted. Today there are 104,000 children in foster care waiting to be adopted ranging in age from less than a year old to 21. The most recent adoption and foster care statistics from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shows the majority of children waiting to be adopted are Caucasian (40 percent) or African American (28 percent). Children of Hispanic origin account for 22 percent of those waiting to be adopted. Let us help you give a child a forever home. Contact your local DHS office or call 1-800-821-9157. Permanent placement is our goal.*

## And a Shout Out To....



**Congratulations to Wanda Scott, DFCS MACWIS Unit for earning her masters degree in Business Administration from Belhaven University.**



**Congratulations to Mary Young for completing the Basic Supervisory Course. Mary is shown with her certificate after being awarded a "Whatever it Takes" pin by SSBG Director Derra Dukes.**



Marion County has recognized Family Protection Specialist Willie Sue Watts for her outstanding service, commitment and dedication to the needs and support of a special needs young adult in care who graduated with her senior class this month. The youth came into care over two years ago after experiencing severe abuse by her primary caretaker. Her special needs required her to be in a wheelchair with constant care and supervision which made placement extremely difficult. All the staff in Marion County worked to ensure the child received the best care and the most appropriate placement. However, Sue helped her live her dream to, not to just exist, but be recognized and counted. Sue worked endlessly to ensure this child did not "fall through the cracks." Sue, for your commitment, passion, dedication, care, support, and excellent practice, Marion County Family and Children's Services say thank you for all you have done and continue to do for the children in care.

## MDHS Employees Demonstrate CHARACTER FIRST

Lawrence County Director Alvis Everett was recognized by Region 5-East for the character trait of **VIRTUE**. In a touching presentation, Regional Director Debbie Grant read letters from coworkers who described Alvis' dedication and leadership that she exemplifies on a daily basis.



### CHARACTER FIRST

#### Definition of the Month

## VIRTUE



**The moral excellence evident in my life as I consistently do what is right.**

## Special Birthday Wishes to DFO Director Cathy Sykes

A birthday party was held for Division of Field Operations Director Cathy Sykes by the State Office DFO staff. (Note bunny ears by Chris Christmas.) Also pictured with Cathy are David Noble and John Davis.



## Do You Have a Facebook or Twitter Account?

Social networking is one of the many ways we stay connected with our friends and family. We also use it to find out what's going on in the world. "Like" the Mississippi Department of Human Services Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/msdhs> or follow us on Twitter at: [http://twitter.com/MS\\_DHS](http://twitter.com/MS_DHS) to stay up on the latest happenings at MDHS.

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For information or to submit articles, contact Julia Bryan, Beacon Editor at: [julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov](mailto:julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov) or phone 601-359-4517.

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