



DCFS
Connections
Winter 2014
Care * Commit * Connect



Director's Note...from Cecile Blucker

Seven hundred twenty four! Represents the number of children who found forever homes through adoptions in SFY 2014. November is National Adoption Month and November 22 is recognized as National Adoption Day. National Adoption Month is a collective effort to raise awareness of the more than 100,000 children in foster care waiting to find a permanent, loving families - their forever home! I love the theme for this year - Promoting and Supporting Sibling Connections! It pays tribute and brings about awareness of the unique bond between siblings. It is the longest lasting relationship most people have, longer than the parent-child or spousal relationship. During November, there will be a number of events statewide highlighting National Adoptions Month.

Over the last two decades, research has demonstrated the critical nature of sibling bonds and their importance for children's development and emotional well-being. Some research suggests that children and youth in foster care experience better outcomes when placed with their siblings. In AR we have seen the percentage of siblings placed together continue to increase.

Even though we had 724 children find their forever home in SFY 2014, there are 587 children who need a forever home. Through partnerships with people like Channel 11, Conway Rotary Club, Project Zero, the CALL, Christians for Kids - we are bringing about awareness for the need for adoptive homes. In addition we are able to share our need for quality foster parents. Through the IV E Waiver Demonstration Project intervention regarding foster parent recruitment and retention and through the work of our Diligent Recruitment grant (ARCCC - AR Creating Connections for Children) we have the opportunity to increase the number of foster homes for our children and to meet their specific needs.

I think it is very important for us to remember the impact our decisions have on the children and families we serve. Not only do those decisions make a difference today, they have long lasting impacts on people. When we think that separating siblings doesn't impact a life or siblings being adopted separately doesn't have an impact on a life today and tomorrow - I will challenge you to go to the Adopt US Kids Website - Stories of Aging Out and hear the story from Shane. He will share how decisions made early in his life continue to impact him as an adult. He shares his experiences in foster care, being separated from his sibling, his sibling being adopted and him not and aging out of the system without being adopted. He can tell the story because it's his story and it's very powerful. We should think about Shane's story in our decision making - remembering the long lasting IMPACT on their lives. Thanks to all of you for the difference you make each day in the lives of children and families and the IMPACT on them today and tomorrow!



NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH – EVENTS AROUND THE STATE

by Marilyn Counts, Adoption Manager



November is National Adoption Awareness Month. Originally introduced in 1976, the aim was to promote awareness of the need for adoptive families for children in foster care. Today, the month is full of activities and news highlighting the heartwarming stories of families being created by adoption. Sibling groups, older youth and minority children in foster care in need of safe, stable and loving homes represent the greatest need. This year National Adoption Day is on Saturday, November 22, 2014. We always plan special events for November and A Place to Call Home will feature children weekly during October and November. The Adoption Specialists have been asked to look at their waiting children and send the names of a child or children they would like to feature. We are proud to announce that a total of 53 finalizations are planned in November.

The following is a list of activities planned in each Area:

Area 1 Area 1 had one big event that covered the celebration of National Adoption Month and a meet and greet early this year. It was sponsored by Christian Life Cathedral Church, The CALL, CASA and DHS. Other sponsors were Zaxby's, Harps, Tysons, Royal Fun, Arvest Bank, Fayetteville Police Department, Fayetteville EMS, and Fire Department. The name of the event was "Under the Big Top" and was held Saturday, October 18, 2014, from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. There were about 100-125 people in attendance at the come and go event. There were all kinds of activities for the children and hamburgers, hotdogs, cookies and drinks were served. There was a cupcake walk, bouncy house, all kinds of games, and a clown making balloon hats and animals.

Fun photos and family photos were provided by Dawn Reed. A room was set up with the Project Zero photos. Heather did the Project Zero presentation with Christie Erwin on Sunday at the CLC church. We talked to adopt only families about available children over the state plus ours. Christie was doing the craft fairs while she was in NWA. **Twelve adoptions are scheduled for November.**

Area 2 Area 2 is having a meeting/reception for Adoption Awareness on November 18th from 5:30-7:30 at the Sebastian County DCFS office. Waiting families and any families with current placements or finalized adoptions that want to attend will be invited and we will have a question/answer session with them. Refreshments will be served. **Area 2 will finalize 13 adoptions in November**

Area 3 15th Annual National Adoption Day Event will be hosted by the Department of Children and Family Services, Garland County Adoption Coalition and Garland County Juvenile Court. The event is scheduled for November 22, 2014, from 10-12 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 228 Spring Street in Hot Springs, AR 71901. There will be food, fun, prizes, testimonials, and two adoptions are planned. This event is to encourage people to consider adoption of waiting children in foster care, or to even open as a foster home for foster children. **Area 3 will have 2 adoptions that will finalize during November.**

Area 4 Area 4 will celebrate National Adoption Month on Thursday, November 6, 2014, at New Life Church in Magnolia. This year's celebration titled "Every Child Needs a Home" will begin at 6:00 p.m. and is hosted by the DCFS Adoption Unit. Refreshments will be served. Area 4 is also planning to

have a recruitment/public awareness event in Texarkana. **Two adoptions will be finalized in Miller County in November.**

Area 5 Area 5 has one adoption planned.

October 14th a balloon release was held in Boone County, each balloon represented a child available for adoption in Boone, Baxter, Newton and Marion counties.



Judge Gary Isbell releases a balloon in honor of a child available for adoption.

There will be an Adoption Awareness Celebration Nov 14th in Marion Co. Tentatively it's scheduled to be located at Church on the Rock at 6:30 on Nov 7th.

An Adoption Awareness Celebration is planned in Faulkner Co at Backacher's Ranch from 6-7.

Area 6 Area 6 will have an Adoption Event at the Pulaski County Juvenile Court on Thursday, November 6, 2014, beginning at 12:00 a.m. **Eleven adoptions will be finalized**

Area 7 Area 7 does not have any adoptions set for November. Area 7 will attend a CALL event November 6th in Cabot for adoptive parents and foster parents. There will be recognition of families who have adopted from foster care.

Area 8 Area 8 has a foster/adoptive parent conference is planned for the last weekend in October and all efforts have been going into planning that. It is the "Foster/Adopt Family Conference-the Heart of DCFS". **Ten adoptions will be finalized in November.**

Area 9 Area 9 will host an appreciation luncheon will be held in the Crittenden County office with all adoptive families and children that have finalized an adoption this year from Cross, Crittenden, Jackson, Woodruff. Area 9 will also hold a Balloon release (date not yet set) in honor of all children that have been adopted this year. **So far 4 adoptions are scheduled**

Area 10 Area 10 will host the 15th Annual National Adoption Day in all 9 counties, Arkansas, Ashley, Drew, Desha, Chicot, Lee, Phillips, Monroe and St. Francis for all the children waiting for adoption.

The Adoption and Resource Unit and planned a balloon release in each of the nine counties. Each county will utilized a specialized child care center or daycare to allow the children to release the balloons while leaving value information at each facility in regarding to adoption. Each balloon will represent the children waiting. The dates for each event have not been confirmed but all events will occur within normal business hours. **Area 10 proud to announce one (1) adoption scheduled in November.**

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS SUPPORT GROUP

BY STEPHANIE STONE

If you know anyone who is caring for a child with an FASD, please invite them to attend the monthly FASD support group. Facilitated by David Deere, Executive Director Partners for Inclusive Communities. Meetings are held 1st Saturday of every month, 2p.m.-3p.m. (Child-care available), Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church, 1601 Louisiana Street, Little Rock, AR. 72206 For more information please contact, Stephanie Stone at 501-682-1573 or

Stephanie.stone@dhs.arkansas.gov



DCFS'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY BAZAAR

Our annual **Holiday Bazaar** will be held on **Friday, December 3rd** in the first floor conference rooms. This year we will have a **Bake Sale, Hot Dog/Chili Sale, Personalized Ornaments, Christmas Wreaths** and a **Silent Auction** where you may bid on items. There will also be gift certificates from restaurants you may purchase along with other items. A special feature this year is a cookbook titled **Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice.**



DCFS ACTIVITIES FOR CHRISTMAS OR FOSTER CHILDREN



October 31st

Boo Bake Sale - Sale was a success! Thanks everyor



Lead—Kandis Romes

Helpers—Ora Barton, Robbie Lake, Lindsay McCoy

November 5th

Popcorn Sale – Sale raised \$337 for the foster children of AR.

Lead--Danielle Barlow

Helpers—Julie Mullins (cashier), Lillie Owens,

Miranda Raines, Danielle Kimbrough, Lindsay McCoy



November 17th

Gingerbread Tree Kick Off



Lead-Velma Sorrows & Darlene McClendon
Helpers—Tricia Persons, Shirley Vaughn, Nicki Long, Ora Barton, Miranda Raines, anyone on the list

November 19th

Carmel Apples

Lead—Patrena Tabron
Gray, Brooke Harris

Helpers—Julie Mullins (cashier), Ora Barton, Julie



December 3rd

Bake Sale



Lead—Patrena Tabron
Mary Boykin

Helpers—Julie Mullins (cashier), Terri Stephens,

December 5th

Bazaar

Chili dogs Lead—Keith Metz Helpers—Julie Mullins (cashier), Megon Bush,
Lindsay McCoy, Brooke Harris, anyone on the list

T-shirts Lead—Marilyn Counts/Danielle Barlow

Ornaments Lead—Nicki Long Helpers—anyone on the list

Decorations Lead—Miranda Raines Helpers—anyone on the list

Baskets/Silent Auction - Lead—Nicki Long & Patrena Tabron



THE LIGHTER SIDE OF DCFS



AREA 1

The administrative area from DCO in Benton Co. joined together to create "The Wizard of Oz" with the yellow brick road, all the characters, and the candy hanging from the ceiling. They won the prize for best overall execution.



Shannon Saindon's door it has the mannequin clown and the black and white chevron paper. She won the prize for the scariest door.



Someone with DCO has the invisible man (running on green grass with a blue sky...it's also in there somewhere) that won the silliest door.



Sara Coker won Best Costume... she is a circus performer with hoola hoops and had a whole routine with hoola hoop tricks to share.



Alma Gomez and Sara Coker teamed up to win the most creative and best overall with their wolf howling at the moon with the 3D bats.

DCFS CARE * COMMIT * CONNECT TEE SHIRTS FOR SALE



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

SHORT SLEEVE			
Quantity	Size	Price	Total
	SMALL	\$15.00	
	MEDIUM	\$15.00	
	LARGE	\$15.00	
	X-LARGE	\$15.00	
	2x	\$16.50	
	3x	\$16.50	
LONG SLEEVE			
Quantity	Size	Price	Total
	SMALL	\$20.00	
	MEDIUM	\$20.00	
	LARGE	\$20.00	
	X-LARGE	\$20.00	
	2x	\$21.50	
	3x	\$21.50	
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED			

MAIL PAYMENT TO: DHS/ DCFS ADOPTION SERVICES UNIT,
 ATTN: MARILYN COUNTS–
 P. O. BOX 1437, SLOT S565,
 LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72203
FOR MORE INFO EMAIL:
DANIELLE.BARLOW@DHS.ARKANSAS.GOV OR
MARILYN.COUNTS@DHS.ARKANSAS.GOV

RECRUITMENT IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS (RIEB)

BY GREG MOORE

The values and principles of *Family to Family* provide that all levels of staff should understand the profiles of children entering foster care and the resource family needs for their respective jurisdictions. In this way, recruitment is not the responsibility of a particular group of staff. Instead, it is everyone's responsibility to recruit and support resource families. This underlying tenant of *Family to Family* is encapsulated in the notion that recruitment is everyone's business (RIEB).



The following are some examples of how all levels of staff support the recruitment and retention of resource families:

Understanding the Need

DCFS staff has contact with all kinds of professionals. During such communication, these professionals may inquire about how to foster or adopt. By understanding the characteristics of children in care, the types of resource families needed and the processes through which prospective families enter the system, staff can quickly and succinctly articulate these needs to interested individuals and how they may formally inquire about becoming a resource family.

Partnering

Foster parents should be part of the team and work in partnership with the child, family, Agency and other involved service providers. Agency staff should first and foremost treat foster families as full partners, and foster families should act as partners with birth families. All should be actively involved in the efforts to achieve permanency. All should support reunification but commit to keeping a child in the foster home for as long as necessary, without disruption.

Support

The problem in maintaining enough foster homes is principally one of retention. Many parents leave the system before their first year is over or shortly thereafter. Surveys repeatedly find that the primary reason they drop out is lack of responsiveness, communication and support from the foster care system. By quickly and courteously responding to foster parents, whether in regard to a crisis involving a foster child, a question about a board payment or anything else, staff contribute to the retention of resource families, thus reducing recruitment needs.



We all impact the recruitment and retention of resource families, from their initial call to the Agency, to the training with which we provide them, to the support they receive once children are placed in their homes. Therefore, we all have a responsibility to maintain a constant awareness of recruitment possibilities and how our actions support retention.

ADOPTION EXCELLENCE AWARD

BY MARILYN COUNTS

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) established the Adoption Excellence Awards program in 1997 to recognize outstanding accomplishments in achieving permanency for America's children waiting in foster care. These awards honor States, child welfare agencies, organizations, courts, businesses, individuals, and families.

This year, the Adoption Excellence Awards will be presented to 13 recipients at a ceremony held on Tuesday, November 18, 2014 at the Hubert H. Humphrey Building, 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20201. The ceremony will take place at 1:00 – 3:00p.m. during the Children's Bureau Celebration of National Adoption Month. In addition to presentation of the awards, this joint Children's Bureau and AdoptUSKids celebration will highlight the 10th anniversary of the National Adoption Recruitment Campaign and launch the newest public service announcements that encourage the adoption of sibling groups from foster care. There will also be a national sibling photo exhibit featuring sibling groups available for adoption throughout the country. The National Adoption Month Celebration is by invitation only and will be attended by federal and state child welfare professionals and families.

This year Dawn Scott, KTHV, Channel 11, was nominated and selected to receive a 2014 Adoption Excellence Award in the category Individuals/Professionals. She was recognized for the extraordinary contributions she has made in providing adoption and other permanency outcomes for children in foster care through "A Place To Call Home". Her nomination is included below.



Adoption Excellence Awards Deadline to Submit: July 31, 2014

AEA Application for Business, Media, Child Welfare & Judicial Systems Change

Date: 7/31/2014



Nominee:

Name: Dawn Scott
Email: dscott@thv11.com
Phone: (501)244-4545
Title: News Anchor
Organization: KTHV-TV Channel 11
Address:

Nominated by:

Name: Marilyn Counts
Email: Marilyn.counts@dhs.arkansas.gov
Phone: (501)682-8437
Title: Adoption Manager

Organization: Department of Human Services / Division of Children and Family Services
Address: P. O. Box 1437 Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437

Award Category: (select one)

- Business Contributions/Initiatives
- Media/Social Media/Public Awareness
- Child Welfare/Judicial Systemic Change

* Remember that reviewers will be looking for excellence defined as superior leadership and innovation which has contributed to positive outcomes for children that are above and beyond the ordinary.

Nominations for Business Contributions, Media/Public Awareness, and Child Welfare Systemic Change should exemplify all of the following criteria:



Innovation/Uniqueness: New approaches (markedly different from the typical) that result in permanency.

Dawn produces and anchors the station's Emmy Award Winning "A Place to Call Home" segments, which feature Arkansas children available for adoption. Arkansas Division of Children and Family Services is very fortunate that Dawn was chosen to host our partnership with Today's THV in Little Rock, "A Place To Call Home." It is obvious Dawn cares about our waiting children and diligently finds wonderful places to host the tapings.

Some of these businesses include the Children's Library, the Museum of Discovery, Envy Nails (for manicures and pedicures), a Painted Pig (for creating ceramic art), the Wonder Place (where children can play dress up and use their imagination), the Apricot Boutique, the Little Rock Zoo, our new Animal Shelter, a dance studio, Hearts and Hooves (to ride horses), Cold Stone Creamery, North Little Rock Police, and many other interesting places. She has numerous business connections who graciously treat our foster children to a very special day. One clothing store, owned by Dawn's mother, gave a fifteen year old girl several pieces of clothing and she was thrilled. The children love these opportunities for an outing and to be made to feel special. She is committed to our waiting children and assisting in our efforts to find forever families for them. She connects with our waiting children and businesses and makes their lives so very special for that day. She truly exemplifies our mission of Care, Commit, Connect.



Overall Impact/Benefits: Demonstrated commitment to measuring outcomes, impact, and continuous improvement.

Over 55% of the children featured on "A Place To Call Home" have found forever families through this recruitment tool. One segment featured six foster children available for adoption and we were undated with over 450 inquiries for them. Her stories are poignant and include brief interviews with the waiting children which sometimes are heart wrenching. As a result of these segments, the community is more acutely aware of these children and all children in the state's foster care system wanting and needing permanency through adoption.

She has met with the News Director and they want to feature more children and once a month feature a success story. We are in the process of selecting the children now for weekly shoots during the months of October and November.

Use of Resources: Widely used resources (e.g. volunteers, social media, partnerships, businesses) which contribute to significantly increasing adoptions and awareness.

As a news anchor, Dawn has many contacts and organizations willing to partner and offer their services for these segments. Children love the special attention they receive from the sponsors. Dawn always tries to match the place to video with the child's interests and this creates a wonderful experience for the children and the viewer.



Dawn uses social media to let her many friends on Facebook know about adoption and children who are available. A Place To Call Home is prominently featured on KTHV's website and all of the videos are available for viewing. There is also a hyperlink to our Arkansas Heart Gallery where families can view our waiting children along a 100 work bio on them. KTHV actively promotes adoption of children from the foster care system and Dawn has played the major role in that. She keeps the videos fresh and interesting.

Community Outreach/ Involvement: Significant efforts to connect with the community and raise awareness.

In December of 2012, Dawn put together a Christmas Special and invited children who had been featured on "A Place To Call Home" and the Adoption Specialists to the Museum of Discovery for a celebration. The Museum of Discovery donated space from 5-7p on Wednesday December 5th for the Place to Call Home

Christmas Party. Dawn found a church to donate money to buy the gifts for the children. There was also a live special during the 6:30-700 p.m. half hour. There was a wonderful response from the viewing public to this feature and we received many inquiries about adoption. Arkansas' First Lady, Ginger Beebe, was also in attendance and spoke. She helped Dawn buy presents for all the children who had been featured. Mrs. Beebe was adopted when she was a child and spoke of the importance of adoption for waiting children and how it had affected her life. In December of 2013, the second Christmas Special was held at the Museum of Discovery. The children love going there and really enjoy all the wonderful things to do. It followed the same format as the year before and our First Lady was present again. The children loved their gifts and loved being on television. This special sparked many inquiries about our waiting children.

Collaboration/Partnerships: Sustained collaborative partnerships with programs/organizations/individuals, which contributed to positive outcomes. With all of Dawn's connections to businesses, civic groups, and other organizations, we have experienced a unique interest in adoption in Arkansas. The collaborative partnerships just keep getting better. Adoption from foster care is a concept that most people in Arkansas are readily aware of now. That is evident by the number of inquiries we are receiving. "A Place To Call Home" has made the public aware of the older children, sibling groups and children of color that are waiting for a family and families are responding,

Sustainability: Long-term plan and demonstrated efforts/activities to maintain high performance which promote increased adoption.

We review and renew our agreement with KTHV every year and this year we added a digital component that reaches all areas of the state. Our partnership with KTHV has been the most successful recruitment tools we have. They are constantly coming up with new ideas and opportunities for featuring our waiting children and highlighting adoption from foster care in Arkansas.



Ability to Replicate: Model/modified approaches that others can readily replicate and sustain to achieve increased positive outcomes.

This is such a positive way to bring about adoption awareness and every state should be able to work with a local television station to implement this idea. There are many Gannett stations around the country. When the digital feature was presented to Executive Staff, people were here from Casey Family Programs and wanted to know if a Gannett station was in their area. The General Manager of KTHV was present and handed out business cards with the local affiliate written on his card. The Casey staff were very interested in replicating this feature at their local levels.



for the past five years.

Leadership: Degree to which the initiative/approach motivated and inspired people toward a common goal and improved performance.

Dawn does truly exemplify excellence in adoptions by providing a wonderful venue from which to tell our story about the importance of permanency for our children. The children love visiting with her and having their pictures taken with her. She always takes time to listen to them and makes sure they are treated in a special way for their special day. Dawn is on the Board of Directors for Central Arkansas' Women and Children First, which operates a shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children. She also serves on the Board of Directors for The Arkansas Literacy Councils, and she serves on the Board of Directors for the Keep Arkansas Beautiful Foundation. Additionally, she is the television spokeswoman for the American Heart Association's "Go Red for Women" campaign, a role she has filled

"You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you." — John Bunyan

A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

December 18, 2014 - Celine Dion will host a CBS (Channel 11) holiday special spotlighting adoption.

The "Loved Me Back to Life" singer will perform during the 15th annual "A Home for the Holidays," along with Ne-Yo, Chris Young and others.

The special will introduce families and the children they adopted from foster care. Among them is Nicole and Fernando Capaccang, a Los Angeles couple inspired to act after seeing last year's program, and a young man who lived in 11 foster homes before a Washington woman adopted him.



There will also be a segment called "Children Waiting," drawing attention to kids currently living without permanent homes. According to the Department of Health & Human Services, there are about 400,000 children in foster care in the U.S.



signature program

DAVE THOMAS
FOUNDATION FOR ADOPTION™

Presenters of "A Home for the Holidays with Celine Dion" include the Children's Action Network and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. The late Wendy's founder was himself adopted as a child and established the foundation in 1992.

I.M.P.A.C.T.

IMPROVING MEANINGFUL PRACTICE FOR ARKANSAS CHILDREN TOGETHER BY MONA DAVIS

Arkansas has continued to plan, develop, implement, and sustain the six demonstration waiver interventions. The statuses of the six interventions are:

- Permanency Round Tables have been conducted in all Areas since July 2013.
- Differential Response has been statewide since August 2013.
- Team Decision Making was implemented in 3 counties in September 2014.
- CANS/FAST was implemented October 2014 for Pulaski and Miller Counties.
- Targeted Recruitment IDIR was submitted in October 2014.
- Nurturing Parenting IDIR was submitted in October 2014.

The Waiver Core Team was established to provide oversight and decision making for the AR Demonstration Waiver in July 2013. Over the last six months, as we moved from planning to implementation, the Waiver Core Team has reorganized the role and responsibilities of staff who serve on the Waiver Core Team. Each intervention has an assigned Sponsor to work directly with the intervention Lead and Workgroups to facilitate implementation as well as increase communication to all internal and external stakeholders. The Waiver Core Team has an established charter and meets weekly. Infrastructure and capacity building are a part of the continuous work within the Division to assure the sustainability of the implementation of the waiver interventions. This includes:

- Continuing to practice Structured Decision Making (SDM)
- Centralizing the inquiry process for foster and adoptive parent applicants
- Establishing the In Home Services Workgroup to strengthen the policy and tools needed to support the field staff in safely keeping children in their own homes
- Strengthening family engagement and outcomes for these families.

Differential Response:

An overview of Arkansas Differential Response data for SFY 2014 thus far (July 1, 2013 through February 18, 2014) is as follows:

- 5,220 DR referrals assigned to the field
- 1,315 DR referrals that had to be redirected to the investigative pathway
- 452 DR referrals screened-out by the Child Abuse Hotline and the DCFS DR Unit
- 1,309 DR cases reviewed by DCFS DR Unit for quality assurance purposes
- DR unit reviews 20% of the closed DR cases every month.

Permanency Round Tables

All areas have had at least one PRT in their area. There have been 98 Permanency Round Tables conducted from July 2013 through July 2014.

The first PRT to be conducted once the training was completed in August 2014 was in Area 4 in September 2014. Below are the next Round Tables that are scheduled through December 2014:

Area 1 10/9/2014

Area 2 10/27/2014-10/28/2014

Area 7 10/29/2014

Area 6 11/3/2014-11/6/2014

Area 3 11/12/2014-11/13/2014

Area 10 11/17/2014-11/18/2014

Area 9 12/1/2014-12/2/2014

Area 8 12/8/2014-12/9/2014

Areas 4 and 5 are scheduled for the first quarter of 2015. Each area will schedule its PRT quarterly and coordinate with the Permanency Specialist.

The Permanency Specialist plans to continue the pre-consultation meetings to ensure caseworkers and supervisors have a clear understanding of permanency planning and also have an opportunity to more thoroughly prepare for their PRTs.

To address some of the follow up challenges, the Permanency Specialist will be coordinating with the area PRT Coordinators and develop a small workgroup in each area that will focus on success and challenges with that particular area's Permanency Round Tables. These workgroups will develop strategies and suggestions for continued support and strengthening the permanency planning activities in the areas. Initially, these workgroups will be comprised of internal staff. However, as the Division moves forward with integrating Permanency Round Tables as a tool for staff to utilize at any time necessary to move a child/youth forward to permanency, these workgroups may expand.

As we move forward all our initiatives to improve meaningful practice with AR children together, we provide program and evaluation updates. Several informational e-mails will be sent to all DCFS to define the strategies and/or tools as well as provide information about how the implementation is going.

If anyone would like to have more information or schedule time for sponsors or executive team to come speak with internal and external stakeholders, please feel free to contact me at mona.davis@dhs.arkansas.gov

*Making a Difference every day-
Making an **IMPACT** for a lifetime.*



Helpful Links

www.fosterparentcollege.com/info/connections
www.midsouth.uar.edu
www.americanhumane.org/protecting-children
www.arkansas.gov/reportARchildabuse
www.fosterarkansas.org
www.dhsshare.arkansas.gov/pages/default.aspx
www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly
www.nctsnet.org
www.fema.gov/kids
www.childrendefense.org
www.fosterclub.com
www.ppcwg.org/communications-overview.html
www.fosteringconnections.org
<http://drjohndegarmofostercare.weebly.com/index.html>
www.childwelfare.gov

Follow us on....



Downeast Maine Pumpkin Bread



Rated: ★★★★★

Submitted By: Laurie Bennett
Photo By: DetectiveL

Prep Time: 15 Minutes
Cook Time: 50 Minutes

Ready In: 1 Hour 5 Minutes
Servings: 24

"The classic moist pumpkin bread from Down East is spiced with cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and cloves. This bread improves with age, so plan to make it a day ahead if possible."

INGREDIENTS:

1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin puree	2 teaspoons baking soda
4 eggs	1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 cup vegetable oil	1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2/3 cup water	1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
3 cups white sugar	1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour	1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour three 7x3 inch loaf pans.
2. In a large bowl, mix together pumpkin puree, eggs, oil, water and sugar until well blended. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and ginger. Stir the dry ingredients into the pumpkin mixture until just blended. Pour into the prepared pans.
3. Bake for about 50 minutes in the preheated oven. Loaves are done when toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.