

Integrity: The Foundation of Leadership

As we prepare for the close of another year it provides an opportunity to reflect back as well as look ahead to what is going to be a great year. In doing so, we also have the responsibility to look at the core values that drive MDHS and how we, as employees, exist within that framework. Core values are defined as those things which we believe are the most important aspects of who we are and how we treat others.

Interestingly enough, core leadership values are not always expressed outwardly. Effective core values work behind the scenes like the operating system on a computer. You know it is working because the software applications are working. Core values are also like the foundation of a building. And like a building, our leadership ability is only as good as the foundation it is built upon.

So, what do we do? Let's start by determining what our core values are and what they ought to be to promote positive leadership in the workplace. Mr. Berry, our executive director, has written and spoken on many occasions about building a culture within MDHS that seeks to promote four basic core values: integrity, self-development, outstanding customer service and excellent program delivery.

Defined, integrity means making the correct choice when challenged with right and wrong. It further encompasses adherence to ethics and morals and is often linked with honesty. Integrity begins before a person is faced with a decision of right or wrong.

Continued on page 2

Mistletoe Marketplace 2013 - Be Merry!



Held at the Mississippi Trade Mart in downtown Jackson, Mistletoe Marketplace is the perfect way to begin holiday shopping.

This year was the 33rd year for the Junior League of Jackson's Mistletoe Marketplace and more than 30,000 shoppers from around the southeast traveled to attend this holiday shopping extravaganza.

The co-chair for this year's festivities was our very own Jennifer Walker, DFCS, Professional Development Unit bureau director.

Mistletoe is JLJ's largest fundraiser and is projected to have raised in excess of \$1 million which will help to fund more than 30 community projects.

Brandon Kennedy, who served as chair alongside Jennifer, worked with 12 other steering committee members to organize the massive yearly shopping tradition. The event, which drew in more than 150 vendors from across the country, also included 10 special events held throughout the weekend. These included a Preview Gala, a children's event, Tween

Continued on page 2

In this issue:

- Holmes County TANF client moving forward.
- Practice Model Corner.
- Awards and recognitions.
- Breast Cancer Awareness promoted in county offices.
- And much, much more

Distributed by the
Mississippi Department of
Human Services
750 N. State Street
Jackson, MS 39202
1.800.345.6347
julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov

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Integrity: The Foundation of Leadership continued from page 1

Should I tell the truth or should I lie? Should I follow through with what I said I would do or forget my responsibility? Should I do my work or get someone else to do it for me?

It is much easier to make the right decisions, if we have prepared ourselves for the tough choices. Individuals, who possess integrity, commit to choosing right before they find themselves in a situation which requires action. There should never be a time when, as an MDHS employee, we feel as though we have to compromise our integrity to reach our goals.

So a good question to ask ourselves is, "How much do we value integrity and how are we demonstrating it?" A person who has integrity lives out his or her values in relationships with coworkers, customers and stakeholders. If we cannot see ourselves in this definition, maybe it's time to redefine our workplace values, attitude and behavior for overall development and success. Regardless, if we choose to stay in our current role we should always be about raising the bar while never losing sight of our integrity.

We're not perfect and no one is expecting us to be. We all make mistakes and do things we are later ashamed of. We are human, after all. But there is a big difference between making a mistake and purposely doing something we know is wrong. There are always consequences to our actions, whether they come now or later.

Let's face it. When we break it down, the most important thing in our lives that no one can take away (except ourselves), is our word.

- **Honesty:** Be true to others in all that we do.
- **Integrity:** Be true to ourselves in all that we do.

In the end, it is all a matter of personal accountability. Do we want to be a person of character or not? It doesn't matter if we get caught or not. What matters is that we are defined by our actions.

I am thankful to be a part of the MDHS staff and the opportunity to serve every day.

John Davis
Deputy Administrator for Programs

Continued from page 1

event, brunches, fashion show and the Rudolph Race. Each was well planned with a unique design, food and beverage plan.

One important part of an event of this magnitude is the sponsors. This year more than 110 corporate sponsors supported JLJ with hundreds more who signed on as "Friends of Mistletoe" to make the event possible.

Mistletoe wouldn't come to fruition without the Junior League volunteers who spend at least 12 hours each working on the project.

The mission of JLJ is to be an organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of women and improving communities throughout the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Junior League, locally, helps to promote literacy, teen pregnancy prevention, nutrition, physical activity, and social and emotional wellness.

JLJ has more than 2,300 active, provisional and sustaining members and Jackson's Jr. League is the seventh largest Junior League group in the world.

The theme for this year's Mistletoe was "Be Merry," with the thought for everyone who entered the doors to be happy and have a merry holiday season. Said Jennifer, "To our committee, 'Be Kind. Be Giving. Be Merry,' was truly something we all wanted to pass on to everyone who experienced this year's Mistletoe."

She continued, "Serving as co-chair of such a large event; working full-time with MDHS; and being a wife and mother, proved to be a test. I challenged myself to keep all of the balls in the air for a short period of time, knowing the end would come soon for Mistletoe."

It was with a huge smile and happy heart that I joined Brandon Kennedy the final evening at the Trade Mart to say "Mistletoe Marketplace 2013 is now closed."



THE BEACON

For information or to submit articles for the Beacon, contact Julia Bryan at: julia.bryan@mdhs.ms.gov or phone 601-359-4517. To mail photos or articles, send to: PO Box 352, Jackson, MS 39205-0352.

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November 2013 - Page 2

Balloon Release and Event Held for Adoption Awareness Month



November is National Adoption Month and in recognition, Governor Phil Bryant issued a proclamation to raise awareness of the children and families impacted by foster care in Mississippi.

November 13, a ceremony was held on the south steps of the Mississippi State Capitol to raise community awareness about children who have been adopted and those remaining in foster care.

The agency, Southern Christian Services for Children and Youth, and volunteers in support of adoption released 96 balloons in honor of children from the Mississippi foster care system still waiting to find their forever families.

MDHS Executive Director Richard Berry provided opening remarks and State Senator and adoptive parent Bill Stone read the proclamation.

Prior to the balloon release, Mississippi author Matthew Guinn read the names of 96 children free for adoption in the state who continue to wait for a forever home. The public event was attended by more than 100 people.



Holmes County TANF Client is Moving Forward



MDHS programs make a difference. In Holmes County, a **TANF** client is working hard to provide for her children and has obtained her GED. She is now seeking employment with plans to further her education.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families is a program designed to help low-income families with children up to age 18 achieve self-sufficiency. Assistance can be provided for no more than 60 months, with some exceptions, and participants must be engaged in approved work activities.

The federal program was created by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 and replaced the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

The primary purposes of TANF are to:

- Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes.
- Reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.
- Prevent and reduce unplanned pregnancies among single young adults.
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Mother Teresa's Anyway Poem

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered;

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and

some true enemies;

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;

Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;

Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;

Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;

Give the world the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and your God;

It was never between you and them anyway.



PRACTICE MODEL CORNER

Region 3-North Selects a Shining Star for Practice Model Recognition



From left: ASWS Toni Lewis, FPS Jessica Davis, PMC Kimberly Wheaton

Jessica Hollingshed-Davis is a Region 3-North, family protection specialist. She received her bachelor's degree in Social Work from Mississippi State University. "After reading, 'A Child Called It' I was inspired to become a social worker," said Jessica.

Jessica has been employed with the agency for almost two years and you can catch her on any given day telling someone she loves what she does.

Jessica's daily practice speaks volumes. She has embraced the model and incorporates the components in her daily practice. She always does those little extra things to ensure the needs of her families and children are being met in the safest and most appropriate way. She has created some awesome life books for her children and her presentations for Permanency Round Table were as creative and colorful as her working personality.

Jessica never hesitates to attend to the needs of her families regardless of the day or the time. Recently, Jessica worked through a case to reunify a set of siblings who had been in custody several years with their mother. The mother did a lot of work on her own but Jessica made it a priority to remain in contact with her and to ensure the services being provided would match the family's needs.

During Permanency Round Tables it was concluded that the family should have a celebration. PMC Kimberly Wheaton observed Jessica planning this event as well as giving up her Saturday afternoon to make sure it happened. The practice coach, along with ASWS Toni Lewis, attended the celebration and it was a great party for an awesome reason! The greatest thing is that, through it all, Jessica remained in her role as a social worker and exemplified everything that the Mississippi Child Welfare Practice Model stands for. FPS Davis is a hard worker and plays well with her team.

Region 3-North is pleased to recognize her as Practice Model Worker of the Month.

Region 7-West Highlights Klubnik for Outstanding Service



Above from left: Charlotte Newman and Jodi Klubnik.

Region 7-West is proud to highlight the work of Jodi Klubnik for the Practice Model Corner.

Working with families encompasses much of what our Division of Family and Children's Services social workers do. Jodi recently had a family that consisted of a single mother and her three children. The family was at risk of separation due to myriad problems including conditions in the home.

Jodi quickly identified issues and worked diligently to locate and secure appropriate community resources so the family wouldn't experience unnecessary separation.

She additionally secured the services of a local carpenter to work on the mother's home, repair the floors and service the stove. She also located furniture to help meet the family's needs. Jodi displayed such exemplary service, going above and beyond to secure and identify resources for the family so they wouldn't experience additional displacement. Because of her case management efforts and creativity, the family is together while they work to resolve other ongoing problems.

This is the true meaning of case planning, networking, "thinking outside the box," and bringing creativity to the table as she assists families in need. Jodi is a shining star, true hero, and the total picture of what it means to bring the community together to problem-solve so families can thrive. The agency needs self-starters, people who go the extra mile and who take the initiative to assist families so they can remain united.

Region 7-W congratulates Jodi Klubnik and her outstanding and dedicated efforts. Way to go Jodi!

Region 2 East Permanency Summit



Photo of Judge R. Michael Key, keynote speaker.

Region 2-East joined with the Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) to hold a Permanency Summit in Grenada. The day was a great success and was attended by approximately 60 stakeholders and staff members. Keynote speaker was Judge R. Michael Key from LaGrange, Georgia. Staff was quite pleased to find that the agency's philosophy and views on family centered practice was entirely consistent with the renowned expert's position.

Region 2-E and the AOC also welcomed Mike Gallarno, Mary Fuller and Lindsey Landry from DFCS's state office administrative team. It was a day of networking, building bridges, great food and deep discussion along with a lot of work. We especially appreciate the youth court personnel, including several judges who were kind enough to give us a day of their time, and the benefit of their knowledge and experience as we drafted plans for inclusion in the region's practice model implementation plan.

Hinds County Angels

Recently a young woman along with her one year daughter came into the Hinds County DFCS office. She stated that she had been living with her mother in a hotel, and following an argument, the woman put her daughter and granddaughter out on the streets.

A quick look revealed that the young woman had no shoes and the baby only had a tshirt. A kind DFCS clerk retrieved spare shoes and baby clothes from her own car for them.

The woman had no additional resources, nowhere to go and no other family to stay with. Staff located a local shelter that would take the young woman and baby in and give her time to make alternate arrangements. The staff of angels went above and beyond to ensure the safety and well-being of her and her baby.

After the woman arrived at the shelter, she called Hinds County to thank them for all they had done to help her. To Hinds County DFCS, thank you from all of us at MDHS for taking care of those in need.

Emma Green Honored with 30 Years of Service



From left: MIS, CSIO Mark Allen; MIS/IT Procurement Manager Valeria O'Neal; MIS/IT Procurement Analyst Emma Green; and Deputy Administrator for Administration Will Simpson.

Emma Green has been a valued employee with the agency for 30 years. She is currently an IT Procurement Analyst who serves with integrity in the Division of Management Information Systems. She truly does "Whatever It Takes" to get the job done! Thank you, Emma, for your service and loyalty to the agency.

Staff Enjoy Multipurpose Meeting in Leake County



At the quarterly Implementation Meeting in Leake County, topics for discussion included not only forensic interviewing, but breast cancer awareness. The staff enjoyed treats in honor of those who have fought the battle. Above FPS Terrica Dawson; FPS Shakia Fleming; FPS Augusta Hardney; Region 3-North Director Trudy Miller; Clerk Typist Sr. Angela Scott; and ASWS Delbra Lockett.

Highlights from the Division of Field Operations Fall Management Conference 2013

ACE Winners Announced



This year's Division of Field Operations, Fall Management Conference was truly a celebration and combined managers from the DFO's Economic Assistance and Child Support staff. Senior management attended policy and leadership workshops and gathered for an evening spent dining together and sharing in the accomplishments of their counties and others around the state. As always, staff look forward to the award presentations.

For the ACE Award winners for SNAP/TANF, counties were grouped by number of supervisors and scored on: SNAP Error Rate, TWP Participation Rate, Expedited Timeliness and Claims Timeliness. Counties with top scores were: Amite, Bolivar, Choctaw, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Jones, Kemper, Monroe, Neshoba, Noxubee, Sharkey, Stone, Sunflower, Tallahatchie and Tate.

For the Child Support ACE Award winners, counties were scored on: PEP rate; court orders and customer service; PEP rate at or above the state average PEP; and cases with court orders within 20 percent of PEP rate. Counties with top scores were: Bolivar, Calhoun, Claiborne, Clay, Grenada, Jasper, Kemper, Montgomery, Noxubee, Quitman, Simpson, Tallahatchie and Winston.

FORREST COUNTY BREAST CANCER AWARENESS



Forrest County had a Breast Cancer Awareness Fund Raiser Luncheon in October with all divisions participating. Back row l-r: Anissa Smith, Marilyn Allen, Erretta McSwain and Barbara Hammer. Middle row: Aundia Cameron, Martha Elledge, Shanta McGee, Lacherye Williams, Denise Smith and Jessica Howell. Front row: Becky Thornhill, Tanya McPherson, Victoria Johnson-Lewis and Wanda Simpson.

Human Resources Celebrates Longevity of Service



The Division of Human Resources recently recognized its staff that have greater than 10 years of service to the State of Mississippi with a service pin and service certificates signed by Governor Phil Bryant and MDHS Executive Director Rickey Berry. Front row: Lorisia Wilbert, 30 years; Gloria Jackson, 30 years; Marcellus Warren, 20 years; Evelyn Thompson, 30 years. Back row: Richard Adams, 20 years; Rose Banks, 30 years; Renfred Tate, 10 years; Shirley Wright, 10 years. Not pictured: Cynthia Amos, 20 years; Joe Broger, 10 years. Thank you all for your dedicated service.

Happy Halloween from Hancock County



Hurricane Katrina dealt quite a blow to the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 2005. Included in that devastation was the Hancock County offices. In June 2013, the county staff moved from temporary trailers to a beautiful new facility on Highway 90.

Prior to the move, staff shared open spaces and/or cubicles. With the move, almost instantly the work atmosphere was positively transformed.

The mantra from DFCS staff was, "We are so pleased," though many worked at long tables or makeshift desks until appropriate office furnishings could be provided.

But, in October, doors were delivered and installed and it truly made a huge difference!

FPW Kiani Abel came up with the idea to celebrate and rallied everyone to join in a door decorating contest. Our "children" were invited to participate in a FUN experience at the office in contrast to the normal structure of their visits. They came by doors for "trick or treats" and then voted on the best door decorations. The children, adults who accompanied them, and the staff really enjoyed the celebration.

The winner of the door decorating contest was Melissa Matherne and Harmony Raffio. Much thanks to the Hancock County Board of Supervisors for the beautiful new building.

Human Resources Hosts Annual Health Fair



Many thanks to the Division of Human Resources for a successful Health Fair. The event featured vendors and sponsors who shared information with staff, checked vision, blood pressure and spinal alignment, and administered flu shots.

Perry County Hosts Meet and Greet

Perry County DHS hosted a meeting Nov. 13 for local officials. Pictured is Cecilia Weathersby, Perry County Director, speaking during the event.

Also attending: District 105 Mississippi House Representative Dennis DeBar; Perry County Board of Supervisors Bobby Bolton (Dist. 1), Kevin Shows (Dist. 2), Tommy Walley (Dist. 3 and President), Mitchell Hinton (Dist. 4), Lanny Mixon (Dist. 5); New Augusta Mayor Albert Garner; Beaumont Mayor Jamie Patterson; Perry County Sheriff Jimmy Dale Smith; Perry County Superintendent of Education Scott Dearman; and Ginger from the Perry County Chamber of Commerce, Richton. There were many ideas shared over refreshments. Thanks to all our local officials for their support to Perry County DHS.



CHARACTER FIRST

DEFINITION OF THE MONTH:

GENEROSITY

Carefully managing my resources so I can freely give to those in need.



EXCITING NEWS FROM MDHS

THE MUCH ANTICIPATED NEW MDHS WEBSITE IS EXPECTED BY THE END OF THE YEAR. THE SITE WILL BE CLIENT-FOCUSED, EASY TO NAVIGATE AND USER-FRIENDLY.