

Kent County Celebrates



Kent County Employee of the Year—Family Services Case Worker Sheila Rich with Deputy Secretary Stacy Rodgers; Interim Secretary Brian Wilbon, and Director Kerry Ahearn-Brown.



Joshua Jester—Youth of the Year



Frank and Roxanne Newman - Foster Parents of the year



Michael Peck, The Samaritan Group
Community Partner of the Year

Kent County

Department of Social Services

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2010



Kent County
Department of Social Services
350 High Street - Post Office Box 670
Chestertown, MD 21620
(410) 810-7600
www.dhr.state.md.us/kent.htm



Governor Martin O'Malley, Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown, Interim Secretary Brian Wilbon



Message from the Director

As fiscal year 2010 arrived the economy continued to worsen and our volume of work increased along with it. I am again proud of the work the great staff of Kent County Department of Social Services did to keep up to the ever growing demand for services and support our customers needed. Our Family Investment Division worked diligently to complete - on time - an increasing surge of applications for all types of benefits; the Child Welfare Division distinguished themselves by being only one of three counties statewide to reach all four state designated Place Matters Goals; and the Child Support Office collected over one million dollars for the children of Kent County.

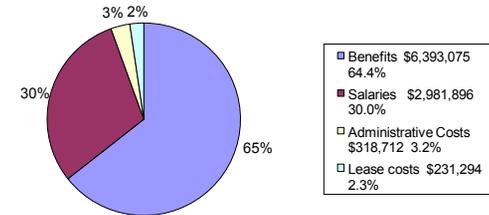
Because of the increase in demand for our services and our desire as stated in our strategic plan to deliver “best practices” to our clients, our child welfare staff saw the need to improve our system by beginning the process of creating a local Child Advocacy Center (CAC). To begin, we designated an area of our office solely as a “child visitation center.” This area is used by parents to visit their children who are in foster care, for Family Involvement Meetings (FIM’s), and will be the future home of the CAC. Our staff also wrote and won a grant to install the I-Record system; a state-of-the-art digital video recording and management system for recording child forensic interviews.

We remain committed to our mission of promoting personal responsibility, dignity and self-sufficiency, protecting vulnerable children and adults, and preserving families. We do so in partnership with customers, stakeholders, and the community, especially during these tough economic times. We continue practicing our Family Centered philosophy in all program areas as a respectful, culturally competent, and customer service paradigm for delivering services.

I hope this Annual Report gives you a snapshot of the work we have done over the year to serve the residents of Kent County. We appreciate your continued partnership and support. We could not have done it without you.

Kerry Ahearn-Brown, Director

KENT COUNTY DSS FY 2010 SPENDING \$9,924,977



Kent County Is Re-Accredited

Pictured Deputy Secretary Stacey Rogers; Services Assistant Director, Paula Gish; Supervisor Lisa Falls; COA Richard Klarberg

Kent County DSS Board of Directors

- 1) Douglas Walters (Chair)
- 2) Gail Yerkie
- 3) Leon Frison
- 4) Denise Bentley
- 5) Ruth Briscoe
- 6) Pat Gatto
- 7) Judith Kennard
- 8) Rev Mary Walker
- 9) Ronald Fithian, Kent County Commissioner

The Office of Child Support Enforcement is committed to raising the standard of living for children in Kent County by establishing and enforcing their right to receive support from both parents. In Kent County in FY 2010 we:

- Collected over 1.2 million dollars in Child Support payments;
- Continued to exceed statewide standards in the establishment of paternity, court orders and collection of arrears;
- Continued our collaboration with the Kent County Circuit Court Family Services Unit and Shared Opportunity Service to afford non-custodial parents an opportunity to obtain employment and develop the skills necessary to promote a positive and healthy relationship with their children which will ultimately enhance child support awareness and increase collections;
- In conjunction with Child Support Awareness Month (August), sponsored a "Child Support Forum" to educate clients, employers and community members as to the services available, not only through the child support office, but the Department of Social Services as a whole.



Child Support Worker of the Year 2010

Elizabeth Bankhead receives Kent County Child Support Worker of the Year 2010. Shown Interim Secretary Brian Wilbon, CSEA Assistant Director Kathy Nolan, and Deputy Secretary Stacey Rodgers

KENT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

VISION

We envision Kent County as a safe community, free from exploitation, neglect and abuse, where individuals take responsibility for themselves and their families by striving for independence and self-esteem.

MISSION

Kent County Department of Social Services promotes personal responsibility, dignity and self-sufficiency, protects vulnerable children and adults, and preserves families. We accomplish this in partnership with our customers and stakeholders.

Family Investment Administration helps families achieve independence through work, personal responsibility and community involvement while providing family centered supportive services, and assistance such as Temporary Cash Assistance, Temporary Disability Assistance, Emergency Assistance to Families and Adults, Food Supplement Assistance, Medical Assistance, Work Readiness and Job Placement Programs, and Purchase of Care (POC). The POC program provides funds for families to pay for children to attend daycare. We are also proud to serve the citizens who have home heating needs through our Office of Energy Programs.

In Kent County in FY 2010 we:

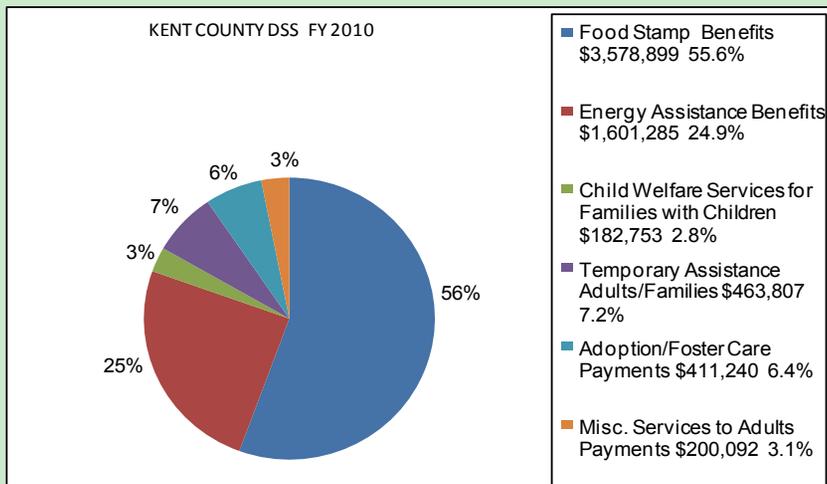
- Engaged 97% of cash assistance customers in job readiness activities;
- Placed 44 cash assistance customers in unsubsidized jobs;
- Served 587 citizens through our Work Opportunities Program;
- Engaged 19 citizens in a Work Exchange Assignment;
- Achieved 100% food stamp accuracy payment rate;
- Served 192 children through the Purchase of Care Program;
- Served 4,030 citizens through the Medical Assistance Program;
- Served 2,412 citizens through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program;
- Served approximately 2,589 citizens through the Energy Programs.

The Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) helps families and individuals pay their utility bills, minimize heating crises, and make energy costs more affordable.

In Kent County in FY 2010 we:

- Assisted 1,299 customers
- Disbursed \$1,601,285 in assistance

Benefits to Customers Paid in 2010



Child and Adult Services partner with families and the community to stabilize and strengthen families. We have continued to make Family Centered Practice our focus and promoted its core strategies. We have seen successes with the implementation of Family Involvement Meetings (FIMS), which are structured meetings with family and community members. We held 12 Out of Home and 14 In Home FIMS in FY10.

We are very proud of our Child Welfare staff who met all of the Place Matters goals for FY 2010. KCDSS was one of 3 counties in the state singled out as an Outstanding Local Jurisdiction for our team meeting or exceeding each of the 2010 goals. We were also the top winner in the small county category for reducing the number of children in foster care by the highest percentage (19%). Staff continued to pursue our goal of creating a Child Advocacy Center. We wrote a \$27,680 grant to acquire the I-Record Audio/Video Recording System for recording child forensic interviews and to attend the 27th National Symposium on Child Abuse in Huntsville, Alabama. Due to the state's fiscal situation, the moratorium on new cases in Social Services to Adults and In-Home-Aide was partially lifted in March 2009, but accounts for a significant decline in the number of adults served in the SSTA program during FY 10. Staff organized the giving of Christmas presents to our Guardians with the assistance of a community partner.

Child and Adult Services

In FY 2010 we:

- Investigated 87 reports of abuse/neglect; 8 of the 87 were at the request of another agency;
- We assisted 89 children in 54 families in their own homes;
- Investigated 18 reports of abuse/neglect of vulnerable adults;
- Maintained Guardianship of 6 adults;
- Provided services to an average of 44 adults per month in the Social Service to Adults (SSTA), this is a 27% decrease from FY09. We averaged 16 per month on the waiting list;
- Assisted an average of 42 adults, families, and children per month utilizing In-Home Aide Services. We averaged 9 on this waiting list;
- Had a total of 10 foster homes, 2 were licensed in FY 10;
- Finalized 3 adoptions, meeting our goal;
- Averaged 16 children in foster placements, ending the year with 13;
- 84.6% of children in Out of Home care were placed in family homes; 69% of our foster children were placed in Kent County. 0.0% of foster children were placed in group homes.



Kent County—Place Matters Awards

(L to R) SSA Executive Director Carnitra White, Supervisor Nikki Strong, Director Kerry Ahearn-Brown, Services Assistant Director Paula Gish, and Interim Secretary Brian Wilbon