



December

Safe Toys and Gifts Month
Universal Human Rights
Month

12/1 Rosa Parks Day
12/1 World AIDS Day
12/2 Special Education Day
12/3 International Day of
Persons with Disabilities
12/21 Winter Solstice Day
12/25 Christmas
12/31 New Year's Eve

December Birthdays

12/6 Stacey Curtis
12/6 Julie Manis
12/9 Tora Aldridge
12/12 Melissa Stone
12/13 Beverly Monk
12/16 Isaac Perry
12/17 Sabrena Harris
12/18 Rodney Farley
12/19 Karensa Richmond
12/20 Jennifer Gordon
12/22 Patricia White
12/24 Linda Navarro
12/25 Karen Lawson
12/30 Sandra Thomas
12/31 Stacey Schratz

In the past year, what is the one thing you are most grateful for?

As we settle into the holidays to spend time with loved ones, family and friends, what are you most grateful for? At DDS central office we've had a birth, an influx of new employees and several who have become retirees. There have been programmatic changes this year and change will continue. In addition to a lot of change, we have also had some accomplishments. DDS held the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Blue Umbrella during the 3rd annual Fall Food & Craft Fair. The store's merchandise will consist solely of items made by persons with developmental disabilities. We celebrated Famous Arkansans during National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month at the capitol with Governor Asa Hutchinson. Two of the HDCs had much needed expansions and renovations to enhance the lives its residents. DDS rallied around one of its own by supporting an employee's daughter in the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Walk in Little Rock. HDCs hosted proms and galas with fashion shows. Community partners collaborated with the HDCs to provide clothing, make-up, and hair services to ensure successful events for the residents. The pictures spoke volumes! Two HDCs celebrated milestones; 50 and 40 years of serving Arkansans. Last, but certainly not least, was the inspiring story of one of our own who worked with Mother Teresa. These are just a few of the highlights I covered this year in DDSPEAKS.

We all have a story. We come from all walks of life with a variety of life experiences. It is our complex blend that allows us to weather the storms and come to work each day with the drive to make life better for the people we serve.

Happy Holidays!

Yvette

Christmas Holidays off: December 24th and 25th

New Year's Day off: January 1st

DHS Central Offices will be closed. During this time, the significant sacrifice of HDC staff working these holidays is both remarkable and humbling. We appreciate you!

Southeast Arkansas Human Developmental Center celebrated its 40th Anniversary on October 26th



Warren High School ROTC Color Guard



Mayor Bryan Martin reading the Proclamation for the SEAHDC 40th Anniversary



Photographs of when SEAHDC was built alongside guest book



Foster Grandparents Lucille Howze and John Hammock along with Robert Waston enjoying the program



Mayor-elect Denisa Pennington and DDS Assistant Director Tammy Benbrook

Mayor-elect Pennington will take office on January 1, 2019.

2018 DHS Veteran's Wall of Honor Ceremony

On Thursday, November 8th, DHS honored over 230 veterans of whom over 60 were new inductees. The ceremony featured Catholic High School JROTC Marine Corp Color Guard, Joe Winford (DDS), and Jennifer Sellers (DAABH). State Senator Jim Hendren, USAF Veteran served as the keynote speaker. We salute all of our veterans! A special thank you to the team of volunteers who served the veterans; Rhonda Stewart, Keesha Lucas, David Sterling, and April Nichols.



Save the Dates

11/14-12/12 DHS Christmas Drives (toys, gift wrap supplies, gifts and gift cards) benefitting those in DYS, teens in DCFS, ASH, AHC, and the HDCs. Wish list items are on the Christmas tree in the DHS Directors office. Contact person is Yvette Swift, 501-682-4268 or email yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov



12/7 DDS Holiday Party— DDS Director's conference room— 12 noon



12/14 DHS Toy Parade with LRFD and the DHS Singers



12/12-12/21 Blue Umbrella Soft Opening— The store will open to DHS employees only during this time 10:00am– 2:00pm.

1/11 DHS New Year's Celebration— Celebrating each division's accomplishments in 2018. South Building A&B conference room— local food trucks



Comments, Suggestions, Q&A

Please send all comments, suggestions, and Q&A to yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov