

Fall Edition

July 1st-Oct. 31st

# Let's Talk About CRBC

## GREETINGS FROM THE CITIZENS REVIEW BOARD FOR CHILDREN (CRBC)

Autumn reminds us of the impermanence of everything. We have experienced the budding of life in spring and the flowerings and profusions of summer. Now the leaves fall and bare branches remind us of the fleeting nature of all things....

## 2015-2016 State Board

**Circuit I:** Doretha "Dee" Henry (Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico & Worcester)

**Circuit II:** Vacant (Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's & Talbot)

**Circuit III:** Delores Alexander, Vice Chairperson ( Baltimore & Harford)

**Circuit IV:** Nettie Anderson-Burr, Chairperson (Allegany, Garrett & Washington)

**Circuit V:** Heidi Busch (Anne Arundel, Carroll & Howard)

**Circuit VI:** Susan Gross (Frederick & Montgomery)

**Circuit VII:** Denise Joseph (Calvert, Charles, Prince George's & Saint Mary's)

**Circuit VIII:** Sheila Jessup (Baltimore City)

**Circuit VIII:** Sarah Walker (Baltimore City)

**Circuit VIII:** Sylvia Smith (Baltimore City)

# CRBC Insider

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### State Board News

*Next State Board Meeting*

**Friday,**

**February 12, 2016**

The meeting will be held at CRBC in the conference room. This meeting is open to all board members.

## A Message from the State Board Chair

**T**ogether  
**E**veryone  
**A**chieves  
**M**ore

At CRBC we remain committed to working to help improve child welfare. We care about the well being of children. The time and effort that each volunteer gives for case reviews enables us to obtain necessary information and to make recommendations regarding services and support to families and children. We are moving forward with increasing CRBC

membership and training. There were 16 newly Governor appointed volunteers trained during this quarter. This was the result of tremendous teamwork and effort between CRBC staff and volunteers. Thank you for your passion, commitment and dedication to serving Maryland's children. We appreciate all that you do!

Nettie Anderson-Burrs,  
State Board Chair

## A Message from the Administrator

In this edition of CRBC Insider, you will find valuable information on child welfare policy and legislation that may impact CRBC reviews. Child welfare is constantly evolving and there are changes to policy, practice and legislation. We are taking necessary steps to ensure that you have the tools and information necessary to be the best advocates for children. Look for child welfare policy information each quarter in the CRBC Insider.

Each volunteer brings unique experiences and contributes to the process. However, when voting or making decisions regarding recommendations for individual or systemic child welfare improvements it is

imperative that advocates are knowledgeable about child welfare, child welfare policy and resources.

Volunteers make a difference every day. You play an important role in the life of a child in your community. We recently started asking new members a question during new member orientation and pre-service training: Why are you here? It is a question for all of us to ask ourselves. There were various responses and paths that led to the new volunteers getting to CRBC but one theme resonated and it was that they were citizens that cared about children and wanted to advocate for and improve child welfare. Child welfare has an impact on citizens and communities. We can help

child welfare agencies achieve better outcomes by providing appropriate support, advocacy and continuing to work to help improve child welfare.

Denise Wheeler,  
Administrator



# Child Welfare News

## Child Welfare Legislation

### **Human Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act – CRBC Implications**

On October 1, 2014, the Human Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (thereafter referred to as “the Act”) went into effect. Many of the provisions impact the criteria we use in reviews. Referenced policy directives can be found at [www.dhr.state.md.us](http://www.dhr.state.md.us), “Social Services Policies”.

## Child Welfare Policy

**Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA):** APPLA is limited to youth age 16 and over. Court must document the efforts to place a child permanently at each court hearing under a plan of APPLA. APPLA may not be used as the secondary plan in concurrent permanency planning. No youth under age 16 may have a plan of APPLA as of 9/2017. LDSS should change APPLA plan of youth under age 16 to another plan at next court hearing. SSA-CW #16-10 provides implementation instruction.

**Victims of Sex Trafficking:** Identify, document and determine appropriate services for children in placement, care or supervision of LDSS who are at risk of becoming a sex trafficking victim or who is a sex trafficking victim. SSA-CW #14-15 provides implementation guidance.

**“Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard” (RPPS):** Foster family homes and child care institutions will utilize RPPS in the care of children to ensure that foster youth are able to participate in normal and beneficial activities. It is the responsibility of the caregiver to apply RPPS in determining whether to allow a child in foster care to participate in extracurricular and social activities. That decision must be based upon the maturity of the child, safety and normalcy of the activity. SSA-CW #16-17 and #16-16 provides implementation instruction.

**Youth on Runaway Status:** LDSS must take steps to locate children missing from foster care, determine factors that led to child’s absence and to the extent possible address these factors in subsequent placements. All runaways must be entered in the National Crime information Center database by the police. SSA-CW #16-04 provides implementation instruction.

**Case Plan requirements for youth over age 14:** Case plan must be developed in consultation with the child and at the option of the child, 2 members of the case planning team who are not the caseworker of foster parent. Case plan must document child’s education, health, visitation and court participation rights, the right to receive an annual credit report and a signed acknowledgement that the child was provided these rights and that they were explained an age appropriate manner.

**Relative Notification and Sibling Definition:** When a child enters foster care, the LDSS must notify parents who have legal custody of the child’s siblings. A “sibling” is an individual who is considered by state law to be a sibling, even in the event of TPR or death of a parent. SSA-CW #15-23 provides implementation instruction.

# Child Welfare News

## What is Educational Stability?

A major goal of the Fostering Connections Act of 2008 is to reduce the number of schools foster youth attend as education disruption is a huge contributor to academic failure. Therefore, every effort is to be made to keep the child in their “school of origin” upon placement into foster care and any subsequent placement changes. “School of origin” can either be the school the child attended prior to entering foster care or the school the child attended prior to a placement change. It is permissible to change schools if the local department and/or school determine that it is not in the child’s best interest to remain in the school of origin. Transportation to/from school is usually provided by the school system.

## Who decides if child should change schools?

This depends upon the timing of the placement. If the child is being placed for the first time, the school system is required to determine (under the McKinney-Vento Act) whether the child should change schools by making a “best interest” determination. If the child stays in the school of origin, the school system is required to both provide and pay for the transportation. At the end of the first school year, the department, in consultation with the school, must determine whether the child’s needs are best met in the current school. If the child continues in the school of origin, the school continues to provide transportation, but can bill the local department for the cost of transportation. After the first year in foster care, the local department becomes the primary decision maker (under Fostering Connections Act). The best interest factors are identical regardless of which agency is the lead decision maker.

## What does this mean for reviews?

If a case is being reviewed for the first time, make sure we inquire as to whether the child changed schools upon placement into care and whether a “best interest” determination was made. If there have been any placement changes during the period under review, we should ask about shifts in school enrollment due to the placement change.



# Child Welfare Legislation

## Legislative Update

**Effective October 1, 2015, the following changes are being made to Maryland law which may impact or may have an impact on CRBC reviews.**

### SB150 – Waiver of Reunification Efforts (Anayah’s Law)

Federal law permits states to waive reunification efforts under a definition of “aggravated circumstances”. The changes to Maryland law expand the circumstances under which a waiver can be requested as well as allowing a request if a sibling or other child residing in the home is subjected to one of the listed aggravated circumstances.

Defined “Aggravated circumstances” to include:

- Parent engaged in or facilitated Chronic or severe physical abuse, chronic and life-threatening neglect, sexual abuse, or torture of the child, sibling or another child in household;
- Parent or guardian knowingly fails to take appropriate steps to protect the child after household member inflicted sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, life-threatening neglect, or torture of the child or another child in the household;
- The child, sibling or another child in household has suffered severe physical abuse or death resulting from abuse by parent, guardian or another adult household member and all persons who could have inflicted the abuse or caused the death remain in the household;
- OR Parent or guardian has abandoned the child.

Abandonment means to leave a child without any provision for support and without any person who has accepted long-term responsibility to maintain care and have custody and control of the child when:

- The whereabouts of the parent or guardian are unknown and LDSS has made reasonable efforts to locate the parent or guardian over a period of six months and has been unsuccessful.

Criminal convictions relating to a crime of violence against the child, minor offspring of the parent or guardian or another parent or guardian and involuntary termination of parental rights remains in effect. Request may be made at any time the LDSS becomes aware that the circumstances listed in the law exist. If court finds by clear and convincing evidence that any of the circumstances exist, the Court must waive reunification efforts. Permanency plan hearing to change plan to adoption will be requested within 30 days of the finding.

# Child Welfare Legislation

## **SB 685 – Information & Services for Foster Youth and Former Foster Youth**

This law adds additional “reasonable efforts” findings the Court must make at permanency planning hearings for youth over the age of 18. The Court must find that the LDSS has done the following prior to the youth emancipating from care:

- Enrolled youth in health insurance that will continue after emancipation

- Screen youth for eligibility for public benefits and assist youth with application for those benefits

- Work with others to establish plan for stable housing reasonably expected to be available for at least 12 months after emancipation

- Work with others to engage child in education, training or employment activities aimed at providing sufficient income to live independently after emancipation.

Prior to emancipation, LDSS must:

- Advise the youth in writing about the right to reenter care and procedures to do so.

- Ensure that youth have birth certificate, social security card, health insurance information, medical records and driver’s license/state ID card.

If the LDSS becomes aware that a former CINA youth, who is eligible for reentry, is homeless, the department must contact the former CINA and advise them of their right to reenter care.

If the LDSS becomes aware that a former CINA youth, who is eligible for reentry, is homeless, the department must contact the former CINA and advise them of their right to reenter care.

Each local department must develop plans for partnering to provide and promote affordable housing and employment opportunities for former foster youth with a report due to General Assembly by June 1, 2016.



# Child Welfare Legislation

## SB567 – State Child Welfare Report

Added new annual report requirement due to General Assembly by December 1<sup>st</sup> regarding children and foster youth in the state child welfare system, disaggregated by county, age, gender, race and ethnicity. Report to be published on DHR website within 30 days of submission

- Child abuse and neglect reports, Alternative Responses, Investigative Responses and findings for completed investigations;
- Children and foster youth receiving In-Home Services;
- New Out-of-Home Placements by placement type;
- Exits from the child welfare system by exit type;
- Exits to reunification and reentries within 12 months of exit;
- Exits to reunification and reentries within 24 months of exit;
- Stability of foster placements, including # of placement changes;
- Stability of school placements;
- Graduating from high school;
- Qualifying for GED;
- Receiving tuition waiver.

In addition, HB 386 clarified that CPS records in MD CHESSIE can be viewed by all local departments, not just the department where the finding was made. HB 346 changed the term “master” to “magistrate” for juvenile court officers, as well as others.

Additional details can be obtained via the Maryland Legislature website at <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/>.

Any questions can be directed to Debbie Ramelmeier at [debbie.ramelmeier@maryland.gov](mailto:debbie.ramelmeier@maryland.gov) or via phone at 410-238-1341.

# Help Wanted

Citizens Review Board for Children is currently seeking current volunteers available to assist at the CRBC main office. Please contact our office if you are available to volunteer in the office a few hours a week to inquire about volunteer opportunities in the office.

**Citizens Review Board for Children**  
1100 Eastern Blvd.  
Essex MD 21221  
(410) 238-1320 (Office Number)



# Join A Committee

## Recruitment & Retention

**The Recruitment & Retention committee recruits, plans and coordinates activities for CRBC members..**

## Children's Legislative Action Committee (CLAC)

**CLAC makes recommendations to the State Board regarding legislation.**

## Training Team

**The training team provides new member orientation and pre service training.**

# Moving Forward



**Contact Marlo Palmer-Dixon, Volunteer Specialist or your Staff Assistant to request recruitment materials to recruit Potential volunteers in your circuit. The volunteer who recruits the most volunteers will be highlighted in the CRBC Insider.....**

**BE the CHANGE that YOU wish to see in the WORLD...**

# **TAKE ACTION!**



## **Action Alerts**

### **50% Board Attendance for 2015—6 Month Alert**

Each Year in December, the Governor's Appointments Office sends us a written directive to submit the names of individuals serving on the boards who have missed more than 50% of their local board meetings during that year. When we reach the 6 month mark and 50% attendance will be reviewed.

You can alternate or substitute on local boards in the jurisdiction/circuit in which you are appointed to make up for missed review dates.

**For more information contact your Staff Assistant.**

### **Reappointments for 2015**

Each fiscal year there are local board members that have appointments expiring on June 30th, you are notified by mail and sent a reappointment package. Your Staff Assistant will follow up with you at your board review in reference to your reappointment packet. Please complete the necessary forms and return to CRBC as soon as possible. Board members may serve until reappointed.

If you have any questions about the Reappointment Process you can contact the Volunteer Specialist @ (410) 238-1338 or via email [Marlo.Palmer-Dixon@maryland.gov](mailto:Marlo.Palmer-Dixon@maryland.gov)

# Dorchester CRBC Pre Service Training

The Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) Training Team trained 9 newly Governor appointed volunteers in Dorchester County on Friday, October 9, 2015 at the Dorchester County Department of Social Services, 927 Race Street, Cambridge MD 21613. There was representation from the following jurisdictions:

- Cecil County
- Dorchester County
- Talbot County
- Wicomico County
- Worcester County

Please help CRBC welcome our newly appointed board members. Please remember to tell your story as a volunteer to encourage other citizens to want to be apart of the CRBC family!



State Board: Nettie Anderson-Burrs (State Board Chair), Doretha Henry, Sarah Walker and Denise Joseph attended the meeting and pre-service training in Dorchester County.

A special thanks to Nicolette Smith-Bligen, Dorchester County Department of Social Services Director & Phillip Thompson, Dorchester County Department of Social Services Assistant Director of Services for welcoming CRBC staff & Volunteers and for use of the training space.

# Training Participants



## Upcoming Pre-Service Trainings

Citizens Review Board for Children Pre-Service Training

### 2015 Trainings

Friday, November 13, 2015 (CRBC)

### 2016 Trainings

Friday, January 15, 2016 (CRBC)

Friday, March 18, 2016 (CRBC)

Friday, May 20, 2016 (CRBC)

*\*\*\*Training Date are subject to change\*\*\**

**10:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.**

Citizens Review Board for Children

1100 Eastern Blvd.

Essex MD 21221

To register or **R.S.V.P.** contact: Marlo Palmer-Dixon, Volunteer Specialist.

The purpose of the CRBC Pre Service Training is to train newly Governor Appointed Volunteers to serve on CRBC review boards.

(410) 238-1338 **Voice** or [Marlo.Palmer-Dixon@maryland.gov](mailto:Marlo.Palmer-Dixon@maryland.gov) **Email**



## New Governor Appointed Volunteers

Constance Urquhart—Baltimore County Board #3

Velma Walton – Cecil County Board #1

Vatice Walker – Dorchester County Board #1

Phyllis Hubbard – Talbot County Board #1

Judy Gordon – Talbot County Board #1

Yvonne Armwood – Wicomico County Board #1

Helen Lockwood – Worcester County Board #1

Sheila Jessup – Baltimore City Eastern Region #3

Beatrice Lee—Baltimore City Northwest Region #7

Debra Madison-Moore—Baltimore City Northwest Region #7

# Volunteer Opportunities

We are currently recruiting for volunteers who reside in the following jurisdictions:

**Allegany County**  
**Anne Arundel County**  
**Baltimore City**  
**Calvert County**  
**Caroline County**  
**Carroll County**  
**Cecil County**  
**Charles County**  
**Dorchester County**  
**Garrett County**  
**Howard County**  
**Kent County**  
**Montgomery County**  
**Prince George's County**  
**Queen Anne's County**  
**Saint Mary's County**  
**Somerset County**  
**Talbot County**  
**Washington County**  
**Wicomico County**  
**Worcester County**



**We're  
recruiting!**

## State Board Retirement Party for James Trent & Helen Johnson

On August 29, 2015, the State Board celebrated the retirement of James Trent and Helen Diane Johnson at Sir Walter Raleigh Inn.

Nettie Anderson-Burrs, Chair, Delores Alexander, Vice Chair, CRBC staff and guests of the retirees attended the celebration that included dinner, presentations and remarks.



*Delores Alexander, CRBC State Board Vice Chairperson, James Trent, Senator Joanne C. Benson, District 24; Nettie Anderson-Burrs, CRBC State Board Chairperson.*

James Trent was a CRBC member for 20 years. He was the Vice Chair of the State Board and represented the 7<sup>th</sup> circuit including Prince George's County where he resides. He was active in child welfare advocacy in Prince George's County and statewide during his time as a member.



*Jerome Findlay, CRBC Staff, Nettie Anderson-Burrs, CRBC State Board Chairperson, Helen Diane Johnson, Delores Alexander, CRBC State Board Vice Chairperson; Denise Wheeler, CRBC Administrator.*

Helen Diane Johnson was on the State Board for 7 years representing the 6<sup>th</sup> circuit including Frederick County where she resides. She participated on the State Board's Children's Legislative Action Committee (CLAC), making recommendations regarding child welfare related legislation and she was active in advocacy meetings in the 6<sup>th</sup> circuit during her time as a State Board member.



# Walk to Protect Maryland's Children

CRBC had a information table set up to provide information and applications for volunteer opportunities at the Citizens Review Board for Children.



## CRBC Staff/Training Team



**In the Picture Above:** Eric Davis, Staff Assistant, Michele Foster, Staff Assistant, Denise Wheeler, Administrator, Crystal Young, Assistant Administrator & Marlo Palmer-Dixon, Volunteer Specialist.

As the Administrator of the Citizens Review Board for Children I would like to acknowledge the CRBC staff and training team for your hard work, dedication and efforts. The training team traveled to Dorchester County to train new volunteers and the following day supported CRBC's partnership with the Family Tree in the 5K walk and family fair at the YMCA in Baltimore.

Thank you,  
Denise Wheeler,  
CRBC Administrator!

# 1 Mile Kids Fun Walk/5K Family Walk

CRBC's Team Challenge had 40 registered walkers participate in the 5K walk to bring awareness to child abuse and neglect. This is the 5th year Team Challenge & CRBC participated and partnered with the Family Tree in the Family Fair and Walk.



Crystal Young, CRBC Assistant Administrator & Sydney Young (daughter) walk with Team Challenge supporting the CRBC partnership with Family Tree.

# Family Fair

**Sarah Walker, Baltimore City State Board Representative & Recruitment, Retention & Training Team Committee Member with Marlo Palmer-Dixon, CRBC Volunteer Specialist.**

**CRBC would like to extend a special thanks to Mrs. Walker for participating in the last two CRBC Pre Service trainings, traveling with the CRBC staff to Dorchester County and supporting the CRBC partnership with the Family Tree at the Walk and Family Fair.**

**Thanks Again!!!**



## Contact Us

Citizens Review Board for Children

1100 Eastern Blvd.

Essex, MD 21221

Office Number: (410) 238-1320

Fax Number: (410) 238-1395

Email: [crbc.mail@maryland.gov](mailto:crbc.mail@maryland.gov)

Website: [www.dhr.maryland.gov/crbc](http://www.dhr.maryland.gov/crbc)

### Connect with CRBC on Social Media

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Children**

Follow us on Twitter:



**twitter.com/MD\_CRBC**

 **CRBC**  
Citizens Review Board for Children



**“One Unified Volunteer  
Voice for Safety,  
Permanency and  
Advocacy”**