



## April

4/1 April Fool's Day  
4/2 Autism Awareness Day  
4/7 Good Friday  
4/9 Easter  
4/22 Earth Day  
4/26 Administrative Professionals Day  
National Volunteer Month  
World Autism Awareness Month

## *DDS recognizes Administrative Professionals*

This edition of DDSPEAKS is dedicated to the Administrative Professionals of DDS. Supervisors and co-workers from across the state sent in accolades and in some cases, pictures of the glue that holds each and every office together. As different celebrations are planned to recognize these essential staff, DDSPEAKS wants to recognize staff with this tribute. We appreciate you and all that you do to make our offices, programs, and facilities run effectively and efficiently. Thank you!

I have had the pleasure of being LeAnn Edington's supervisor for the past 1.5 years. She came in at a time when I was desperate for help. With over 100 cases and doing everything myself, I was always overwhelmed. She was quick to learn and started in helping right away. What I appreciate most about her is her ability to tell when I am overwhelmed or getting scattered and she immediately steps in and gets me organized and on track. With her help, we have developed a system that works best for us. Every morning we will get together to go over our calendars and we each know what the other needs to get done. We created check sheets for when we do referrals. If I am needing advice on the best course of action for a case member, I can always run my ideas through her and trust that she will give me her honest opinion. She is a valuable member of my team, and I would not be as successful of a care coordinator without her. Not only has she become a coworker, but also a wonderful friend. She has been with DHS for over 9 years now and I often tell her, as a joke, she isn't allowed to retire until I can. With her help and expertise in areas that I am not proficient at, we have been able to build our caseload to almost 200. Not only is she being recognized and appreciated on Administrative Professionals Day, but I always make sure to let her know how much she is appreciated daily and will continue doing until our DHS journey ends.



Hannah Raines, Supervisor

(Pictured above: Hannah Raines and LeAnn Edington)

Gina Elliott is new to DDS but has worked for the state for many years. I appreciate her eagerness to help and the knowledge she brings from her years of experience. -Sandra Crome

Gina has a very positive attitude and we look forward to working with her each day. -Stacey Schratz (I directly supervise her but she also assists Sandra Crome)

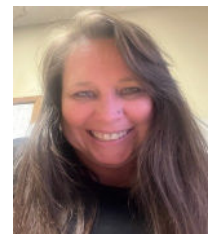


~Booneville HDC ~

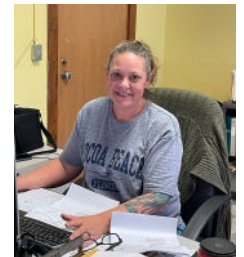
Tessie Harmon joined Social Services as our Administrative Assistant in September 2021. Tessie was already very familiar with the Human Development Center setting as she had worked in direct care several years prior. Tessie is a huge part of Social Services. She writes letters, processes our mail, maintains files, and maintains contact information for all of our client's guardians and family members. She keeps the office organized and our supplies ready to go. Tessie is joy to be around and she does everything with a positive attitude. We know that no matter what it is, Tessie is always willing to jump in and help. We could not keep things running smoothly without Tessie and we appreciate everything that she does for us and the clients at the Booneville Human Development Center.



Amy Beckett has worked with me as an Administrative Specialist II for almost 10 years. She is honest, trustworthy, capable, consistent, does her job with accuracy and is always willing to help. She has the mental toughness to hold everything together and makes the workday easier because she always gets the job done.



Melissa Snodgrass has been with us for over a year now and within this year she has been crossed trained do to Purchase Orders, Canteen, TR-1's, and has had to be Storeroom Clerk, Deliver and unload trucks because the department has been shorthanded. She is a trooper will go when called to be coverage, will help with anything activity I ask her and has jumped in and helped ERC out with backing items to helping give gifts to staff. She works well in our department and when she has spare time which is not that often she will go and ask coworkers if they need here to help with something. She understands what teamwork is and isn't afraid to get her hands dirty by lifting boxes, making deliveries, but most of all she isn't afraid to work and be a Great Team Player.



Ashley Thompson has worked at BHDC for over five years, almost two years as an administrative specialist. She runs the Central Records Room and maintains the master files of clients. Ashley brings much needed energy to her job. She learned a lot in a short amount of time and has become indispensable to the department. Ashley has a good rapport with the clients and frequently assists with taking their photographs, which can be a challenging task. She is also very approachable and has knowledge about events and information from other departments. Ashley is always happy to help others with the numerous requests she receives daily and is adept at assisting with things outside her usual job duties. Her sense of humor and wit make her a department favorite. She makes the most grueling days easier by adding much needed comic relief. Ashley enjoys hosting parties and special events for her family, cooking, cosmetology and being a baseball/soccer mom!



Kathleen Shigley keeps master calendars to aid and assist the Team RNs in maintaining accurate records. She keeps detailed notes and logs regarding appointments. Her computer software skills are instrumental in keeping spread sheets of staff and clients. She helps and all the nurses maneuver through spread sheets, type and create documents needed for the medical department. Everyone relies on her for assistance with Word and Excel. She is always willing to help and volunteers to assist her colleagues better understand the software they are working with. She is self-motivated. She also serves as a timekeeper for the medical department working with extremely odd hours and multiple points of contact with nurses for time keeping. She has attention to detail and takes minutes at the infection control meeting and our QA meetings. Her responsibilities are too numerous to list and could only be performed by a very seasoned employee in the medical department. She could not be replaced easily.



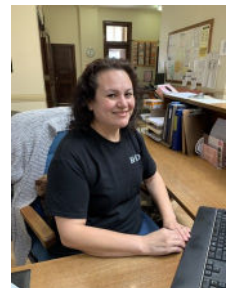
Nadine Wilson has a paralegal background and has held supervisory positions in previous jobs which has trained her to be disciplined and to excel in her work. She has completed some college business courses since her employment in the medical department and she is able to apply her skills to the structure and operations of my department. Her professionalism and willingness to help is recognized in her desire to share the knowledge and help others succeed. Her computer software skill is a strong asset to this department and Nadine willingly helps the staff with any problems they may have maneuvering through the spreadsheets (Excel), documents (Word), or forms that have been created by other departments. Nadine helps my staff and her colleagues better understand the software they are working with.



Rebekka “Bekka” Poore has proven to be an asset to BHDC and has been very beneficial to me and the clients that we serve. Bekka makes sure Staffing Reports and Progress Notes have been completed, updates BTP books, figures payroll, cleans the office and the restrooms all while being coverage in the work area 5 days a week. Bekka is not one to complain as she is asked to work over on many occasions and go cover at Davison House or any other area where she may be needed. I wish I had 20 more staff just like her.



Tara Dickens greets all visitors and ensures they are directed to the right location while visiting on campus. She is extremely friendly and takes great pride in assisting and greeting them with a smile and warming personality. She provides detailed care when processing Worker’ Compensation Claims for the facility. We appreciate her hard work and willingness to assist wherever is needed. Tara is a great asset to Human Resources as well as the Facility.



Jennifer Merrill has one of the toughest jobs at BHDC – Residential Services Timekeeper. She ensures that over 125 employees get a paycheck every two weeks. She also helps out and is the backup Administrative Specialist to the Residential Services Department. Jennifer has an amazing attitude which spreads to others around her. She keeps things light when the department is extremely busy. She volunteers to help with client activities. Just like Stacy, Jennifer does her best to keep me grounded and makes sure there is no gap in my sticky note reminders.



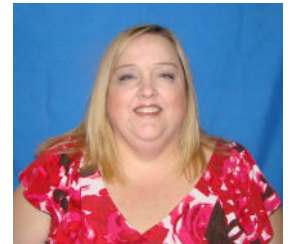
Ina Rodriguez is a longtime employee who has dedicated her whole career nearly to BHDC. She is like a mother hen to all the guys in Maintenance. She enjoys taking the guys under her wing which includes meals, fellowship and giving life advice. Ina enjoys getting to know her guys and giving back to their families. She has amazing time keeping skills that others in the department rely upon. Life would not be the same without Ina.



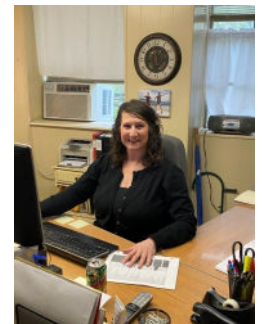
Stacy Brown manages an extremely busy Residential Services office. She maintains all retraining records for Residential Services staff, client payroll, schedules client hair appointments and paperwork involving client's cottage reports. She also is the back up timekeeper. Stacy is very organized which comes in handy when dealing with the largest department at BHDC. She also volunteers to help with client activities. Stacy keeps me grounded, focused, and on-task, as best as she can. I wouldn't know what to do without Stacy's constant reminders and her sticky notes.



Laura Fiddelke is one of the most fun loving and outgoing employees we have the honor to work with at Masonic Training. She listens to every person who comes by and always has a beautiful smile and pleasant response. Laura works hard to make life easier for the people around her. She goes out of her way to find ways to help. She is one person that can always be counted on to provide her services wherever she is needed. It is no secret that no matter where she is located, she will make a difference in someone's life and it will always be for the better.



Jill Upton has worked at BHDC for three years as an administrative specialist for the Quality Assurance Department, but it seems like she's been here forever because she is such an integral part of the department and a key source of information. She handles various duties within the QA Department with precision and efficiency. Jill isn't afraid to tackle challenging projects, and she is frequently called on to help various departments because of her excellent work ethic. She can always be counted on to volunteer for BHDC special event committees, and she gives incredible effort to make sure events are memorable and special for the clients. Jill also has a contagious sense of humor. Her laugh, which can be heard in the halls, brightens the day of anyone within earshot. Her hobbies include singing, reading, antiques, entertaining friends, and serving as her church's secretary. Jill also loves spending time with her two sons and her granddaughter.

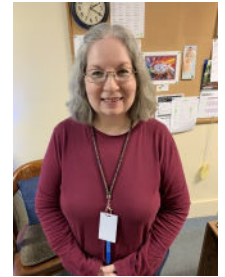


Michelle Shafer has had the unique ability to be a part of something new to BHDC's psychology department. When she started over 5 years ago, her main job duties were just administrative. But during the course of this past year she has transitioned into more of a behavioral tech role, assisting the psych examiners with tracking behaviors, providing feedback from behavior programs, working with clients and staff in the living and prevocational training areas. Michelle also is a part of BHDC Pet Therapy program and her English Bulldog, Abby, comes to work often to interact with our clients as well as out staff. Michelle volunteers her time as well as her money to boost employee and client morale. She has assisted in BHDC Volunteer Council projects, moral gifts for employees and clients, made appreciation gifts, banners and signs for employees. She spearheads different events for the clients at BHDC as well as organizes the BHDC's Christmas Lighting Ceremony that's open to the community. Michelle is a member of BHDC's Employee Recognition Committee as well as BHDC's Volunteer Council. I have the privileged of supervising this infectious employee and thankful I get to recognize her in this capacity. BHDC is grateful Michelle, Abby and Michelle's husband Gary Shafer (who works in BHDC's Maintenance Department) chose here to work!





By the time Administrative Professional's Day comes around, this extraordinary employee will have retired after working at BHDC since 1991. Lynn Spain's wealth of knowledge and meticulous work will be greatly missed. She is dependable, steps in to assist where needed, pays attention to detail, extremely helpful and hard working. Lynn has been an asset to BHDC for over 31 years and we wish her nothing but the best in her retirement.



Joyce Roberson is the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent's office; she brings a great attitude and smile to the office each day. Joyce has worked in the direct care area for many years, so she brings a great deal of understanding to the clients we serve. Joyce goes out of her way to bring fresh baked goods and other treats to our staff because she has a love for cooking and wants to share her passion. Joyce is known to the Central Office staff for her cookies she bakes for them as well as all visitors and staff. We are very fortunate to have her working in our office and for BHDC.



Brenda Hamilton is an Administrative Specialist II in the Mena/Polk County/DDS/CHC office. Brenda is a great asset to our agency exemplifying dedication, dependability, and very task oriented. She is always willing to assist any staff or family with any needs that they may have. We are grateful to Brenda for the attributes that she brings to this agency. -Tina Smith



Christin Ward does a great job in adapting to changes that occur on our workload or in our assignments. Her ultimate goal is to do the best she can to serve our kiddos and their families. -Shelly Barnes



Laniya Jackson is an Administrative Specialist II in Central Office/DDS/CHC. Laniya is a very dependable and dedicated employee with a good attitude and beautiful smile. She is always willing to assist staff with any task and is very proficient in her work ethic. We are fortunate to have Laniya on board and appreciate her for all she does. -Tina Smith

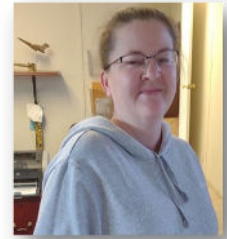


~Jonesboro HDC~

Kierra Blanks, works as the timekeeper for education. She also serves to stand in the gap for anything and everything we need day to day in education. She is adaptable, quick to resolve problems, friendly with all staff, and has an excellent work ethic. During the time that I have stepped in to assist with Education she has been essential to the success, and continued functioning of the department, and we couldn't do it without her.



Candice Oliver is the epitome of a team player. She is very knowledgeable and has experience in a lot of areas. Candice is always willing to help others out.



Judy Steinegger is very knowledgeable and knows what it takes to get her job done. She is constantly training and gaining new skills.



Patrick Black is dependable and is very detail and goal oriented. He is always friendly and has a positive attitude.



Administrative assistants are the backbones of any operation and the JHDC Rehab Department is no exception. Maurice Oliver has worked at JHDC for over 21 years. He began serving in Residential services and then moved to therapy assistant in the Rehab Department. Maurice enjoys working alongside Cham, the Physical Therapist, in helping the individuals at JHDC achieve their maximum potential. Maurice also orders and repairs adaptive equipment, teaches lifting and moving for the CNA and Phase classes.



Dominique Robinson is our Admin II For Residential Services. Dominique does a lot of work behind the scene for the office and all the front line workers (C.N.A.'s). We want to thank Dominique because it is the Admins in the office that keep things attached and the process moving. Dominique started with the center in residential as a Residential Care Technician and then worked as a Teacher Assistant in Education and then came back to residential as our Admin II for a total of 9 years with the center. We love having you as part of Team Residential.

Ericka Walls is also a crucial member of the Rehab team. She is the Speech Assistant and the Assistant to the Director of Rehab and has worked at JHDC for almost 11 years. She began her JHDC career in Residential services and moved to the Speech Department in November of 2015. She assists clients with improving literacy, language, and cognitive skills working alongside the Speech-Language Pathologist. Ericka works well with the clients and as a Speech motto goes "she has ways of making them talk."



Diana Morgan is punctual, focused and has a willingness to meet whatever comes her way head on. She has no hesitations to jump in to help anyone that may need it.

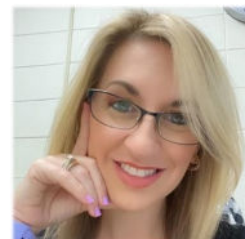
Nancy Bere is kind and lighthearted. She always has a sunny disposition and projects that to everyone she is around including the residents, which she has built a wonderful rapport with.

Katelyn Davis possesses an enthusiasm and vibrant energy for life. She is driven and currently pursuing higher education which adds to her ability to multitask.

Tammy Kelly has been a member of the QA dept since June 2020. Her experience in residential services has assisted her well in transferring into the QA dept. Tammy sincerely cares for our residents and looks out for their best interest. Tammy is willing to help with any activities with residents on and off campus. Tammy is willing to fill-in and help other departments in the Administration building. Tammy is a valued co-worker.



I appreciate Ashleigh King's desire to help. In all the different positions she has had, she is willing to step up to the plate and take on challenges, no matter the need. I have seen her in a variety of roles, whether it is a supportive or leadership role, she always gives 100%. While she has been in Staff Development, she has been an asset to the team and makes doing my job easier. It's people like her who truly care about the residents and staff that make JHDC a great place to live and work!



Jo Bond came into the Quality Assurance dept. in the middle of May 2022. Jo has proven to be an asset to the QA dept. Her experience and years of service in Residential Services has also served her well in her other duties in QA. Jo is a Team player and willing to take on other duties as well. Her quality of work is always exceptional. In my time here at JHDC, Jo is simply the best at her job.



Deanna Luster is an ASII in Human Resources. She returned to state government 2 years ago and has been an asset here at JHDC. She is always happy go lucky and willing to help wherever needed. We appreciate Deanna!



Dawn Giroux is the Admin Spec. II for the Program Coordinators at JHDC. Dawn has a creative gift for decorating. She has jumped into tasks such as decorating the PC Christmas float, creating Halloween decorations, helping design activity boards/games for the Fall festival, and many, many more activities. Dawn has purchased small gifts and candy for our residents so they could win a prize during the festival. She is a shy person with a big caring heart. We are very grateful to have Dawn as a part of the Program Coordinator team.



Donita Garrett is an amazing employee and person. She always greets people with a beautiful smile and is always willing to help anyone in need. Not only is she sweet as can be, but she is also a hilarious person and is someone that you can talk to about anything. She will pray for you and your family while checking on you often to make sure that you are doing well along with your family. When I was off for my daughter's surgery, she took such good care of anything I needed done at work and was an amazing friend to me when I needed one the most. Donita is such a blessing to JHDC and to me. I wouldn't trade her for anything!



Kendra Posey is an Administrative Specialist II in the Food Service Department. She performs administrative office duties such as maintains department personnel files, completes inventory, orders office supplies, assists Administrative Support Supervisor in completing food orders and requisitions to adequately supply the kitchen, and she updates daily and weekly cleaning schedules for other food service staff. She also serves as our department's timekeeper and assists in the production of payroll. She maintains the order and functionality of our food storage areas and provides occasional assistance in the food production area and in the supervision of our foodservice staff. Kendra is a hard worker and has shown that she will do whatever is needed to get the job done. She has even helped other departments with coverage during times she isn't scheduled in this department. She has covered other shifts as needed, including weekends. She is quick to learn new processes and is a valuable asset to the department. Kendra has a strong focus on serving our residents. If you were to have a conversation with her, you would learn quickly that she is here because she cares about our residents, she wants to care for them, and she truly enjoys being around them. I like Kendra very much as a person, also. She is a little shy, but she is very conscientious and has a very good heart. She thinks I'm funny, so she has an awesome sense of humor, too. I'm very proud to have her in my department and of the job she does.



Terrlyn Scoggins- I appreciate her dedication to serve DDS members. She has been with the Waiver Applications Unit for more than 15 years.– Merinesa Morris

Michelle Barrett– I appreciate her commitment to serve DDS members. She quickly learned to process Waiver Applications Unit’s procedures.– Merinesa Morris

Rhonda Stewart– I appreciate her willingness to assist Waiver Applications Unit. She recently joined our team and her experience will greatly affect the success of the unit.– Merinesa Morris

Virginia Green– I appreciate her dedication also to serve DDS members for more than 16 years.– Merinesa Morris

~Arkadelphia HDC~

Audrey Bivens, Program Specialist, is an excellent worker who takes on extra duties willingly. Many times, she has already taken care of the extra duties without having to be asked. She shares information with others/teaches her co-workers so we work together as a better team. –Kerry Gambill

Claria Collins, Administrative Specialist II, has a vast knowledge of what we do in our area due to her long work history in this position. She works closely with her co-workers which makes us a stronger team.– Kerry Gambill

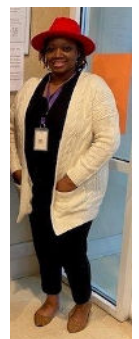
Felicia Smith, Planning Specialist, is always willing to help her co-workers and share information with them. She volunteers for special activities that help build our team.– Cheryl MacKay

Shatera Langston and Rebakah Giles, ADHC Residential Services Administrative Specialists, both are reliable and dependable workers. They work tirelessly each day to make sure Residential Service needs are met. They are patient, kind, professional, and knowledgeable when dealing with staff issues across the campus. These ladies are truly assets and are appreciated by Residential Services.– Tanyaka Conway

Danielle Cannon, AHDC Maintenance Administrative Specialist, is an outstanding employee. She is a problem solver and a solution finder. Maintenance is thankful to have such a skilled, dependable, and dedicated Administrative Specialist II.– Greg Reynolds



RaQueisha Washington is a natural self-starter, a characteristic essential for productive daily operations. As many division projects require a team effort, she consistently gives prompt attention to assigned tasks understanding that the success of these projects is contingent upon everyone doing their part efficiently. She always displays a model work ethic and takes personal satisfaction in being a “go-to” person for the DDS Director’s office and the entire division. We are very fortunate to have her.– Avis Lane, Central Office



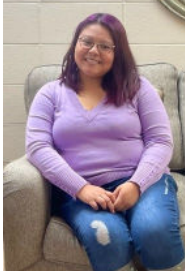
Sheena Burton – It is such a pleasure having Sheena on my team, she never complains . I appreciate her willingness to help others without being asked. I appreciate Sheena’s work ethic and her determination to learn and grow not just within DDS, but within DHS as a whole.– Portland Gilbert



Ajani Rouse – I love having Ajani in my unit. She is sweet and kind. I appreciate that she displays the ability to learn rapidly.– Portland Gilbert



~Conway HDC~



I appreciate that Jennifer Sligh is always willing to perform other duties as assigned. Often times with covert issues, Jennifer will go on med runs for the team. She helps in other areas outside of her regular duties. This is most helpful to the team.— Becky Burns



I appreciate Erica Carter’s dedication to the team. Not only does she perform her job duties as staffing, secretary, and back up time keeper, but she also takes time to organize get together's for our office staff. She make sure we all remember birthdays, different celebrations and brings us together for them.— Becky Burns



I appreciate Kiana Ray’s willingness to learn. She is new to the team, but has taking on the responsibility as TCT 's lead time-keeper. She has a positive attitude. This is refreshing for a supervisor.— Becky Burns



Ozetta Dicus-Davis exhibits a calmness that radiates throughout the Intensive Training Team office. She volunteers to assist others and often picks up food for the office staff. Her genuine kindness and thoughtfulness are shown to everyone. She completes her work effortlessly and is always willing to help others. I appreciate all the extra things she does around the office to ensure that the office area is clean and welcoming. Her positive energy is demonstrated daily. She is a ray of sunshine.— Gale Sasser



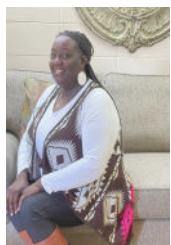
I appreciate all the extra things that Ester Madison does to encourage and show appreciation to everyone that comes into the Intensive Training Team office. She is always willing to do what she can, whenever asked. Her positive perspective on life is demonstrated throughout the day.— Gale Sasser



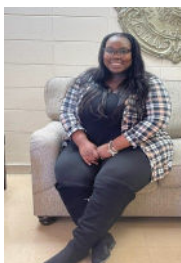
I appreciate Angela Neal’s ability to complete her work in a timely manner, always ahead of the deadline. I also appreciate her relationship with our residents. She cares deeply about them and often works additional hours in the residence.— Gale Sasser



I appreciate Heather Ward’s work ethic and great attitude. You are always using your skill set to help others. Your hard work and dedication are appreciated.— Jennifer Teague



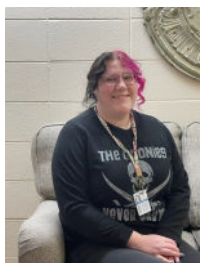
I appreciate all of Angelique Thompson’s hard work. Thank you for always going the extra mile. You are an asset the Individual Assistance Team.— Jennifer Teague



I appreciate Chelsia Harper for completing tasks with time to spare, keeping track of employees times, and staying calm when tensions rise. You always have a positive attitude and we appreciate all your hard work! -Jennifer Teague



Joyce Harter is a bright spot. She greets people when they come in, has a positive attitudes, and assists anyone with materials needed without hesitation. The residents love to come visit her and have great conversations. She is always present and completes work in a timely manner.— Terry Rudd



Emily Payne is a joy to have on SLT. She responds to codes and helps in the homes with the residents to ensure their needs are met. She completes her job and jumps in to help assist in any way or capacity.— Terry Rudd



Jordyn Tidwell is always willing to work in various areas when needed. She’s dependable and punctual when it comes to turning in paperwork. She’s been a bright spot in the SLT office and we’re lucky to have her.— Terry Rudd



I appreciate Yolonda McClure’s straight forward sense of humor and attention to detail.– Peyton Sullins



I appreciate Terri Lindsey’s willingness to work overtime in the residences to ensure our residents are provided the best care possible and her internal drive to excel in her position as timekeeper.– Peyton Sullins



I appreciate Catherine Henson’s positive attitude and ability to adapt to any situation presented to her with ease.– Peyton Sullins



Amanda Martin came over to Staff Development about 5 years ago, and as a result, the whole Staff Development dept operates like a well oiled machine. She completes reports off the database at a moment’s notice, she assists with training if we are in a pinch, and most challenging of all, she keeps me and everyone else straight in Staff Development. Despite the fact that she doesn’t provide direct services to our individuals, she still touches their lives by ensuring that their staff get the training they need.

Thanks Amanda for everything that you do!- Stu Douglas



Donna Crabtree is a huge asset to the Conway Human Development Center. I admire her willingness to go above and beyond daily! Donna is professional, and task driven.– Lisa Hancock

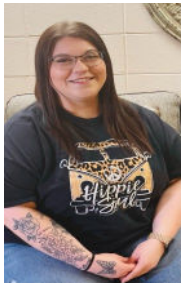


Social Services is very fortunate to have Addreine Sanders-Young work in our office. She is smart, organized cooperative, easy to work with, advocates for others, and brings joy to those around her. We truly enjoyed Drina in her sunny disposition.– Kathy Marsden



Traci Rutherford is an asset to the Administration Department at the Conway Human Development Center. While prompt and efficient in her job duties and always willing to do whatever is asked of her, more importantly her attitude is always positive, she is friendly to people, and truly cares about people. She has the right heart for human services as she assists our residents and our staff however she can.

Thank you, Traci!- Kathy Guffey



Morgan Williams is an asset to the Administration Department at the Conway Human Development Center. Morgan is a team player, ready to go wherever she needs to go and assist whomever she needs to help. She has a great rapport with our residents interacting with them frequently as they make their rounds through our office areas. Morgan is also known to assist staff in residence homes, assist the personnel recruiter with staff recognitions, all while accomplishing her work duties during the day.

Thank you, Morgan!- Kathy Guffey



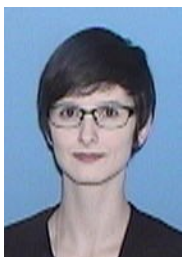
Diana Bryant is the most tenacious person I have met. When given a task you can count on her to complete that task and inform you on all aspects of the task. I count on her to keep things in our office flowing.- Anthony Hodge



Sammie Jo Liles is the heart of our department. She is willing to do anything she can to help and learn.- Anthony Hodge



Melissa Rodgers, I appreciate your positive attitude and your efforts to do your very best daily! I appreciate your ability to adjust to the late nights and early hours that you put in for CHDC.- Blake Wilkerson



Bailey Babb, thank you for all of your hard work. You are such a joy everyday! I appreciate your ability to adjust to the late nights and early hours that you put in for CHDC.- Blake Wilkerson





Rachel Braud, we all appreciate you and everything that you do!- Trichita Steele



Tanya Halverson, your contribution to our office is tremendous. We appreciate your work ethic and great attitude.– Brannon Rushing



Cora Dann, you do so much to keep the office going, and somehow you do it with a smile on your face. Your positivity is a breath of fresh air.– Brannon Rushing



Darren Capaldi, thanks for always working as a team with others. I appreciate your ability to adjust to the late nights and early hours that you put in for CHDC.– Blake Wilkerson



Michelle Lyons has been with the center a long time, and with that comes a wealth of knowledge. She will be missed when she retires.– Lisa Summerville



Amy Kirsch is an upbeat and positive force in our department. She can always turn something negative into something positive.– Lisa Summerville



Erin Watkins is a go getter. She dives right into any project ready to go and tackles any problem that comes up.— Lisa Summerville



Katrina Campbell is steady and sure. I can always count on her to be a great example to the center. She always looks for the good in others.— Lisa Summerville



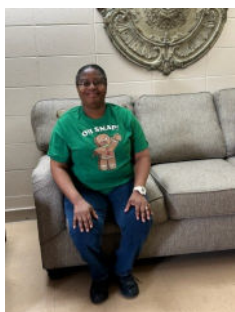
Brad Whitaker is quiet, but in that quiet he is taking everything in and looking at the bigger picture.— Lisa Summerville



Melinda Fawcett, thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to CHDC. I admire the relationships that you have built and continue to build with our staff, residents, parents, and guardians. You play an important role and we appreciate you.— Blake Wilkerson



Linda Rohrer is very professional. She is trustworthy and respectful of others. Her performance is exceptional. She accomplishes tasks quickly, efficiently, and consistently which makes a positive impact on the facility. Linda is detailed oriented and well organized. Linda is a team player, and I am proud to have her on mine!- Dr. Ronald Pelz, Psychology



I appreciate Sherrel Nelson for her thoughtful advisement, her willingness to assist in any aspect of our production duties, and the positive energy she brings to our area. Sherrel has been a go-getter from day one of her arrival to the kitchen and she seems to grow stronger every day. Sherrel brings a burst of positive energy to the kitchen that we are all thankful to have.— Kevin Bowman



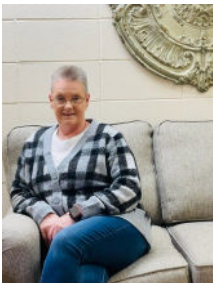
Charles Brooks is a true asset to the kitchen. Charles always has a smile on his face. Charles makes numerous sacrifices throughout his personal workday to make sure the needs of the ones we serve are met. To borrow one of his catch-phrases, Charles is 100%! We are very lucky and appreciative to have Charles as our fellow co-worker and friend.— Kevin Bowman



Jamie Preza is like my right hand, and I so appreciate how she is always willing to step up and handle situations when I cannot.— Brittney Wood



I always appreciate Stacey Hlongwane’s drive to do more, her eagerness to learn, and how she never backs away from a challenge.— Brittney Wood



Betty Web is our overachiever, always on the go, and never slows down. I love and am so thankful for her optimism and her bright attitude that is always present!- Brittney Wood



~Southeast Arkansas HDC~



Administrative Professionals pictured from left to right: Kelly Castleberry, Jasmine Curtis, Stephanie Henry, Kristy Gill, Bettye Fleming, Alicia Jones, Gwendin Berger, Nelly Risher, Jeremy Rowlett. Not pictured: Veronica Ross, Leshia Swift





Avis Lane is the executive assistant to the Director's office. She not only keeps Melissa Weatherton operational but all of the assistant directors and even some directors from other divisions!

She is soft spoken, intelligent, patient and always kind. She speaks to hundreds of providers, clients, and families and does so with impeccable grace. She is willing to do anything to make DDS successful and we could not live without her!!- Melissa Weatherton

Marcia Davis, assistant in Children with Chronic Healthcare Needs, is an awesome team member who works well independently. As a confident and valued team member, Marcia presents the truth in an appropriate and helpful manner when performing her job functions and tasks.— Beverly Monk

Thelma Hawkins, assistant in Children with Chronic Healthcare Needs, is an excellent team member who handles complex situations. She takes the initiative to get the job done. Thelma is always accountable. She's the go to person when you can't figure things out on your own.— Beverly Monk

Crystal Huffstetler is housed in the Sebastian County DHS Office. Crystal is always willing to take on a task and complete it without hesitation. Always willing to help other team members and support them. She is a definite asset to the Northwest Arkansas Team.— John Taylor

Jennifer Diehl is housed in the Madison County DHS Office. Jennifer is one the most conscientious people I have had the pleasure to work with. She takes a task and completes with amazing accuracy and is always completing days before deadline.— John Taylor

Annemarie Barnes. I appreciate her skill with Excel. Annemarie runs all of our monthly Therap reports for CHC and sorts the information out by the Community-based Office.— Iris Goacher

Beverly Monk. Beverly handles all of our Title V Referrals. I appreciate her knowledge of Salesforce.— Iris Goacher

In honor of Administrative Specialist Day. I would like to recognize Rebbie Gardner for always supporting and assisting the Intake and Referral Unit in so many ways. We thank you and appreciate everything you do. We could not do it without you!- Lacrosha Fitzpatrick

Patricia Jenkins, DDS Administrative Specialist III for DDS Intake & Referral Unit 2, has a heart of gold and is always looking for ways to serve the citizens of Arkansas. She encourages her peers in her county office as well as everyone on the DDS Intake and Referral Team to maintain a positive attitude even during stressful times. Patricia always greets everyone with a smile. We frequently see her smiling face in the monthly DDS Speaks newsletters, documenting her dedication and involvement with community outreach in Jefferson County. Patricia has established a professional relationship with many local businesses and community agencies and is able to utilize these relationships to better the lives of our DHS consumers through food drives, toy drives, and clothing drives. Patricia is a great asset to Team DDS and I am so great to have her as a member of our unit!- Kimberly Smith

Ivy Harris, DDS Administrative Specialist III for DDS Intake & Referral Unit 2, is a great asset to our team and is always so humble. She prefers to stay behind the scenes and doesn't expect recognition for her hard work. When asked about any extra duties she has completed, she always says "I just do my job". Fortunately, other team members tell me how much she helps them. One of our team members said, "Ivy is amazing! She is so quick to jump in to do anything we ask of her." Ivy consistently helps others. She assists individuals who call regarding various DHS programs and strives to find an answer for these families. Ivy receives numerous telephone calls daily from individuals, families, and guardians inquiring about services, seeking resources, and with general questions. She goes above and beyond what is required of her to assist these families and ensure they receive the services they need and that they feel like they are heard and valued.— Kimberly Smith

Karen McDaniel. Karen works hard to make sure that everyone around her knows that they are special and part of the team. She is always there to offer one-on-one training on office-wide software support. This time is not only offered to her in-office staff but also others in our outlined county offices. No one will ever say they have ever reached out to her for assistance and was met with unkind words or left their interaction with negative thoughts. She truly cares and has no problems going the extra mile for her coworkers.— Issac Perry



# Happenings at Arkadelphia HDC



Teresa Washington, Program Coordinator, hosted a Tea Party for the 289 Pine ladies and their staff. The ladies enjoyed the event!

What a great display of service! Thank you, Teresa!

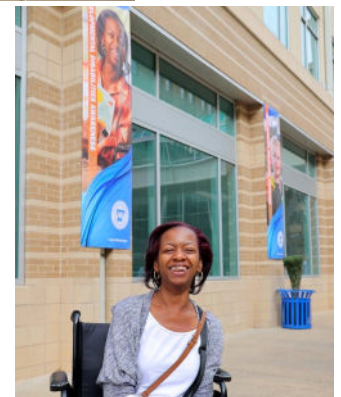


The State and National Elks toured the AHDC campus February 24th. The Elks are long time supporters of the Arkadelphia HDC. They have sponsored various events and service projects benefitting the center. Thank you for your continued dedication and faithful commitment to AHDC's mission and residents!





DDS celebrated Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March with a ceremony unveiling 10-foot tall banners featuring eight Arkansans with developmental disabilities. DHS Secretary Kristi Putnam and DDS Director Melissa Weatherton led the ceremony and welcomed the featured Arkansans who were in attendance. DDS serves approximately 70,000 children and adults residing in the community as well as state-run facilities all across the state.



DHS Secretary Kristi Putnam and Deputy Directors Mischa Martin and Janet Mann visited staff and residents at the Conway HDC. DDS Director Melissa Weatherton and CHDC Superintendent Sarah Murphy led the tour.



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## Blue Umbrella Graduation

On Thursday, March 30 at 11 a.m., The Blue Umbrella celebrated it's first two participants in The Blue Umbrella's Employment Training Program, Gabe and Johnny. We are so proud of their success and growth over the last six months! We wish them well in their future endeavors.

Shiloh Marlar, Blue Umbrella Assistant Store Manager



Also, Gabe (in black) is interviewed on The Vine



Johnny labels all of the store bags



# Let's Talk DDS

During the most recent Let's Talk DDS, Director Melissa Weatherton addressed the devastating storms that have impacted our state. Thankfully we have no reports of injuries sustained by any of our DDS family and none of our offices or facilities were damaged. As a team we are compiling a list of resources, stand ready to offer assistance and encourage everyone to volunteer whenever/wherever you can. Please be safe and reach out to us if you have needs or learn of needs in the community.

## There is a lot coming up at DHS. Stay tuned!

*Save the Date*

**May**

*5/5 DHS Employee Appreciation*

*Vendor Fair DHS Visitor Parking Lot*

*Downtown Little Rock*

*11 a.m. – 2 p.m.*

*5/6 – 5/12 Nurses Week*

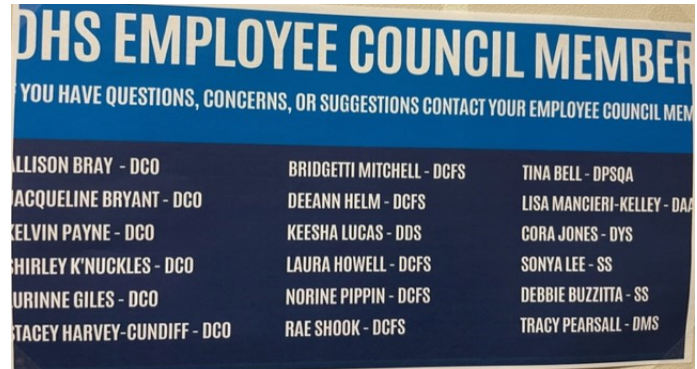
**June**

*6/23 HDCs Farmer's Market*

*700 South Main Street*

*Downtown Little Rock*

*11 a.m. – 2 p.m.*



The council will be an advisory body working closely with HR to promote and support the mission and vision of DHS.

**Mission:** Arkansas citizens are healthy, safe and enjoy a high quality of life.

**Vision:** Together we improve the quality of life of all Arkansans by protecting the vulnerable, fostering independence, and promoting better health.

The **Purpose** of the Council is to listen to and understand your concerns. Provide a conduit to senior leadership. Increase morale through meaningful change.

DDS representative: **Keesha Lucas**

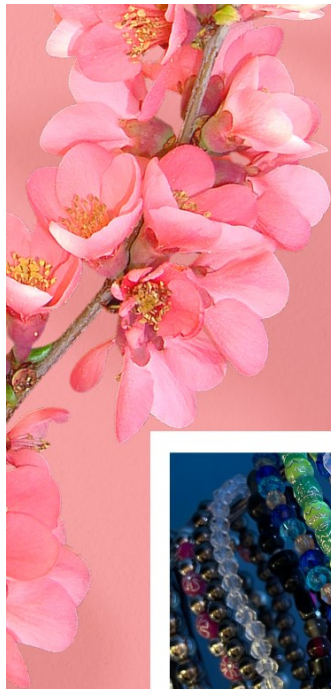
Contact information: [Keesha.Lucas@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:Keesha.Lucas@dhs.arkansas.gov)



## Comments, Suggestions, and Q&A

What would you like to learn more about or see featured? Please send all comments, suggestions, and Q&A to [Yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:Yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov) by the 15th of the month.





# The Blue Umbrella Newsletter



## NEW ARRIVALS!

Residents at Booneville Human Development Center have been hard at work crafting a variety of new items to browse at The Blue Umbrella! Each lanyard is one of a kind and is priced to sell at \$11.70.

## COIL BRACELETS

Calling all jewelry lovers! These beautiful wood beaded coil bracelets won't last long. Other new wrist and ankle bracelets are also available in various styles.



## SPOON NECKLACES

This lovely collection of spoon handle necklaces are sure to be a conversation starter. Each necklace measures 18" and is \$23.40. Stock of all items are limited, so hurry in today.





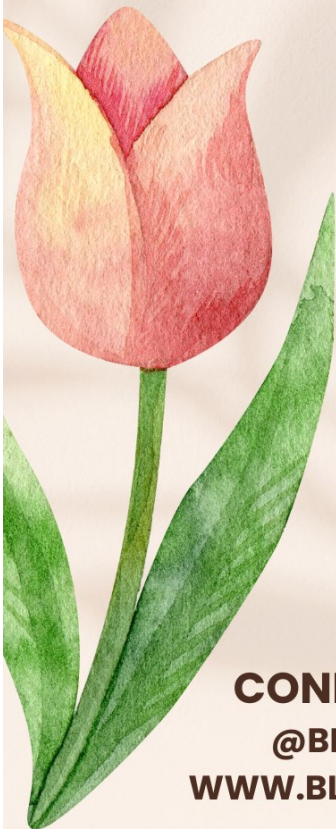


## SPRING HAS ARRIVED!

The Blue Umbrella is bursting with all different types of spring décor. New greeting cards, door hangers, diamond art, and other home décor can be found now in the store along with many other new surprises.

Stop by today!

We are open Monday - Friday  
10 AM - 2 PM!



**CONNECT WITH US:**

**@BLUEUMBRELLAAR**

**WWW.BLUEUMBRELLAAR.ORG**

