



Garrett County Department of Social Services



2009 Annual Report

From our Director



As the Director of the Garrett County Department of Social Services, it is with pride and enthusiasm that I present for your review our 2009 Annual Report.

During this past year my staff and I have been working vigorously to review and revise our Agency's Values, Mission, and Vision statements and continue our Strategic Planning review process in order to ensure that we provide only the highest quality of services to those who lives are touched by our services and programs.

I have aligned our Agency goals and priorities with those of DHR to ensure that as an Agency we strengthen our workforce through training opportunities, recruitment, and retention. Our Agency continues to make great strides for our customers enrolled in our Garrett WORKS program as well as our Wheels to Work program. Along with DHR, our Agency has taken a pro-active approach to the Place Matters initiative and the exciting changes and challenges it brings. GCDSS Adult Services strive to provide vulnerable adults with the best possible assistance while maintaining the least restrictive living environment.

The Agency's Advisory Board remains a positive and valued advocate providing insight into the unique needs of our community and customers. Members of the Agency's Advisory Board play a vital role, using their knowledge regarding Agency programs and services to provide a factual bridge of information between our Agency and the community.

As Director of GCDSS, I value the continued support of an outstanding and dedicated staff. During these trying economic times, I set great store in DHR's leadership, knowledge, and cooperation. I continue to value the many and varied contributions of Local Government and community partnerships. My staff and I look forward to continuing our collaboration on behalf of the customers we serve and the community we live in.

Sincerely,
Rick DeWitt, Director

Leadership Team

Rick DeWitt
Director

Tamra Canfield
Assistant Director Services

Tom Rosser
**Assistant Director Family Investment
Administration**

Phil Gillum
Assistant Director Child Support

Alicia Helbig
Assistant Director Administration

Advisory Board Members

William Aspinall, Chair

Kim Durst, Vice Chairperson

Lesa Whittemore, Treasurer/Secretary

**Denny Glotfelty, County
Commissioner**

Barbara Baker

Beverly Beard

Heather Hanline

Dr. Brenda McCartney

Carolyn Taylor

Wendy Sharpless

Robert Stephens



Values

We value the effort, experience, knowledge, and professionalism of our employees to respond to the needs and deliver services to our customers. We value our employee's ability to inform our customers of the programs and services they are entitled and their obligation to actively participate in the process.

We value our partnerships with other community agencies that contribute to the delivery of service to our customers.

We value and respect our customers as individuals as we work together to improve the quality of their lives.

Mission

We will aggressively pursue opportunities to assist Garrett County residents in economic need, increase prevention efforts, and protect vulnerable children and adults.

Vision

We envision Garrett County residents living free from abuse and neglect while maximizing their potential for self-sufficiency.

Dedicated to: Prevention, Protection, and Self-sufficiency

Customers of the Garrett County Department of Social Services have the following rights:

- ◆ **To receive appropriate service (s).**
- ◆ **Services which are free from harm and mental, physical and sexual abuse/exploitation by staff.**
- ◆ **An impartial, timely grievance procedure, which affords you the ability to exercise your rights as described in the "Consumer Grievance Policy".**
- ◆ **To receive services in accordance with the applicable individualized Service Plans which conform to the rules and regulations which govern this Agency.**
- ◆ **To participate in the development and/or revision of their Service Plan.**
- ◆ **To receive in appropriate terms and language, explanation of the following:**
 - content and objectives of the Service Plan;**
 - nature and significance of any possible adverse effects caused by the Service Plan;**
 - name, title and role of personnel directly responsible for carrying out Service Plan;**
 - when appropriate, other available service providers.**
- ◆ **To privacy and confidentiality of services provided and records maintained.**
- ◆ **To access your Service Plan. If the Case Manager/Services worker responsible for your case determines access to your records would be harmful to you or other interested parties, that information will not be released. Release of information to other agencies can only be done with your written consent unless provided for by regulation.**
- ◆ **To an explanation, in appropriate terms and language usage, of any charges or fees that will be applied before receiving services from the Agency.**
- ◆ **Upon admission to services, to be informed in appropriate terms and language and through written policies by the prominent posting of the above rights.**

Social Services Administration

Child Protective Services

The Child Protective Services Unit recently received some good news in the form of a new CPS Investigator, April Adams, LGSW. Ms. Adams recently graduated from the University of MD School of Social Work through the IV-E program. Ms. Adams has relocated to Garrett County and has recently completed the "Finding Words" training.

The GC Child Advocacy Center Concept Committee has taken a new step toward accreditation with monthly meetings to discuss common cases. The Agency is very pleased that Lisa Thayer Welch, GC State's Attorney, and Dr. Richard Porter, MD have taken time from their busy schedules to add their expertise to the discussions and planning. Dr. Porter recently completed training in the area of physical and sexual child abuse exams. He is assisted by his staff and a forensic nurse examiner Ms. Heather Cooper, from the Garrett County Health Department.

Along with the Agency's four CPS Investigators, Mandy DeWitt, LGSW, the VOCA therapist, compliments the Child Advocacy Center staff. Ms DeWitt is trained to provide therapeutic assistance to all child victims of physical and sexual abuse.

Jerry Schlossnagle, MSP detective, is involved in all physical and sexual abuse investigations. In his absence the Agency uses other MSP detectives or staff from the GC Sheriff's Department.

Mike Downton, CPS Investigator is currently stationed at our Grantsville office where he handles the cases in the northern end of Garrett County. Mr. Downton travels to the main office for staff meetings, supervision, and trainings when needed.

Rick Kutchman, Dawna Day, and April Adams handle cases in the central and southern sections of the County. This separation of duties is more effective and cuts expenses for driving State vehicles.

The next task for the Child Advocacy Center Committee is to develop a system for tracking investigations that will be approved by the National Children's Alliance, the governing body of Advocacy centers.

The staff of the Center are planning to attend a National Conference in Huntsville, Alabama that will provide advanced training for all disciplines involved in the Center's operation.

In-Home Family Services

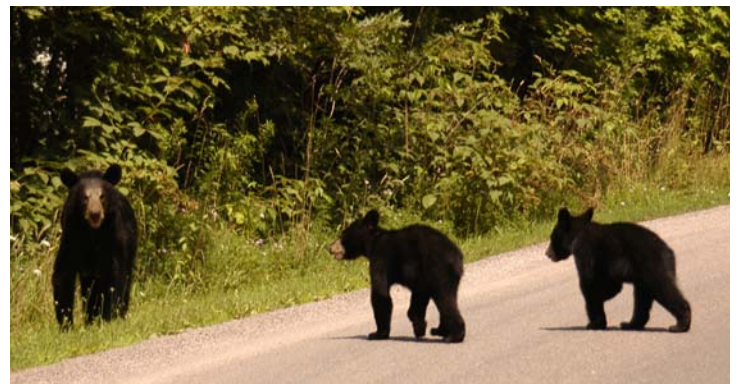
The Garrett County In-Home Family Service Program's purpose is to promote the safety and well-being of children and their families; to preserve family unity when children's safety can be supported; to maintain permanency for children; and to empower families to achieve or sustain independence and self-sufficiency. The program's goals include enhancing the parents' ability to create a safe, stable and nurturing home environment that promotes healthy child development; preventing out-of-home placement of children when safety can be promoted to a sufficient proportion; and providing, referring, and

coordinating services needed to achieve or maintain family safety, stability, independence, and unity.

The Garrett County Department of Social Services provides a continuum of service programs designed to achieve the purpose and goals of In-Home Family Services and to meet the needs of individual families.

The Unit consists of 8 workers who have provided services to over 72 families in FY 2009 in Garrett County.

All of the programs within the Service Unit are accredited by the National Council on Accreditation, New York.



Social Services Administration

Foster Care & Adoption

The Garrett County Foster Care/Adoption Program provides a temporary, out-of-home placement for children whose biological families are experiencing difficulties in parenting and/or supervision. Placement of children occurs within the context of licensed foster families, treatment foster homes, group homes, and residential treatment centers. The goal of the program is to provide high quality case management services and to secure a permanent living arrangement for each child as soon as possible.

Regular Foster Care - provides services to vulnerable children from birth to age 21. In FY 2009, the program provided services to 75 children utilizing 52 licensed foster homes. The length of stay for children in the program declined following new legislation and with due diligence from GCDSS staff to pursue permanent placement for cases of children in care for 15 months. Nearly all foster families are being “dually” licensed which means they will provide foster care as well as adopt. This has aided in the increasing number of finalized adoptions in the County.

Semi-Independent Living – provides services to youths in foster care that are 16 years or older and emancipation upon reaching adulthood. The purpose of this program is to assist youth with life skills, educational advancement, career planning, employment, and money management skills.

These skills will prepare these foster children for success as adults. The goal of this program is to teach skills that are vital for self-sufficiency.

Treatment Foster Care – provides services to severely, emotionally-disturbed foster children while maintaining placement in a foster family setting. Completing its 11th full year in FY 2009, the program served 11 children. All program staff maintained national certification in non-violent crisis intervention techniques.

Kinship Care – provides services to extended family members meeting the needs of children accepted for care through the foster care program. Placement of foster children with an extended family member is preferred if removal from the biological family is imminent.

Adoption – licenses and matches adoptive homes with waiting children through the Maryland Adoption Resource Exchange program (M.A.R.E.). The program finalized 7 adoptions for Garrett County in 2009. In addition, GCDSS has partnered with other counties to find suitable families for waiting children. GCDSS exceeded the goal of 4 finalized adoptions set by the State.



Social Services Administration

Adult Protective Services

Secretary Brenda Donald has reorganized some of the programs previously administered by Community Services Administration to now be under the auspicious of the Social Services Administration. In order to streamline those programs effectiveness and efficiency, the Adult Protective Services Program was one of the programs that was included in this transition.

Garrett County DSS continues to provide quality services to the adult population through voluntary, as well as mandated, programs. Vulnerable adults who have been mistreated, exploited, or have placed themselves at risk receive services under the Adult Protective Services program (APS). All APS reports are screened by the Assistant Director and the lead APS worker prior to assignment for investigation. If allegations of abuse, self-neglect, or exploitation or neglect by others are proven valid, services are provided to prevent further harm or institutionalization. Of the 51 investigations completed in Fiscal Year 2009, 33 were self-neglect, 16 were neglect by others, and 2 were exploitation.

Educational workshops on APS and Domestic Violence have been provided to professionals and members of the community in the previous year. Garrett County DSS purchased several videos that could be used by local agencies and the community for educational purposes. Content of the tapes included how to recognize the stages of Alzheimer's Disease and how to effectively deal with this progressive disease.

The lead APS worker served on a state panel to update the current APS manual. This has been completed.

Social Services to Adults (SSTA) – is a voluntary program for disabled and elderly adults who may be in need of financial, medical, social, or psychological assistance. Customers may also be in need of, and/or eligible for, In-Home Aid Services (IHAS). Chore services are provided to help prevent

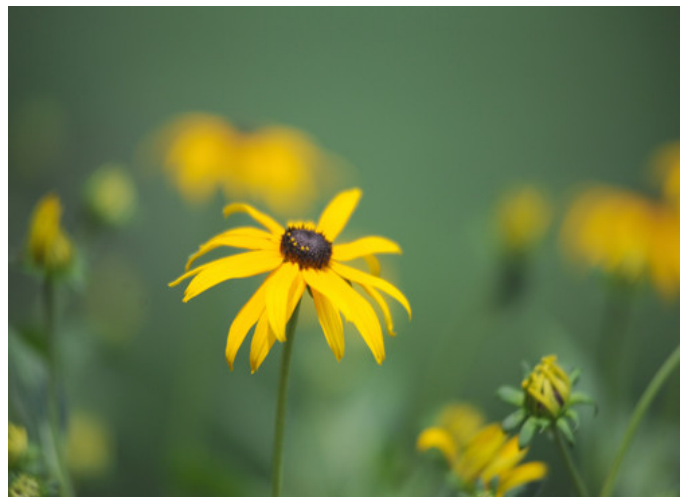
institutionalization. The goal is to enable customers to remain in their community in the least restrictive manner so that their needs are met.

Customer safety is very important while services are being delivered. Customers may be referred to a step-up program, such as APS; or, they may be stepped-down from APS to SSTA/IHAS.

The APS and Social Services to Adults Programs have seen an increase in referrals due to community knowledge, increased need, and our customers are living longer. Approximately 100 customers were served monthly by the Garrett Co. Adult/In Home Aid program. The department collaborates with the local Area Agency on Aging, the Health Department, and the local Core Service Agency to meet the needs of customers in the most efficient and effective manner.

Project Home – has one certified home serving four customers. The Agency's goal is to provide assistance to customers in the least restrictive setting with a homelike atmosphere. These individuals attend the local Adult Day Care program and receive socialization skill enhancement.

All Adult, APS, Project Home, and Guardianship programs are accredited by the National Council on Accreditation in New York.



Family Investment Administration

The Family Investment Program (FIP) provides Medical Assistance, Food Stamps—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Purchase of Care (Day Care assistance), Temporary Cash Assistance to Families (TCA), Temporary Cash Assistance to Disabled Adults, Long Term Care (Medical Assistance for Nursing Home residents), and Job Readiness, Placement, and Retention services. Family Investment is segmented into four interdependent units, two teams of Case Managers, Garrett WORKS (work opportunities) and Clerical Support.

Benefits issued by Family Investment are based both on technical and financial criteria as determined by Federal, State, and local policies. The Family Investment Unit has exceeded the state and federal goal for error rate in all Family Investment programs for seven years running. This reflects the hard work and dedication of FIP staff.

During the last state fiscal year, the Food Stamp caseload continued to increase, with a large jump of 15% more cases this year over last. The Food Stamp caseload now stands higher than our past record in 1994 (the end of the last recession). The Community Medical Assistance caseload increased also by 30.8%. The state expanded the Medical Assistance program to include adults in Maryland's Children Health Program (MCHP) households effective 7/1/08. Since then 1167 individuals were added to the caseload. As predicted in last year's report, as the public becomes more aware of this expansion, the MA caseload will grow, but we had predicted by only 10%. The Long Term Care (Nursing Home) Medical Assistance dropped slightly by 4.7%. The size of this caseload is driven by the number of nursing home beds in the county. The Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP), provides cash assistance to disabled adults increased by 11.2%.

The TCA caseload increased by 27.5%. The dramatic

increase in our core programs, Food Stamps (now know as SNAP), MA and TCA, are an indication of the depth of the recession and its affect on Garrett citizens. GCDSS is now seeing many applicants who have never had to ask for help before and our agency continues to serve as a safety net for all residents of Garrett County who are in need of our services.

Garrett WORKS has a particularly challenging job in light of current circumstances. The strenuous work program requirements to qualify for TCA still discourage many applicants. Garrett WORKS helps customers find and retain employment. Jobs skills enhancement offers help for working customers to improve their skills and advance their careers. During '09 to date Garrett WORKS has already met our job placement goal of 30, making 31 placements as of 6/2/09. Additionally, Garrett County has reached a monthly Universal Engagement average of 100%, and a Work Participation Rate of 89%, which currently leads the state.

“Wheels to Work,” one of our most successful work programs, allows working customers to purchase or fix their used vehicles with low-cost loans. During fiscal year '09 to date, the program placed or repaired 14 vehicles. Wheels to Work is a partnership program between Garrett County Department of Social Services and Garrett County Community Action. The Secretary awarded the agency extra funding for Wheels to Work in the last two years, and additional funding as a result of the August 2008 budget meeting. Recently the Secretary met a Wheels to Work customer here in the parking lot to look at her car and talk about the program.

Family Investment met or exceeded all performance measures set by DHR, as well as those set in our own strategic plan, for SFY 2009. Wage at placement is currently \$7.07 per hour. This is related directly to Garrett's economy.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	GOAL	ACTUAL
Application Processing Compliance		
Regular Applications	97%	99%
Food Stamp Error Rate	Below 6.0%	4.8%
TCA Error Rate	Below 3%	0%
TCA Job Placements	30	31 as of 6/2/09
Job Retention	70%	75.7%
Earnings Gain Rate	40%	63.3%
Work Participation Rate	50%	89%

Family Investment Administration

The largest caseload handled by Family Investment continues to be the Medical Assistance caseload. 21% of Garrett County's population participated in some kind of Medical Assistance program during 2009. This is third largest percentage of the general population that relies on Medical Assistance of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland, behind only Worcester County and Baltimore City.

The Purchase of Care weathered the major administrative changes of the last three years. The push by MSDE is toward formal day care, which has an education component. Unfortunately, there are too few of this type of providers in Garrett County. As of June 2009 the POC caseload stood at 113 children.

Family Investment continues to provide services to needy customers through Emergency Assistance for utilities, housing, and Burial Assistance. Through moving funds, we were able to have DHR approved extra EAFC funding for this fiscal year, and we have utilized most of to date. We increased the grant limit for Emergency Assistance for heat to \$800 a year, only to see a small reduction in cost when the price of fuel oil dropped with the recession.

FY 09 Statistics

Temporary Cash Assistance to families	Households	69
Temporary Emergency Medical and Housing Temporary Cash Assistance to disabled adults	Recipients/Cases	54
Public Assistance to Adults	Recipients/Cases	8
Purchase of Care (POC)	Children	113
Food Stamps	Households	1399
Medical Assistance-Community	Recipients	3782
Medical Assistance-Long Term Care (Nursing Homes)	Recipients	236

Local General Administration

The Local General Administration (LGA) is responsible for numerous support functions including the Finance Office and Administration. The Finance Office is responsible for all financial operations including accounting and budgeting. Administration is responsible for personnel, procurement, inventory, fleet, network, and facilities management.

LGA Unit Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2009

Outcomes

Effectively used resources to meet agency needs without deficit spending.

Limited resources were used to meet core mission.

The fiscal year was closed with no deficits.

Upgraded the agency's multi-media capability.

Decreased network downtime and increased productivity.

Streamlined fiscal processes to gain efficiencies in operations.

Successfully obtained the Children's Justice Act Committee (CJAC) Grant.

Maximized personnel resources to better implement best practices and streamline customer service.



Child Support Enforcement

The Child Support Enforcement Unit of GCDSS plays an important role in carrying out the Agency's goal of assisting customers in becoming self sufficient.

Since 1999 the BOSE has been speaking to 9th graders at the local high schools about their growing responsibilities, budgets, and reality of paying child support. This message has been presented to approximately 5,500 students since the beginning of the program. Student feedback indicates that this program has and continues to be enthusiastically received.

Child Support Services Include

- ◆ Locating non-custodial parents
- ◆ Obtaining a Court Order for Child Support and Medical Insurance

- ◆ Collection and distribution of payments
- ◆ Enforcement of Court orders
- ◆ Review and adjustment of Court Orders

Paternity Establish Services are available through genetic testing and an In-Hospital Paternity program.

There are a number of administrative tools for enforcing Court Orders that include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Drivers License Suspension
- ◆ New Hire Reporting
- ◆ Automatic Earnings Withholding
- ◆ Interception of Federal and State Tax Refunds

PQI/CQI FY 2009 at a Glance

June 2008	<p>Need for second meeting</p> <p>Review Sign-up Sheets (Facilitators & Newsletter)</p> <p>New Employee CQI Training – update</p> <p>Review of DHR’s PQI Template – specific pages for discussion – e-mail will be forwarded to Council Members</p>
July	<p>Need for second meeting</p> <p>Continue the review of DHR’s PQI Template – specific pages for discussion</p> <p>Review Newsletter Sign-up Sheet – Zanea will send a reminder e-mail to everyone</p> <p>Employee Recognition Committee – have they made arrangements for coverage for July 18th – All Staff Picnic</p>
August	<p>Continue the review of DHR’s PQI Template – specific pages for discussion (beginning with page 20)</p> <p>Agency Suggestion Box</p> <p>Committee Composition</p> <p>MD Charities - Post Parameters and Sign-up Sheet</p>
September	<p>Continue the review of DHR’s PQI Template – specific pages for discussion (beginning with page 20)</p> <p>Send reminder to staff regarding MD Charities Committee</p> <p>Develop Criteria for Agency CQI Suggestion Box and Council Response</p> <p>Need for a Second Meeting</p> <p>Zanea requested attendance from CQI reports (every 6 months)</p>
October	<p>CQI Committee Reports</p> <p>Need for a Second Meeting</p>
November	<p>Recruit for New CQI Council Members, 2009 Holiday, and 2009 Employee Recognition Committee sign-up</p> <p>Space Utilization Report & Story Board</p> <p>Continue the review of DHR’s PQI Template – specific pages for discussion (beginning with page 20)</p> <p>Need for a Second Meeting</p>
December	<p>Review Space Invaders – Potential Solutions</p> <p>Review Sign-up sheets for 2009 Holiday Committee, 2009 Employee Recognition Committee, and CQI Council</p> <p>Need for a Second Meeting</p>
January 2009	<p>Invite New Council Members - Co-chair Alicia Helbig, Sue Sines, Josh Hazelwood, Stacy Sisler, Lorena Fazenbaker, Jenny McNally, and Brenda Thomas</p> <p>Welcome New CQI Council Members</p> <p>Review CQI By-laws and a brief orientation for new members</p> <p>Update from Leadership Meeting regarding Space Utilization Team Recommendations from Council</p>
February	<p>Discuss CQI Meeting Day & Time</p> <p>Review and Discuss CQI By-Laws</p> <p>Space Issues – Grantsville</p> <p>PQI – Discussion</p> <p>Review Committee Sign-up Sheets</p>
March	<p>Grantsville Space Utilization Discussion</p> <p>Review first 10 pages of DHR’s PQI Template</p> <p>Review – Internal Customer Survey Results (if available)</p> <p>Review Training & Strategic Planning Committee sign-up sheets</p>
April	<p>Committee Updates</p> <p>DHR PQI Plan – Council will review pages 11 – 31</p> <p>Space Issues</p> <p>Internal Customer Survey –Modal Discussion</p> <p>Committee Funds Policy</p> <p>Hot Box Suggestion/Question Form for Staff</p>
May	<p>DHR/GCDSS PQI Plan</p> <p>Committee Funds Policy</p> <p>Need for a Second Meeting</p>
June	<p>DHR/GCDSS PQI Plan Review and Vote</p> <p>Space Issues</p> <p>Internal Customer Survey – Modal Discussions</p> <p>Committee Funds Policy</p> <p>6 Steps to PQI</p> <p>Review Newsletter Sign-up</p> <p>Need for Second Meeting</p>

The leadership and staff of GCDSS are committed to providing only the highest quality services to our customers and community.



GCDSS Staff hosted fun activities at the in the 2009 Garrett County Kids First Fun Fair.



**Garrett County Spring 2009 Job Fair
Julie ShROUT , Sarah Trottier, and Director Rick DeWitt (not pictured) represented GCDSS and shared the Agency's commitment to educating Garrett County Residents who may be eligible for our programs and services.**

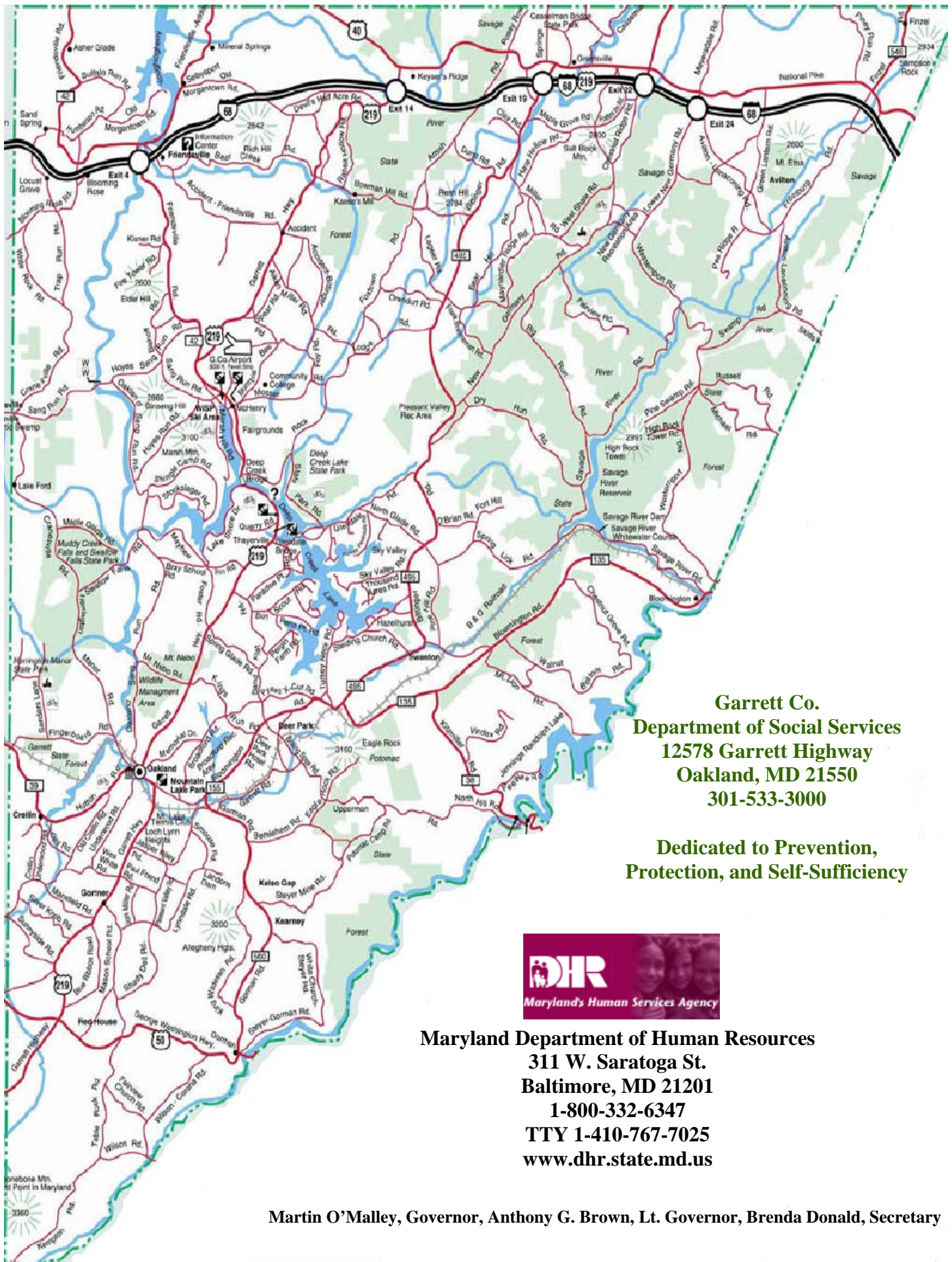


Secretary Brenda Donald, Deputy Secretary Stacy Rodgers, and Director Rick DeWitt congratulate a Garrett Works customer on the vehicle she was able to purchase with assistance from the GC Wheels to Work Program.

Secretary Brenda Donald and Deputy Secretary Stacy Rodgers visited GCDSS on May 5, 2009 and received a warm and enthusiastic welcome from GCDSS Director Rick DeWitt and staff.



Matthew Everline was selected as Garrett Co. DSS's Social Worker of the year for 2009. Matt was our nominee for "Social Worker of the Year" based on his diligent efforts on behalf of the customers he serves.



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Dedicated to Prevention,
Protection, and Self-Sufficiency



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Martin O'Malley, Governor, Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor, Brenda Donald, Secretary