



# The Caroline Connection

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## Message from the Director

Behind every great accomplishment there is usually a great team willing to put forth the effort to help meet expectations and achieve goals.

On July 8, 2014 this Agency, along with Kent and Talbot County DSS's, achieved re-accreditation through the New York-based Council on Accreditation. The re-accreditation process involves a review and analysis of an organization's administration, management, and service delivery functions against international standards of best practice.

That achievement allows us to build on the strengths of all of our staff as we deliver services to the children, families, and adults that we serve. It helps us continue to build on the relationship that we have with our community partners, both formal and informal, as well as the individuals and families we serve.

Each of you helped support this accomplishment in ways you probably don't even realize, and I cannot thank you enough for your part in the process. As we move ahead, I am looking forward to working with you on



*Osvaldina Gomes Daly, LCSW*  
*Director*

behalf of Caroline County's children and families.

I am glad to invite you to read through this newsletter as there are many interesting articles about our programs and accomplishments.

*~Dina*

## Save the Date:

- September 11  
8:30 AM  
Mandatory Training  
HAPS Building  
  
1:00 PM  
All Staff Appreciation  
Tuckahoe State Park
- November 6  
8:30 AM  
All-Staff Meeting  
Denton Library
- December 11  
12:30 PM  
Holiday Luncheon  
Denton Volunteer Fire Co.

## All Staff Appreciation Day ~by Leslie Jordan, Assistant to Director for Services & Child Welfare

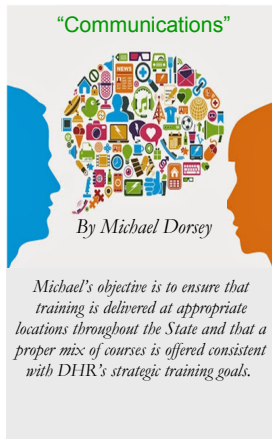


The Create, Motivate, and Improve (CMI) committee has planned a fun-filled afternoon for Friday, September 11th at Tuckahoe State Park from 1:00 PM - 'til. Lunch will be catered this year!

The menu is: Pulled Pork & Fried Chicken, Potato Salad, Macaroni and Cheese, Pretzel Salad, Vegetable tray and dip, Sliced Tomatoes, Cucumber & Onions, Fruit Salad & Rolls. Desserts include Brownies and Cookies. Refreshments are Iced tea, Lemonade, and Water.

The theme of the day is All Sports and the CMI team asks that you wear something in support of your favorite sports team. Just for fun, a list of colors for Major League Baseball and the National Football League are listed page 17. Bring your team spirit and join us for a great day!

## Meet Your Bud's Day - September 11, 2015



The Caroline County Department of Social Services' Training Committee is pleased to present "Communications" by Michael Dorsey at its annual "Meet Your Bud's Day" training on September 11th.

Michael is a training manager with the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) in Baltimore and a professional speaker and coach who

empowers others to pursue their passion and purpose. "As a speaker, I have the opportunity to work with all types of audiences ranging from elementary age to corporate executives." With 15 years of experience in a variety of roles ranging from retail management, diversity, and social services, he is a highly motivated entrepreneur with expertise in communication

theory, diversity competencies, personal brand development, reaching across generational gaps, and career related topics.

This is a mandatory training for all employees that will be held at the Caroline County Health Department beginning at 8:30 AM. See you there!

~ by Norma Hitchens  
Child Welfare Support Staff

## Our Parents as Partners Program ~ by Kelly S. Allen, Child Support Supervisor



**Seated:** Emily Joiner; Talbot County, Aimee Bollinger-Smith; Baltimore County.  
**Standing:** Dawn Coleman; Talbot County, Kelly Allen; Caroline County, Joyce Rader; Baltimore County, Earl Corso; Baltimore County, Anthony Dickerson; Caroline County and Ron Nix.

Fatherhood Programs provide services that support fathers in their roles as major influences in their children's lives. They help fathers create loving, nurturing relationships with their children and encourage them to be actively involved in their lives.

This year, the fiscal Quarterly Fatherhood Meeting was held at Annie's Restaurant in Grasonville, MD on June 29, 2015 where a luncheon and ceremony was held to recognize members of Special Projects.

Tywanna Taylor, Director of Special Projects and Ron Nix, Program Manager with the Child Support Administration presented members with a Certificate of Appreciation. This is in gratitude for the exemplary work and dedication to the MD Department of Human Resources, Child Support Enforcement Administration's "Young Fatherhood Program" by their commitment to bettering the lives of Maryland fathers and their children.

## Summer Youth Employment Program

The Summer Youth Employment Program is an initiative sponsored by the Mid-Shore Departments of Social Services. Caroline County DSS is the lead for this initiative with Delmarva Community Services serving as the program vendor.

The program provides youth - ages 14 to 21 - with meaningful summer work experiences through placements in the private, non-profit, and government sectors. This year, 28 youth participated in the program.

Of those, 19 youth responded to a survey about their program experience. The results were: Overall Program, Field Trips, and Orientation rated excellent. Youth also indicated that Placements and Hands-on Experience met their expectations. There were eight (8) 14 to 15 year olds, nine (9) 16 to 17 year olds, and two (2) 18 to 19 year olds that participated. One student commented that she loved the program and would like to participate next year and another said the program had given him purpose for the day and funding to help him feel more secure.



Eleven students participated in the program for the first time; Six attended for the second time, and one student participated for the 3rd year.

## Foster Care *~by Kitty Nelson, Child Welfare Supervisor*

Foster Care is also known as the Out of Home Unit. In Caroline County our Unit has many tasks compared to larger counties who have a Unit for each specific grouping. We administer Foster Care, Adoptions, Independent Living, Voluntary Placements, and until recently, Resource Homes programs.

When cases are identified where a child is at risk of harm or neglect the Supervisor is notified to attend a **Family Involvement Meeting (FIM)** and to bring the worker who would most likely be the one to manage the case. The FIM is designed to explore all the options and other family members who may be available to support the family and prevent the youth from coming into care. We believe that the family is the expert on the child, and as we listen to the needs of the family, if there is no one that is willing or able to keep the child safe then a Shelter hearing must be requested, and the child is taken into our care.

Prior to a case coming into our care, workers and foster parents are put on alert so that they can be aware that a child “may be” coming into care. Many discussions are held with family members to prevent a child from coming into foster care, and we are often involved to help brainstorm solutions to prevent this from happening. Once “shelter” is deemed necessary many wheels start moving to secure an appropriate placement for the child/

children, such as secure day care, education, medical appointments and minimizing trauma for the child, while preparing the foster parent and bio-parents of everything that needs to happen. This all needs to happen usually within a 5 day time-frame or less.

Policies are different for each Unit, and documentation of all the steps and conversations is vital to a case. Foster Care always begins the Reunification process with the parents/ family with the hope that what brought a child into our care can be rectified so the child can return to the home or to an appropriate relative who can keep them safe from harm and in a stable environment.

Notification to social security, medical assistance, and child support also needs to occur in case funding is available that will support the child where they currently live.

In-between all the steps that need to be completed timely, is the management of the family’s emotions, as well as, the child’s or children, the foster parents, and the worker’s feelings. Everyone may try to put on a brave face underneath all that is the fear of the unknown and the concern for the child. Balancing all this as professionally as possible is part of our every day duty.



## Upcoming Changes in Foster Care

*~ by Melissa Forbes, Child Welfare Supervisor*

The Foster Care unit has been growing, and as a result we will now have two separate units that will work together to ensure the needs of families within Caroline County are best served. The second unit will consist of Robin Bigelow, Resource Homes; Patty Linder, Special Projects (Family Finding & Family Navigation); Robin Mc Guckian, Home studies/Resource Home worker; Erika Taylor, Family Services Associate and Melissa

Forbes, Child Welfare Supervisor. Beginning in September, we will be welcoming two new interns from Salisbury University who will join our team. This has been a rewarding start for the Kinship Navigation, Family Finding Foster Care staff. We have attended multiple trainings in regard to new Family Finding Policy, Kinship Navigation, and participated in support groups with other new workers within the state. We

acquired a new search engine by the name of “Clear”, which has helped us locate family members for youth that would have normally entered the foster care system. We have been able to assist Adult Services staff with finding family members for their clients. One youth reported to her caseworker that she was so happy that she had grandparents now. It is our goal to help strengthen families and create new bonds.



*“Our goal is to help strengthen families and create new bonds. One youth reported to her caseworker that she was so happy that she had grandparents now.” ~ Melissa Forbes*

## *Adult Services* ~by Doreen Patrick, Adult Services Supervisor

The Adult Services Unit is waiting for the new grant for the Winter Haven homeless shelter; this grant will fund a full time Housing Counselor and Aftercare position at the shelter.

This is an exciting time for Winter Haven as they prepare to open in October and will close the end of May. The Executive Director, Brian Gourley, has been an enormous support to Caroline County residents in providing shelter.

The program goals are to connect clients with employment opportunities, sobriety meetings, health insurance, food assistance, and housing. The case manager will work diligently with the clients in giving them new hope in their lives while maintaining and sustaining their new productive role in the community.

Brian's goal is to have a full-time shelter for Caroline County in the near future. Last year the shelter provided 4,738 safe and secure bed nights of shelter, assisting 92 people (44 females and 48 males). There were 17 children ages infant -17 and 75 adults.

According to Brian, the Mid-Shore Family Shelter, Winter Haven, recently changed its name to "His Hope Haven". This was done for a couple of reasons.

First, the shelter exists to serve those who are in dire straights and the most in need of the hope we have to share. A statement that was often heard from many shelter guests and/or their family and friends is: "it seems weird but the shelter has been the best thing that has ever happened in my life".

Second, the shelter is moving towards providing support and services year-round. The name "Winter Haven" accurately described the shelter at its beginning, when they were only open during the 2 coldest months of the year. It is now open October 1- May 31(three quarters of the year), the maximum time the shelter can be open in its current location. The need for a year-round support facility is real. On May 31, 2015 there were two families with no place to live. Those families stayed in cabins and sheds until they could find housing.



Mid-Shore Family Shelter

*Winter Haven recently changed its name to "His Hope Haven".*

*A life saving ministry helping families find living hope.*

## *Maryland's First Lady Opens Government House to Outstanding Foster Parents*



**Pictured L to R:** First Lady Yumi Hogan, Kitty Nelson, and DHR Secretary Sam Malhotra. Debbie Ramelmeier is pictured in the background.

In Maryland, there are 4,995 children who live in out of home care. Foster families care for 3,484 of those 4,995 children. Each of the Department of Human Resources' Local Departments of Social Services identified a family that excels in fostering children with various disabilities to receive this recognition.

"It takes a special type of person to foster special needs children. Many of the children are faced with physical, mental, and/or cognitive disabilities that can be very challenging at times," said DHR Secretary, Sam Malhotra. "Opening their home to a child who may need a special diet, medical equipment, or just an extra hug to make them feel a part of a family is why we celebrate these families."

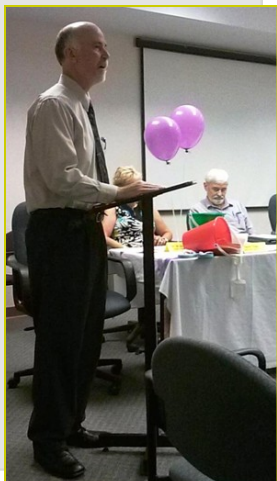
First Lady Yumi Hogan treated the families to a buffet luncheon on May 21st and presented them with an award certificate along with a small token of appreciation as recognition of their outstanding service to Maryland's children in out of home care. In addition, the honorees had their photos taken with the First Lady and the Secretary of DHR.

In addition to this celebration, the 24 local department of social services show their appreciation to their local foster parents by hosting dinners, picnics, family fun days, an Inner Harbor cruise, bowling and skating outings, and more, to say thank you.

In Caroline County, the 2015 Outstanding Foster Family is Elizabeth Nichols. Ms. Nichols was unable to attend the event and Kitty Nelson accepted the honor in her absence.

## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day — June 15, 2015

~ submitted by Ty Kennedy; APS, E.A., and Homeless Caseworker



**Pictured:** Gary Gunther, Director of Upper Shore Aging.

The purpose of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic, and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

Locally, in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2015, Upper Shore Aging, Caroline County Department of Social Services (CCDSS), and the Caroline Senior Center organized a community outreach event held on June 12, 2015. **“Celebration of Seniors”** was intended to promote awareness, provide information, and stimulate discussion of the under-recognized problems of Elder Abuse, as well as to honor our elderly. Vital feedback from community partners and leaders who confront these issues daily was shared. Participants from the Senior Center, under the supervision of Carol “Blue” Donahue, Medical

Adult Day Care, and a number of service providers from the Caroline and Talbot County communities were in attendance.

Gary Gunther, Director of Upper Shore Aging, opened the program and the following partners and services providers shared valuable resource information. They were: Donny Baker, Caroline County Sheriff’s Department; Jane Bateman, Home Instead Senior Care; Dr. Melinda Butler, Preston Family Physicians; Pat Carney, Ombudsman, Upper Shore Aging; Wanda Harmon, CNB; Susan Higgs, Senior Care and Waiver, Upper Shore Aging; Meg Rekstis and Jake Worm, Esq., Mid-Shore Pro Bono; Crystal Terhune, Adult Evaluation and Review/Caroline Health Department; and Ty Kennedy, APS investigator, CCDSS. Ty highlighted data on the numbers of reports and investigations compiled annually by CCDSS and served as moderator of the event. In Caroline County in 2014, there were over 150 referrals

made to the Adult Protective Services Unit (APS), with approximately 60 screened-in for Investigation. Of those, nearly half involved cases of Neglect and the remaining were Abuse and Exploitation. There are increasing numbers of reports of financial exploitation, related in part to more multigenerational households, wide-spread addiction to prescription pain medications, and changing family structures. A large percentage of APS cases are transitioned to Continuing APS and Senior Care caseloads.

Following the panel discussion, a catered lunch provided by Helen Todd Catering was enjoyed by all.



**Pictured LtoR:** Crystal Terhune (AERS), Jane Bateman (Home Instead), Jake Worm, Esquire (Mid-Shore Pro Bono).

## Child Protective Services ~by Cara Calloway, Child Protective Services Supervisor

Child Protective Services (CPS) provides protection for children who are at risk of, or are experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or emotional or physical neglect.

The focus is on the safety of the child and support for parents to strengthen families and promote safe, nurturing homes for children.

Here at CCDSS, investigators receive, screen, and investigate reports of abuse and neglect. Investigators provide families with referrals to Agency and community

resources and provide supportive services to children and families in their homes. The investigations unit makes arrangements for out-of-home placement and permanency planning for children at imminent risk when necessary.

More recently, the investigations unit has begun implementing the Statewide initiative, Alternative Response, which is a less intrusive, more team-oriented, and strengths-based approach to families with low-level reports of maltreatment. The investigators also share responsibilities for assisting law

enforcement on criminal investigations/interviews when needed, assisting other local DSS agencies with courtesy interviews/assessments and also conduct 30-day assessments to assist the In-Home Services unit at times.

At the present time, the investigations unit is comprised of the following staff: Ivy Lambert, Intake Worker; Mark Cole, Angela Bey, Tynekia Green, Charity Mullen, Sarah Porter, Investigators; and Cara Calloway, Supervisor.



*The focus of CPS is on the safety of the child and support for parents to strengthen families and promote safe, nurturing homes for children.*

## Respite Care ~by Robin Bigelow, Resource Home Worker



The Respite Care Program has been active at Caroline County Department of Social Services for approximately 20 years, has been funded by the Caroline County Human Services Council.

The program utilizes licensed foster homes. Those homes have been inspected; home studies have been conducted.

When children come into respite, the parents don't lose custody. They are just placed in foster homes for two or three nights in order to give parents or caregivers a break.

There are three types of respite programs in Caroline County. 1) The Respite Grant, 2) Respite for children who are going from one foster home to another, funded through the Department of Human Resources (DHR), and; 3) Crossroads Community, Inc. where children with a mental health diagnosis can have their medical assistance card billed to pay the respite care provider.

This respite grant is most utilized by DSS and is for any child in need in Caroline County. Referrals are received by all agencies that deal with children (i.e., School Board, Juvenile Services, Health Department, CPS, etc.).

Recently, the Agency has seen an increase in the number of substance exposed newborns. In these cases, the parents cannot care for their children safely because of their own addiction so the child is placed in respite care until a family member can travel to the area to pick up the child and care for them.

There are currently 26 licensed foster homes in Caroline County, and any one of them can provide respite care if they so choose. In the last fiscal year, 14 of those homes were utilized for respite.

For more information on the Respite Care Program, please contact Robin Bigelow at extension 4533.

## Family Investment Administration: Customer Care Celebrates First-Year Anniversary!

The Customer Care Unit at CCDSS is a very busy office, receiving more than 100 customer calls per day. The unit is supervised by Linda Farrow and employs five full-time workers. They are: Christina Martinez-Shepherd, Alicia Martinez, Christine Pusey, Christina Chandler, and Oretta Duncan. Christine says, "When calls come in we answer questions and assist customers with various resources they may need. We can also check their case status and make changes where necessary".

Customers may apply for Energy Assistance, Cash Assistance, Food Stamps, and Purchase of Care (POC) or, they may request an application to be sent by mail. They may also apply online at [www.marylandsail.org](http://www.marylandsail.org). SAIL applications are retrieved each morning and forwarded to the appropriate supervisor for processing.

In addition to answering phones, each worker contributes in a unique way to the daily process. Alicia and Christina C. scan daily mail, faxes, and drop-box items and

forwards them to the appropriate Family Investment supervisor for processing. They also scan and forward documents for the Long-term Care/Medical Assistance program.

Through the Maryland Health Connection's (MHC), customers must apply for medical benefits online. During that process they may need to provide additional documentation that they are unable to upload to the MHC site. In that instance, they may take the documents to their local DSS for processing. Oretta and Christina S. share the responsibility of scanning documents that customers bring to Caroline County DSS. They upload and save the documents to "file.net" where they may be retrieved by workers from anywhere in Maryland in order to update the customer record.

Congratulations on your first year of operations, and thank you for all you do to assist our customers and fellow workers!



**Seated:** Christina Martinez-Shepherd. **Standing L to R:** Linda Farrow, Alicia Martinez, Next row: Christine Pusey, and Christina Chandler. Back row: Oretta Duncan.

~by Terry Bond, Management Associate

## Local Day to Serve - Let the Contest Begin!



This year's Local Day to Serve will run from September 11-October 9, 2015. We will be collecting personal, cleaning, and other items to help stock "His Hope Haven" (Formerly Winter Haven) shelter for the upcoming year. Here's where the contest comes in. The Community Outreach Team (COT) has taken the list of items needed and divided them into 4 categories; each category has a point value for items listed. For each item collected points are awarded. Each unit will have their own box to collect their items. The unit with the most points at the end wins bragging rights! The real winners, of course, will be our community as we help His Hope Haven reach out to those in need.

~by Barbara Matney, Child Support Fiscal Supervisor

## Management Teambuilding Retreat ~ by Terry Bond, Management Associate

In our busiest days it might be tempting to resist the importance of participating in a staff retreat. "Who has time for that?" you might think, but in the day-to-day stressors each of us experience, it's important to focus on the quality and effectiveness of team building. Integrating new staff members and re-energizing current employees helps strengthen a team and is important in helping them maintain a focus on the services they provide as a whole.

On June 26th, the Management Team enjoyed time-out that included a painting session at Suicide Bridge Restaurant and a lunch cruise on the Historic Choptank River aboard the Dorothy-Megan. "I've never experienced anything like this and the camaraderie was awesome! I've been in awe of the Agency since I started working here and this was just the icing on the cake!" said Linda Farrow.

It was fortunate that the weather was warm and dry so we could experience the river cruise and have the opportunity to interact and get to know one another better.

Many thanks to everyone who worked to make this event possible.



Pictures courtesy of Kelly S. Allen

## Make a Difference in Maryland and Beyond!



The Maryland Charity Campaign (MCC) is a workplace charitable-giving program that offers state employees the opportunity to contribute to their favorite charities using the convenience of payroll deduction. Currently nearly 900 charities participate in the campaign.

Last year 31 donors at Caroline County Department of Social Services selflessly gave over \$3,700 to the Maryland Charity Campaign, and your generosity enabled Maryland charities to serve some of our most vulnerable neighbors. The top 10 local Charities that benefited from your contributions are: Caroline County Humane Society, Inc., Denton Child Development Center, Talbot Hospice Foundation, Heifer Project International, Inc., Caroline Foundation for Mental Health, Teach For America, Hospice of the Chesapeake, MAC Incorporated (Area Agency on Aging), Shore Up, Inc., and Autism Society of America Foundation, Inc.

More information about the Fall Campaign will be available in the coming weeks. Please stay tuned for kick-off information.

~ Terry Bond, MCC Coordinator

## August is Child Support Awareness Month!



**Pictured L to R—Front row:** Cindy Fowler, Barbara Matney, Brenda Phillips, Millicent Maloney, Lindsey Cheslowsky, Anthony Dickerson, and Christina Chandler. **2nd row:** Rayshelle Robinson, Melissa Harris, Lynn Spinner, Marcel Seth, Kelly Allen, and Glenn Anders.

August is Child Support Awareness Month across the United States. Rayshelle Robinson, Assistant Director for Child Support and Family Investment at Caroline County Department of Social Services (CCDSS) and the Child Support Unit are marking the month with education and outreach for parents, children and the public.

Each year at this time, CCDSS highlights the importance of the financial support parents provide to their children and thank parents who consistently pay their child support.

During the month of August, CCDSS staffers are donating school supplies for kids and ties and scarves for parents who receive and pay child support. The OAG Child Support Outreach Team will also educate parents and the public on the importance of child support.

## 5th Annual Family Fun Fest a Success!

More than 875 people attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Fun Fest held Friday, August 7, in downtown Denton.

The event was hosted by the Caroline County Office of Child Support Enforcement and the Caroline County Department of Social Services Community Outreach Team to celebrate August as Child Support Awareness Month.

In addition to community resources, refreshments, games, crafts, entertainment and other family-related activities, book bags filled with grade-appropriate school supplies were distributed to approximately 703 children. Community Partners and generous Sponsors/Supporters of the event Included: Department of Juvenile Services, Early Head Start, Caroline Co. Health Department, Recreation & Parks, Caroline Public Library, The Bridge Community, Choptank Electric, Delmarva Power, DLLR, Envoy, MD Coalition of Families, MD Legal Aid, Mid-Shore Pro Bono, Mid-Shore WIC, Talbot Co. Health Department/Addictions Program, Acme of Easton, Breezeway Farms, the Caroline County Commissioners, Circuit Court for Caroline County, Bullock's Deli, B&R Auto Parts, Caroline County Human

Services Council, Centreville National Bank/Denton, Delmarva Community Transit, Domino's, James Ransome/Awards Engraving, Denton Wal-Mart, Federalsburg Lions Club, Food Lion of Denton, M&T Bank/Denton, Mental Health Association/Kids on the Block Program, Mid-Shore Council on Family Violence, Moore Funeral Home, PNC Bank of Denton, Target of Easton, Jason's Computers, Caroline County Sheriff's Department/Fraternal Order of Police, Caroline County Women's Club, Board of Child Care, Rex Landscaping/ Denton, Safeway of Easton, Salad Star/Denton, Sal's of Denton, Market Street Public House, Giant of Easton, Jimmy Johns, Town of Denton/Public Works, Denton Police Department, United Concerned Christians, Christ Our King Church, Verizon TCC Denton, YMCA of Denton, and Walgreens of Easton.

Media promotion was provided by Star Democrat/Times Record, the Caroline Review, and Shore Home & Garden.

Several local churches including Trinity AME Church/Ridgely, St.



Members of the Child Support Unit and the Community Outreach Team gather at the beginning of Family Fun Fest for the 5th annual kick-off. Larry Porter, President of the Caroline County Commissioners, led the ribbon cutting ceremony. Additional pictures are on page 10.

Benedicts/St. Elizabeth's/Ridgely, St. Luke's UMC/Denton, Trinity UMC, Greater Mt. Olive Full Gospel Baptist Church/Cambridge, Crossroads Community Church, Georgetown, DE, Caroline County MOTA/Union Bethel, and Bethel Wesleyan/Goldsboro along with the North Caroline Clergy Association, partnered with the Department as sponsors or served as collection sites for donated school supplies.

The volunteer efforts of the Cadets from the Ridgely Volunteer Fire Company and 18 children of CCDSS employees also helped make the event a success.

~ by Millicent Maloney, Attorney; Services & Child Support



## Child Support Fiscal

### Collection of Child Support Payments

The collection of child support payments has gone electronic and joined the 21<sup>st</sup> century! The new SMART Remote system has arrived using the “Panini” scanner. Now when customers come in with their cash, check, or money order payments they are scanned and transmitted to the Maryland State Disbursement unit immediately. That night, payments are transferred to the Child Support Unit and disbursed to the custodial parent the next day. What a great way to speed up the process of helping get needed resources to the children of Maryland.



~by Barbara Matney, Child Support Fiscal Supervisor

## Work Opportunities ~ by Terry Bond, Management Associate

Linda Farrow is the new Work Opportunities and Customer Care Supervisor at Caroline County Department of Social Services (CCDSS) and Holly Callaway and Tara Wilbur are the Work Opportunities Case Managers.

This article highlights the process of the Work Opportunities Unit when a customer applies for Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). Temporary Cash Assistance is a program designed to lead individuals toward self-sufficiency and family stability. Anyone qualifying for TCA is expected to participate in the Work Opportunities Program or risk their case being closed for noncompliance.

There are two ways a customer can apply for TCA, which includes coming into the local office and submitting a paper application or, they may apply online at <https://www.marylandsail.org/>. The tool to apply online will change at the end of September; The website will be entitled myDHR.

Once their application is processed, applicants will receive notice of an orientation with the Work Opportunities Staff, which is conducted every Monday at 9:30 AM in the Market Street training room.

Requirements of the program are explained to applicants during the orientation that is followed by a 1-on-1 assessment with either Holly or Tara. During this interview, the Work Opportunities Case Manager determines if the customer has any barriers that may prevent them from being successful in the program. Those barriers can include lack of transportation, no education, no child care, substance abuse issues, or mental health concerns.

Once they have completed that assessment, customers are referred to an eligibility case manager in the Intake Unit, who processes the application for TCA. The Intake staff consists of : Judy Nalley, Shaun Rochester, Ian Aldridge, DeNene Stewart, and Tynita Fletcher; Darlene DeShields is the Family Investment/Cash Assistance supervisor for the Intake Unit.

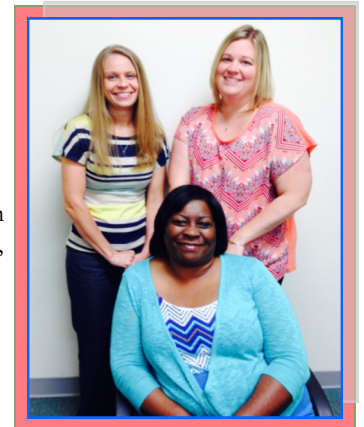
The application process for TCA is a 30 day process that requires customers to comply with Work Opportunities by completing 2 weeks of job training and independent job searches and transitioning into a work experience component as a volunteer, that requires 25 to 35 work hours per week (depending on the family

situation). Each applicant is required to meet with Meyer Slacum, FI/TCA Addictions Specialist within 10 days of the orientation, and those with children must file an application for Child Support. In Maryland, there is a 60-month lifetime limit for this program.

CCDSS also assists customers by connecting them with other programs, agencies, and partners in job placement such as: Obtaining a General Education Development (GED) diploma, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) degree, or Certified Driver's License (CDL). For those who have difficulty securing a job because of their past life experience, the Career Center can assist employers in obtaining “insurance” through the Federal Bonding Program (FBP), which guarantees the job honesty of at-risk job seekers.

The Work Opportunities team is responsible for meeting the Federal Work Participation Rate and Job Placement Goals each year. Caroline County has been ranked #1 in the State of Maryland over the last 4 years in the Work Participation Rate performance goal.

Congratulations on a job well done, ladies! And, thank you for all you do to serve our customers.



**Seated:** Linda Farrow. **Standing:** Holly Callaway and Tara Wilbur.



## Create, Motivate, & Improve (CMI) Sponsors Ice Cream Social

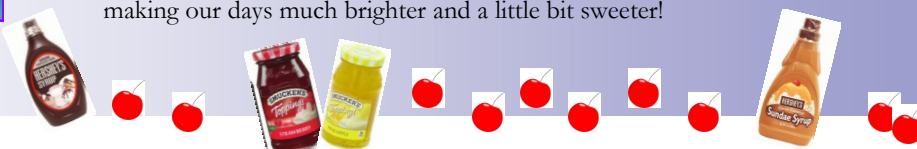


**Pictured L to R:**  
Mary Jo Hollingsworth, Leslie Jordan,  
and Judy Nalley.

Members of the CMI committee were on-hand to serve ice cream at the July 24th Ice Cream Social.

The team provided homemade Ice Cream from the Vandewende Creamery, as well as a variety of sugar-free ice cream. Toppings were Hot Fudge, Chocolate, Caramel, Strawberry, Pineapple, Colorful and Chocolate Sprinkles, and maraschino cherries. Judy made homemade Wet Nuts and Mary Jo whipped up a fresh bowl of whipped cream. Ice cream cones were also available.

Thank You, CMI, for all you do! We appreciate your time to reach out to *all* of us and for making our days much brighter and a little bit sweeter!



## Front Desk Support Staff



*Lauren Baker*  
Front Desk Support Staff at  
Market Street since April 1, 2015

Lauren Baker and Christy Donahue serve the Agency as Front Desk Support Staff at the 3rd and Market Street reception desks.

Lauren and Christy greet and assist customers, answer and direct phone calls, and assist with data entry and other administrative duties as needed. Christy also serves the as Procurement Officer for the Agency.

Christy began working at the Agency in 2011 as a TCA recipient volunteer and was hired at the 3rd

Street location in August of 2014 to fill the vacant receptionists' position. Lauren applied to fill the vacant front-desk position at Market Street and was hired to begin working on April 1, 2015.

Christy and Lauren provide excellent customer service to the community as well as support to the many staff members who depend on them on a daily basis.

Thank you, Lauren and Christy, for all you do!



*Christy Donahue*  
Front Desk Support Staff at 3rd  
Street since August 2014

## Christina Martinez-Shepherd Receives Customer Service Excellence Award



**Pictured L to R** - Front row: Melissa Jones-Harris, Karen Butler, Christina Martinez-Shepherd, and Raysbelle Robinson. Back row: Former DHR Secretary Ted Dallas, and Carnitra White, DHR Deputy Secretary.

The Customer Service Excellence Award Program honors individuals that consistently display a strong commitment to excellence in customer service, perform their duties with competence, integrity and compassion, and adhere to the practices and procedures outlined in the Department's Customer Service Manual. These individuals are DHR's best customer service professionals.

Ms. Martinez-Shepherd sets the highest example of excellent customer service delivery. She goes above and beyond to meet the needs of both the internal and external customers served. She takes the extra time to explain programs and policies so that the customer understands when calling or visiting the agency. Each customer is treated with dignity and respect regardless of their specific need. She is an excellent team player and a great resource person to all.

Congratulations Christina for being awarded the 2014 Excellence in Customer Service Award for Caroline County. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to serving customers and staff.

~ submitted by Terry Bond

# Employee of the Month - September 2014 to August 2015

September 2014



Ian Aldridge

October 2014



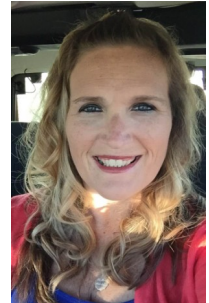
Angela Bey

November 2014



Melissa Kunz

December 2014



Melissa Harris

January 2015



Lynnetta Charity

February 2015



Robin Bigelow

March 2015



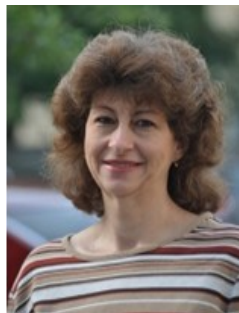
Christina Martinez-Shepherd

April 2015



Shaundranese Rochester

May 2015



Christine Pusey

June 2015



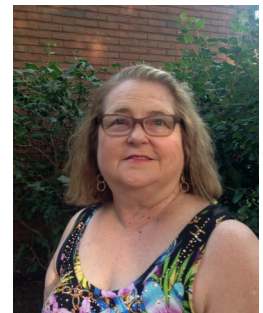
Norma Hitchens

July 2015



Sarah Porter

August 2015



Millicent Maloney

## Peggy Gaestel is Manager of the Year ~ by Dale Oberender, Assistant Director of Services



Each year, the executive team nominates and selects a member of the management team as “Manager of the Year.” In December of 2014, Peggy Gaestel received that honor.

Peggy began state service in Charles County in 1993. In July of 2006, she transferred to Caroline County as the In Home Services Supervisor. She presided over Inter-Agency Family Preservation Services, Consolidated In Home Services, Services to Families Intake and Assessment, and Services to Families affected by Drug Exposed Newborns until her retirement of July of this year.

Peggy successfully led the Agency in the completing the application process and trainings necessary to become a sole sponsor of Category I Continuing Education Unit’s (CEU’s). Trainings focus on ethics and professional conduct, including boundary issues, or pertaining to the standards of practice and laws governing the profession of social work in Maryland.

Congratulations Peggy for being awarded the 2014 Manager of the Year Award and thank you for your hard work and dedication.

## Social Worker of the Year ~ by Cara Calloway, CPS Supervisor

Jessica Tuel was selected by the management of Child Welfare as this year's Social Worker of the Year. Jessica has demonstrated a strong commitment to the field of Social Work and to the Caroline County Department of Social Services in the past year. She was a very strong member of the Child Protective Services' Investigations Unit when need arose in the Foster Care Unit for help. Jessica did not wait to be asked, but volunteered her time and energy to support the Foster Care Unit, and ultimately, progressed in that unit so well, that there was an arrangement made for her to transfer into Foster Care. She has been commended by agency personnel as well as community partners, unsolicited, as to how quickly she transitioned and has become knowledgeable and trusted in her new role. She is a reliable team-member in the Child Welfare Division and is always first to volunteer her time for intake, to train staff, facilitate meetings, or to help out others in need. She demonstrates elite engagement and rapport with even difficult clients, maintains composure and is current on policy and ethical considerations. She has strongly pursued her career goals and was successful in completing the necessary time and supervision to apply for higher licensure.



Thank you and congratulations Jessica!

## Advisory Board ~ by Terry Bond, Management Associate

In 2012, the Caroline County Department of Social Services (CCDSS) Advisory Board applied for and received a 501 (c)(3) tax status for the purpose of engaging in fund raising activities. Since that time, \$7,352.43 has been deposited to the Caroline Community Assistance Fund as follows: Paul Hastings Awards \$1,300, Fund Raisers \$1,487.50, Private Donations \$1,550, Employee Contributions through the Maryland Charities Campaign

\$1,014.93, and \$2,000 from a single Grant.

A total of \$1,180.09 has been disbursed through the Fund and used to assist applicants who qualify for one-time assistance with utilities, medical bills, food and housing, etc. Qualifying applicants must have been screened out and not eligible for other Agency services.

In 2012, the Board applied and

received a loan from the Caroline County Commissioners to be utilized as startup funds to initiate fundraising efforts. The current balance available through the Caroline Community Assistance Fund is \$ 9,172.34.

Caroline County DSS appreciates the support & commitment of its Advisory Board members. Thank you, Board members, for all you do to educate and advocate.



## October is LGA Appreciation Month

The Local General Administration (LGA) will celebrate LGA Appreciation Month in October and will be asking for input from all staff members during the month. More information to follow.

Members have teamed up and will each plan an event once a week throughout the month to

celebrate. In 2014, activities included bingo, a scavenger hunt, and pumpkin decorating.

LGA team members are: Trish Chapman, AD for Finance & Administration; Christina Ford, Finance Officer; Terry Bond, Management Associate; Troy Livingstone, IT Specialist; Barbara Matney, Child Support

Fiscal Supervisor; Karen Satterfield, Fleet Manager; Melissa Kunz, HR Officer; Cindy Fowler and Cheryl Satterfield, Child Support Fiscal caseworkers; and Christy Donahue, Receptionist & Procurement Officer.



Stay tuned for ways you can help celebrate LGA Appreciation Month!

## Welcome to SPS! ~ Submitted by Melissa Kunz, HR Officer



The Statewide Personnel System (SPS) encompasses many tools to assist State of Maryland employees with managing their personal and work life. The SPS is a secure and user-friendly system that puts your personnel data (such as your contact information and your job history) at your fingertips.

The primary SPS tool is **Workday**. **Workday** is a cloud-based application for human resources, benefits, and time tracking.

In **Workday**, you are currently able to:

- Change your contact info
- View your Grade, Step and Increment Month
- View your Salary History
- Add your Education and External Job History

Check out more information on the Department of Budget and Management website: [www.dbm.maryland.gov](http://www.dbm.maryland.gov)

## Open Enrollment ~ Submitted by Melissa Kunz, HR Officer

Open Enrollment for Employee Health Benefits will be from October 15 – November 16. There are no changes to the health benefits this year. So, if you do **nothing**, then your benefits will remain the same. If you need to make any changes to your health benefits you will use the IVR system.

**Remember:** You must re-enroll each year for all of the Flexible Spending Accounts programs, even if you are making no changes!



## Directors Meet DHR Secretary ~ by Terry Bond, Management Associate



*Pictured here are Dina Daly; Director, Caroline County DSS, DHR Secretary Sam Malhotra, and Gregory James, Deputy Secretary for Operations.*

DSS Directors met with Secretary Malhotra on April 1, 2015. The Secretary spoke about his strategic direction and listed 9 areas that he will be focusing on. They are:

- Developing a State-wide Strategic Plan, which he will be working on with Craig Eichler, Director for the Office of Planning and Performance; Drew McKone, Chief of Staff, and; *Gregory James*, Deputy Secretary for Operations. Drew and Craig will be working on the Plan along with Directors.
- Technology Modernization
- Human Capital Strategy
- Digital Media Strategy
- Customer Service
- Welfare to Entrepreneurship
- Secondary Trauma
- Leadership Development for Foster Care Youth
- Internship Careers for Foster Care Youth

Secretary Malhotra is scheduled to visit Caroline County Department of Social Services on October 2, 2015.

## Lt. Governor Rutherford Visits Staff During Summerfest



**Pictured L to R:** Linda Farrow, Melissa Forbes, Lt. Governor Rutherford, Mary Jo Hollingsworth and Doreen Patrick in the background.

~ Photo by Joe Andrucyk

This year's theme for Summerfest was "Caroline Summerfest Goes to the Big Leagues!" Members of the Community Outreach Team (COT) organized and planned participation in this year's activities on behalf of the Agency. The Department welcomed visitors to our booth, where they received information on Agency programs and services. The first-shift team received a surprise visit from Lt. Governor Rutherford and he happily posed for a picture with them. Looking good, everyone!

Many thanks to everyone who helped make the event a big success and provided coverage for the two day event. They are: Doreen Patrick, Christina Chandler, Mary Jo Hollingsworth, Melissa Forbes, Dotsey Matey, Lea Ann Lezotte, Julia Yuker, Tara Lucas, Christina Martinez-Shepherd, Cheryl Satterfield, Kelly Allen, Allayne Burke, Christina Ford, Alicia Martinez, and Bea Williams.

Please remember to forward any training certificates

such as continuing education credits,  
pre-service training,  
or any other type of training certificates  
you receive to Norma Hitches.

Thank you!

### Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP)

Since July 1, 2015 when applications were made available to the approximately 1,800 Caroline County residents on our mailing list, the OHEP staff has received 825 forms. Of that number, 654 have been approved and 71 denied. As of August 28, 2015 there are approximately 100 applications still being processed prior to decisions. These numbers compare favorably to last year at this time. The staff anticipates receiving many more applications in the near future and especially as the colder months draw near.

The OHEP staff remains unchanged from last year. Staff includes: Sharone Scott, Supervisor; Ernie Chadderton, Josie Seth, Amanda Breeding, and Lauren Baker continue to move the operation along in a smooth and efficient manner. ~ by Ernie Chadderton

**Thanks a million!**

**To Erika Taylor and Christina Ford for assisting with the editing of this Newsletter. I couldn't have done it without you! A special thanks to those who submitted articles, too!**

**Terry**

### Fall Is In The Air

No more going to the beach, basking in the sun.  
No more romping, racing and just having fun.

No more lying in the hammock sipping lemonade.  
No more sitting on the porch watching the sun fade.

No more luscious fruits and vegetables of the season.  
As we wonder and ponder, we should know the reason.

No more amusement rides and eating cotton candy at the fair,  
There's a change coming - *Fall Is In the Air!*

Nights are cooler – geese are flying to their winter home.  
No more pesky flies and bugs – no more do they roam.

Days are getting shorter – the earth has a new flair.  
Don't you feel it in the atmosphere – *Fall Is In the Air!*

Fall has its beauty as well as the summer,  
Although some think this season is a bummer!

Consider the orange pumpkins stacked in a pile,  
Waiting to be made into a jack-o-lantern with a big smile!

Apples are plentiful in shades of red,  
Can't you smell the aroma of cider and pies that are fed?

Furry animals scampering about getting ready for their winter sleep,  
Buried under twigs and brush – they won't come out for a peep.

Leaves in shades of red, orange and yellow,  
This is the time to reminisce and be mellow.

Our canvas is filled with beautiful scenes each day,  
For this lovely picture there's nothing we have to pay.

Our Master is saying enjoy the change – do not despair.  
This happens every year – it's nothing new – *Fall Is In the Air!!!*

~ by Josie Seth

## Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) ~by Terry Bond, PQI Coordinator



Responsibilities of the Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) team is to continuously develop and implement ways to improve the quality of

services to customers, both internally and externally. Improvements to the quality of services are achieved through the semi-annual Customer Survey and the annual Community Partner and Employee Surveys.

PQI is also tasked with overseeing the implementation and overall effectiveness of the PQI Plan, which is reviewed annually and was last updated in 2014. There are 9 members of PQI; Doreen Patrick is the Chair.

PQI participates with the Management Team in the preparation of the Long Term Strategic Plan. The current plan is for the 2014 – 2017 period and is continuously updated as goals and plans are met.

There are 6 sub-committees in the PQI process. They each guide, monitor, and evaluate all activities related to the PQI process and the quality of agency services. They are:

**Create, Motivate and Improve (CMI) Committee:** The goal of CMI is to enhance the morale of all Caroline DSS employees. CMI plans and implements activities that keep staff motivated and inspired throughout the year. Activities include “Casual Days” where staff can buy stickers to participate; Proceeds go to defray the cost of the annual Staff Appreciation Day Picnic in September and the Holiday Luncheon held in December. There are 9 members; Leslie Jordan is Chair.

**Risk Management:** This team works to ensure that day-to-day operations are conducted in a safe manner to prevent potential injury to staff and customers. After each meeting, the team visits offices to assess safety risks that include unattended case records or computers that are not locked if an employee is away from his/her desk. There are 8 Members; Kelly Allen is the Chair.

**Employee Recognition Committee (EOM)** acknowledges and recognizes the accomplishments and achievements of staff in performing their duty to serve the citizens of Caroline County. There are 5 members and the team is under new leadership with Christy Donahue serving as Chair.

**Training Committee:** The Training Committee identifies and schedules staff training needs. There are 9 members; Norma Hitchens is chair and Brenda Phillips is in training to assume that position in the future.

**Community Outreach Team (COT):** Their role in the PQI process is to educate the public on Agency services. There are 13 members, including 1 advisory board member. COT is under new leadership. Sharone Green was recently appointed the Chair position and Barbara Matney was elected by the team to the Co-chair position.

**Scorecard Evaluation Team (SET)** This team reviews management tolls used by DHR for achieving high performance. There are 8 members and Trish Chapman serves as Chair.

## Family Investment Unit Receives 6th Golden Fork Award



**Pictured:** Front Row - L to R: Judy Nalley, Shaun Rochester, Denene Stewart, Alicia Martinez, Raysbelle Robinson, Dina Daly, Christine Pusey, Christina Martinez-Shepherd. Second Row - L to R: Jose Seth, Ty'Keta Butler, Lindsay Cheslosky, Holly Callaway, Melissa Jones-Harris, Loretta Jackson, Oretta Duncan, and Ian Aldridge. Last Row - L to R: Julia Yunker, Allayne Burke, Tama Wilmer, Sharone Scott.

The Family Investment Administration (FIA) at Caroline County Department of Social Services (CCDSS) received its 6th DHR Golden Fork award for performance in the Food Supplement Program. The award is based upon application timeliness for regular and expedited food supplement applications, percent of cases pre-reviewed, and the number of FS SNAP Challenges completed by staff.

The State of Maryland's Department of Human Resources awarded CCDSS' FIA unit with the coveted Golden Fork Award on January 16, 2015. The award was presented by Rosemary Malone, Executive Director of the Family Investment Administration. CCDSS has previously received 2 Silver Spoon Awards as well.

Family Investment divisions throughout Maryland are responsible for determining eligibility for state programs including: Food Supplement (SNAP), Medicaid, Temporary Cash Assistance, and the Temporary Disability Assistance Program. Over the past three years, these programs have seen increases in the number of applicants as well as overall caseload totals, while seeing a decrease in overall workforce capacity.

Caroline County DSS has continued to excel in the areas of customer service and quality of work during this time.

Congratulations to the FIA! Your continued support and dedication are noticed and appreciated!



## Cultural Diversity Lunch & Learn

In 2015 the Training Committee has sponsored two “Lunch and Learn” sessions on Cultural Diversity.

The first presenter was our director, Dina Daly. Dina was born on the tiny island of Cabo Verde off the East Coast of Africa. Seeking a better way of life, the family migrated to Portugal when Dina was 7 and then to the U.S. by the time she was 12. They eventually settled in Boston, MA.

“My mother was my hero.” Dina said. “She saved and planned for our family to have a better life; she wanted us to be educated and she was determined not to leave anyone behind”. Dina has 7 sisters and 3 brothers.

On June 15 the Martinez sisters, Christina and Alicia, provided lunch with a wide variety of delicious Mexican-style food. They also presented a PowerPoint on their Mexican

heritage. The sisters are third-generation Americans, born and raised in Monte Vista, Colorado. Their Mexican heritage can be traced back to their great-great-grandparents.

Other planned sessions include Leann Lezotte, who will demonstrate sign language and Melissa Forbes will give a presentation on the Bahamas, her father’s heritage.



*Pictured L to R: Christina Martinez-Shepherd and her daughter, Alleane, and Alicia Martinez and her daughter, Kylie.*



*Dina's Parents  
Zuilda & João Gomes*

In support of Meet Your Bud’s/All Staff Appreciation Day, listed below are team colors for National Football League and Major League Baseball

NFL Teams			MLB Teams		
49ers	Deep Red	Classic Gold	Angels	Cardinal	Midnight Blue
Bears	Midnight Blue	Carnelian	Astros	Bottle Blue	Tangerine
Bengals	Tangerine	Smooth Black	Athletics	Hunter Green	Sunflower
Bills	Midnight Blue	Cardinal	Blue Jays	Bottle Blue	Smooth White
Broncos	Ink	Tangerine	Braves	Bottle Blue	Cardinal
Browns	Weatherwood	Tangerine	Brewers	Midnight Blue	French Vanilla
Buccaneers	Deep Red	Smooth Black	Cardinals	Cardinal	Midnight Blue
Cardinals	Cardinal	Smooth White	Cubs	Bottle Blue	Cardinal
Chargers	Midnight Blue	Sunflower	Diamondbacks	Deep Red	Smooth Black
Chiefs	Cardinal	Sunflower	Dodgers	Bottle Blue	Smooth White
Colts	Bottle Blue	Smooth White	Giants	Smooth Black	Tangerine
Cowboys	Midnight Blue	Classic Silver	Indians	Midnight Blue	Cardinal
Dolphins	Everglade	Tangerine	Mariners	Midnight Blue	Everglade
Eagles	Forest Shadow	Smooth Black	Marlins	Smooth Black	Bay Blue
Falcons	Smooth Black	Cardinal	Mets	Bottle Blue	Tangerine
Giants	Bottle Blue	Cardinal	Nationals	Cardinal	Midnight Blue
Jaguars	Smooth Black	Ocean Blue	Orioles	Tangerine	Smooth Black
Jets	Hunter Green	Smooth White	Padres	Midnight Blue	French Vanilla
Lions	Bay Blue	Gray	Phillies	Cardinal	Bottle Blue
Packers	Hunter Green	Sunflower	Pirates	Smooth Black	Sunflower
Panthers	Smooth Black	Bay Blue	Rangers	Bottle Blue	Cardinal
Patriots	Midnight Blue	Cardinal	Rays	Midnight Blue	Bay Blue
Raiders	Smooth Black	Classic Silver	Red Sox	Midnight Blue	Cardinal
Rams	Midnight Blue	Classic Gold	Reds	Cardinal	Smooth White
Ravens	Purple	Smooth Black	Rockies	Purple	Smooth Black
Redskins	Maroon	Sunflower	Royals	Bottle Blue	Smooth White
Saints	Smooth Black	Classic Gold	Tigers	Midnight Blue	Tangerine
Seahawks	Midnight Blue	Bright Green	Twins	Midnight Blue	Cardinal
Steelers	Smooth Black	Sunflower	White Sox	Smooth Black	Gray
Texans	Ink	Cardinal	Yankees	Midnight Blue	Smooth White
Titans	Midnight Blue	Bay Blue			
Vikings	Purple	Sunflower			

## Caroline County Department of Social Services

Child Welfare Services  
Adult Services  
Administration

John R. Hargreaves  
District Court &  
Multi-Services Center  
207 South 3rd Street  
Denton, MD 21629

~

Child Support Enforcement  
Caroline County Career Center  
Energy Assistance  
Family Investment Administration

The Carter Building  
300 Market Street  
Denton, MD 21629

Primary Business Phone:  
410-819-4500

Primary Fax: 410-819-4501

MD Relay: (800) 735-2258

[www.dhr.state.md.us/caroline.htm](http://www.dhr.state.md.us/caroline.htm)

## Board of Directors

*Larry Porter, President, Caroline County Commissioners*

*Juanita A. Webster, Chair*

*Wayne Cole, Vice Chair*

*Stephen Stouffer*

*Monique Rich*

*Jeffrey M. Porter*

*Karen McGee*

*James Wilkison*

## Staff

*Osvaldina Gomes Daly, LCSW, Director*

*Raysbelle Robinson, Assistant Director, Family Investment & Child Support*

*Patricia Chapman, Assistant Director for Finance & Administration*

*Dale Oberender, LCSW, Assistant Director for Child and Adult Services*

## *Our Vision*

We envision Caroline County as a place where individuals and families are economically stable and safe from abuse and neglect.

## *Our Mission*

Caroline County Department of Social Services protects the vulnerable and provides resources and opportunities that promote self-determination, safety, and independence.

## *Our Values & Guiding Principles*

Caroline County Department of Social Services holds itself to the highest standards of ethical accountability and integrity inherent to social work. We acknowledge that we are a multi-disciplinary organization and thereby expect each and every employee to also work to the highest standards of their profession.