



# DCFS Connections Fall 2012

Care \* Commit \* Connect



DCFS Connections  
Fall 2012

Danielle House-Barlow- Editor

## *Director's Note...from Cecile Blucker*

Thanksgiving is an American tradition that predates the U.S. Constitution by more than 100 years. It is an observance that binds us as Americans no matter our race, religion, or culture. It is a time when we reflect on our many blessings and give thanks for the things in our lives.

We have had many challenges this year but we have turned those challenges into successes --thanks to you. You have focused on the vision and direction of the Division and have found ways to overcome the day-to-day difficulties.

During the month of Thanksgiving and through our Program Improvement Plan (PIP) celebrations, I have been reflecting on our journey together. I am very grateful to have a talented group of employees. I am grateful for your commitment to the children and families we have the opportunity to serve.

Without your commitment, creativity, and sacrifice, we would not be the agency we are today and I am very grateful for your efforts.

To each of you and your families, I wish you the warmest of Thanksgiving wishes and thank you all for what you do each day!



*Happy Thanksgiving!*

## September 9<sup>th</sup> was F.A.S.D. Awareness Day



September 9<sup>th</sup> F.A.S.D. Awareness Day  
with Governor Mike Beebe

On September 9, 2012 Governor Mike Beebe proclaimed the day as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness Day. The day is observed each year on the ninth day of the ninth month to draw attention to this disorder which can have life-long effects. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. Alcohol use during pregnancy is the leading known preventable cause of mental retardation and birth defects in the United States. The effects of this may include physical, mental, behavioral and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications. Each year, 5,000 babies in the U.S. are born with a form of FASD. FASD affects an estimated 40,000 infants each year with direct and indirect costs of more than \$5 billion annually.

## Arkansas EMS Conference in Hot Springs, August 2-5, 2012

In August, Norma Brown, Program Assistant with Columbia County, attended the Arkansas EMS Association conference in Hot Springs. Norma has been with the division since December 2005. In addition to PA duties, Norma is the American Red Cross and American Heart Association CPR-First Aid instructor for Area IV. Norma enjoyed representing DCFS at the conference and was very pleased to see a friend of hers, Larry New, receive the David Taylor SR., Service Award for Excellence in EMS.

Here are some of the conference highlights Norma would like to share with the rest of our DCFS family.

### **Child Passenger Safety Program:**

- Research shows 90% of all car seats are installed improperly or children are not placed in the correct car or booster seat for their weight or size.
- Improperly installed car seats increase the likelihood of the child being injured or killed if an accident were to occur.
- Vehicular accidents are one of the leading causes of child deaths in our nation.
- Arkansas laws require all children under the age of 6 or 60 pounds or less be placed in the proper car seat and all children 15 years of age or younger must be secured with a seat belt.
- Proposed changes to weight limits recommend increasing the use of a car seat or booster seat to 80 pounds and prohibiting the use of booster seats with children between the weights of 40 to 60 pounds. In addition, a child should not be in a booster seat until he/she is between the ages of 8 -12 or 4' 9" tall.
- Old, hand-me-down car seats being passed down or sold to others or cars seats that have been in accidents should not be used.
- Car Seat safety training and certification classes are available through Arkansas Children Hospital (AHC) Community Outreach Program.
- Car seat check-ups are offered periodically or by making an appointment Monday through Friday from 8:30 am till 4:30 pm with ACH.
- Education is also provided to parents and caregivers on how to properly installed car seats by contacting Kristen Hewitt at HewittKC@archchildrens.org or 501-364-3296.

### **Arkansas Poison Control Center:**

- The Arkansas Poison Control Center is open 24/7 and is covered by doctors, nurses and pharmacists who are specialists in the field.
- The Center handles approx. 150 calls each day and in most cases the person does not need to go to the ER or to seek medical treatment. Unless the person is unconscious and not responding, many cases can be handled at home by using simple treatments given over the phone.
- The Center also calls the family back to be sure everything is fine. If they direct a family to seek medical assistance at the hospital, the Center notifies the ER and speaks with the doctor on duty.
- Bath Salts, the newest wave of drugs, snake bites, and other medications that look like candy are adding to the number of children who ingest toxic substances.
- Arkansas Poison Control Number is 1-800-222-1222 or 501-686-6161. Add this number to your contact list in case of an emergency.
- The Poison Control Center also offers training to the public as well as educational material. For more information contact the above numbers, send an email to chsstutts@uams.edu or access their web site at [www.poison.org](http://www.poison.org).

### **Pediatric Trauma:**

- Accidents are the leading cause of death for anyone 40 years of age and younger.
- In Arkansas the leading cause of death in children is Traumatic Brain Injuries. Many of these deaths or injuries can be prevented by just thinking before allowing children to do things unsupervised or by rethinking the dangers to children such as:
  - ✓ Stopping children under the age of 16 from riding ATVs alone
  - ✓ Swimming with more than just floaters. Use life jackets approved by the US Coast Guard.
  - ✓ Ensuring children are wearing helmets when riding a bike.
  - ✓ Avoiding mowing the lawn while children are outside playing in the same area.
  - ✓ Using the correct car seat or booster seat for the child sizes and/or using a seat belt.

If you would like more information about managing personal safety, check out the Defense Tactics for EMS and Firefighters Website at [www.dt-4emd.com](http://www.dt-4emd.com).

By the conclusion of the conference, it was very clear to Norma that DCFS and the Department of EMS could work well together in service to families through education and prevention.

## Tips for Safe Sleep for Infants

### Create a Safe Environment for Your Baby

As a parent or caregiver, you have an important job in choosing where and how your baby will sleep at night and naptime. There are steps you can take to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other causes of injuries and deaths related to sleeping, including suffocation and falls.

#### Do not sleep with your baby.

- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a room with you, but in his own safety-approved crib or bassinette.
- Do not allow adults or other children to share a bed with a baby.

#### Use a safety-approved crib or bassinette.

- Cribs should be approved by the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association.
- The space between bars should be less than 2 3/8 inches (about the width of a soda can).
- Cribs should have a firm mattress and a snug-fitting sheet.
- Do not place stuffed animals, soft bedding, pillows, bumper pads, or wedges in the crib.
- Place the crib in an area that is always smoke-free.
- Be sure that any second-hand crib has not been recalled. Visit [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov) to find out. Also, make sure any crib has all of its parts and meets the safety standards listed above.

#### Put your baby on his back to sleep, at night and for naps.

- Side sleeping is not safe and is not advised.
- Babies sleep comfortably on their backs.
- Babies are less likely to choke when they sleep on their backs.
- Babies need adult-supervised "tummy time" when they are awake. This helps them to develop normally and helps prevent flat spots on their heads.

#### Keep your baby at a comfortable temperature.

- Overheating is a risk factor for SIDS.
- Dress the baby in clothes that you would be comfortable wearing.
- Blankets can become loose bedding and end up on the infant's face. Instead, dress your baby in a wearable "sleep sack."

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

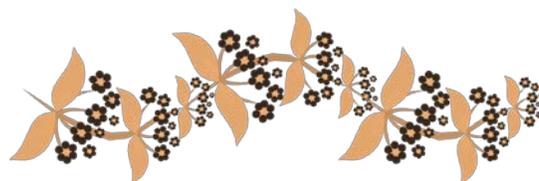


## Who's Who in DCFS - Meet Cassandra Scott, Area Director for Area 10



**Cassandra Scott, Area 10**  
**Area Director**

**C**assandra Scott is a graduate of Henderson State University, where she received a Bachelors of Science. She began her employment with DCFS in 1999 as a FSW in Lonoke County. During the time that she was a FSW, Cassandra provided case management services on FC, PS, SS cases and conducted child maltreatment investigations. Cassandra became the FSW Supervisor in Lonoke and Prairie County in 2002. As a supervisor, Cassandra has supervised case management (FC, PS, SS, ICPC), investigations, resource workers, Program Assistants, LOAA, Health Service Workers, ILP Coordinator and the unit supervisor. Cassandra currently reside in Little Rock and has one daughter who is a graduate of The University of Texas (Dallas) and is currently an assistant coach (women's basketball) at Talladega College in Alabama.



## DCFS Attends 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual C.A.L.L. Summit



**3<sup>rd</sup> Annual C.A.L.L. Summit**

**F**riday, August 24, 2012 DCFS staff was invited to attend the CALL's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Statewide Summit at Parkway Place Baptist Church in Little Rock. The CALL began hosting these summits in 2009 in an effort to allow CALL Coordinators from around the state the opportunity to meet one another, problem-solve issues, and create a sense of teamwork. DCFS staff from all around the state who work directly with the CALL in their counties attended. They joined CALL County Coordinators and volunteers in team building activities, CALL information sessions, and a game with question/answer time.

The team building sessions were led by Beth Jacks of DHS' Division of Volunteerism, and included a leadership –style inventory based on different types of birds! She also led a teamwork exercise using straws to build towers.

Both DCFS and the CALL enjoyed working together.

After lunch, Lauri Currier and Alicen Bennett led the group in CALL/DCFS Jeopardy. They included questions from both DCFS and CALL perspectives. The questions stirred up great discussion regarding DCFS procedures, The CALL Model, and foster care/adoption questions. Both DCFS and the CALL learned that information sharing improves communication and strengthens partnerships.

DCFS also provided workshops on an overview of SAFE home studies and an Orientation to DCFS for new CALL Coordinators during the CALL Statewide Summit on Saturday. These workshops provided more information to CALL Coordinators and volunteers on DCFS' policies, procedures, and our Model of Practice.



## Together We Are Making A Difference!



**Anne Wells, serving cake during a PIP celebration.**

**A**s you are all aware for the past several years we have been working to transform the child welfare system of Arkansas. The Governor was very concerned with the number of children who were dying in the system. Consequently, he ordered a top to bottom review of the organization.

During that same time, the federal government conducted a Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) of our child welfare agency and found we were not in substantial compliance in any of the seven (7) areas regarding safety, permanency and well-being. As a result of the review, we put into place a Practice Improvement Plan (PIP) which consisted of four broad strategies aimed at achieving behavioral change and ultimately improving outcome for children and families. Those four strategies were:

- Build and implement a comprehensive practice model to guide the work of the field and central office supports.
- Design and implement communication, professional development, and change management strategies.
- Grow the State's service array (with attention to the variety and effectiveness of procured services as well as the types of services and supports provided through community partnerships).
- Enhance the State's quality assurance mechanisms to become a more effective system regarding results monitoring and practice improvement.

Additionally, DCFS negotiated improvement goals for nine CFSR items related to safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for families and children:

- Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment
- Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal
- Item 4: Risk of harm to child
- Item 7: Permanency goal for child
- Item 10: Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
- Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents
- Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning
- Item 19: Worker visits with child
- Item 20: Worker visits with parents

On September 1, 2010, ACF and DCFS agreed to baselines and improvement goals for these nine items. Part of this agreement also included the understanding that if Arkansas did not meet the improvement goals within two years, then the State would have to suffer significant financial penalties (estimated at \$1,176,444) which would, in turn, result in reduced staff and fewer services for children and families.

The federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the State, through an ongoing partnership, jointly assessed progress throughout the PIP implementation period. During this two-year PIP period, the State successfully implemented all four (4) strategies which included the completion of 40 action steps and over 300 benchmarks.

By the time the two-year PIP implementation period ended, DCFS had met all but three of the nine items being monitored for improvement. Because of the progress Arkansas had made up to that point, ACF agreed to give the State an additional year – referred to as a “non-overlapping year” – to meet the three remaining item goals. The first set of data reported during the non-overlapping year documented achievement of one additional CFSR Item: Item 17 (needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents). ACF and DCFS then negotiated for DCFS to conduct another round of case reviews for the two remaining items: Items 18 (child and family involvement in case planning) and 20 (worker visits with parents).

On September 24, 2012, DCFS submitted data that demonstrated attainment of the final two CFSR items. With this submission, ACF verified the State’s completion of all action steps and the achievement of all data and program goals negotiated between the State and ACF. Since Arkansas rectified areas of non-conformity through successful completion of a PIP, Arkansas did not incur and will not incur the aforementioned financial penalty.

## It’s that time of year for the DCFS Foster Care Holiday Bazaar!



**T**his year the activities for the DCFS Foster Care Holiday Bazaar are taking place over several weeks and new fundraiser activities have been added. All funds raised go to provide Christmas gifts for children in foster care throughout the state.

The bake sale and kick off of the Gingerbread tree project was held on the same day, November 14. The Gingerbread tree project allows employees to “adopt” a foster child for Christmas and provide gifts for that child. DCFS is looking for volunteer bakers and crafters for all activities and the bazaar.

The traditional bazaar and chili/hot dog sale will be held on Friday, December 7. The bazaar will feature holiday wreathes and bows for sale, aprons, pet stockings, ornaments and much more!

**Here are our upcoming events:**

12/05/2012	9:00 AM	Caramel apples	2nd floor balcony	\$2.00
12/06/2012	9:00 AM	Pie and coffee/hot chocolate	2nd floor balcony	\$3.00 for combo, \$2.00 pie only
12/06/2012	11:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Treat bags	2nd floor balcony	\$2.00
12/07/2012	10:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Bazaar – Hot dogs/chili/chili pies	A & B	\$1.00 Plain, \$1.50 with chili \$2.00 chili pie
12/10/2012		Gingerbread gifts to be turned in	Conf Room 5368	
12/11/2012		Gingerbread gifts to be turned in	Conf Room 5368	
12/14/2012		Fire Department and Parade		



If you wish to volunteer to work any of the activities and/or if you wish to donate any goods for the event, please contact **Valerie Austin** at 682-8549 or **Patrena Tabron** at 682-8451.

Thank you for your generosity and support as we try to make this holiday special for our foster kids!



## Events Held All Over State in Celebration of National Adoption Month



Ballon Release Pulaski County

Every year November is celebrated as National Adoption Month. There are approximately 500 children available for adoption in Arkansas; there is a particular need for adoptive homes for older children and sibling groups. Several events were held all over Arkansas to raise adoption awareness and to help recruit families for Arkansas' children in foster care who desperately want and need a loving forever home.



Pulaski Skate Party

"Safari Aaventure-Hunt For Homes" - Held in Pine Bluff at the Delta River Nature Center.



A picnic with hayrides, games and prizes for all, was sponsored by the Conway Rotary Club



## Websites and Resources



- [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)
- [www.fosterparentcollege.com/info/connections](http://www.fosterparentcollege.com/info/connections)
- [www.midsouth.ualr.edu](http://www.midsouth.ualr.edu)
- [www.americanhumane.org/protecting-children](http://www.americanhumane.org/protecting-children)
- [www.arkansas.gov/reportARchildabuse](http://www.arkansas.gov/reportARchildabuse)
- [www.fosterarkansas.org](http://www.fosterarkansas.org)
- [www.dhsshare.arkansas.gov/pages/default.aspx](http://www.dhsshare.arkansas.gov/pages/default.aspx)
- [www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly](http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly)
- [www.nctsnet.org](http://www.nctsnet.org)
- [www.fema.gov/kids](http://www.fema.gov/kids)
- [www.childrendefense.org](http://www.childrendefense.org)
- [www.pregnancythroughtoddler.com](http://www.pregnancythroughtoddler.com)
- [www.fosterclub.com](http://www.fosterclub.com)
- [www.ppcwg.org/communications-overview.html](http://www.ppcwg.org/communications-overview.html)
- [www.fosteringconnections.org](http://www.fosteringconnections.org)

### Follow us on....



- apostrophe
- catamount
- chastise
- clean
- comma
- crush
- curry
- darn
- exact
- gourd
- groan
- inflate
- joker
- mace
- marionette
- onion
- order

D	K	P	E	R	F	I	D	I	O	U	S	D
P	U	R	I	F	Y	W	R	A	C	K	N	C
Z	K	M	J	O	K	E	R	C	R	U	S	H
C	A	T	A	M	O	U	N	T	O	N	Z	A
Q	S	A	V	A	N	T	J	P	A	Z	M	S
U	G	O	U	R	D	N	N	E	T	M	T	T
O	S	P	P	I	A	O	L	N	O	C	P	I
T	H	U	V	O	I	C	E	C	A	M	T	S
E	I	R	R	N	C	D	Y	X	O	N	N	E
L	R	G	O	E	U	P	E	R	I	O	D	V
F	T	E	S	T	R	A	P	O	R	D	E	R
A	P	O	S	T	R	O	P	H	E	Q	E	H
P	A	S	T	E	Y	I	N	F	L	A	T	E

- paste
- perfidious
- period
- point
- pound
- prompt
- purge
- purify
- quote
- racy
- savant
- shirt
- strap
- student
- sure
- voice
- wrack