

Connect

MAY/JUNE 2016

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Bringing Fathers to the Table

Interns put spotlight on how fatherhood services benefit families

More children in the United States are growing up without their biological father in the home, leaving them vulnerable to drug abuse, health problems, social emotional issues and educational needs.

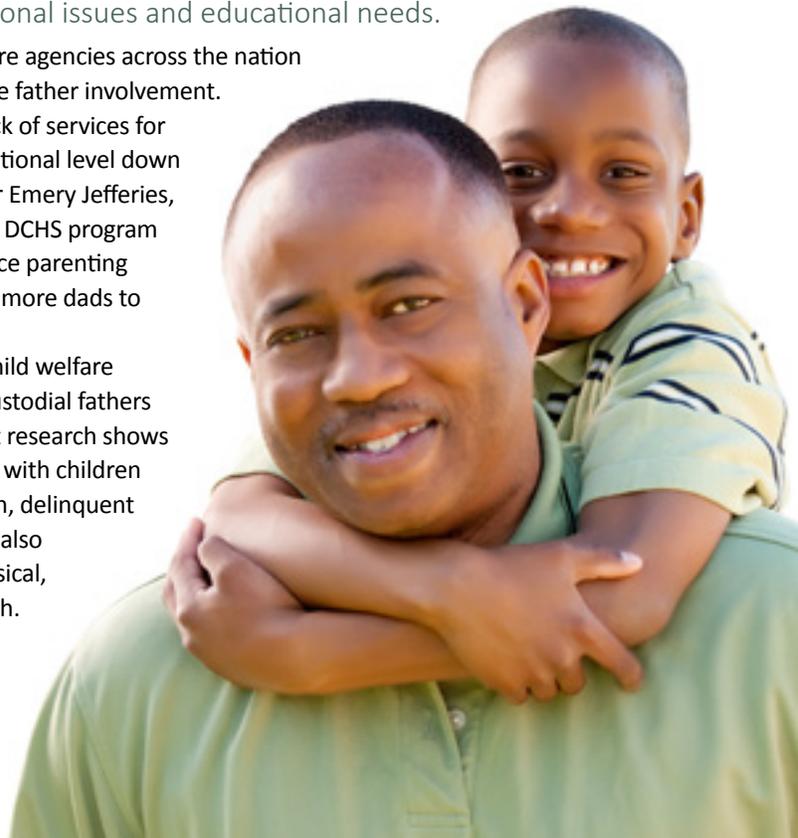
To reduce these risks, child welfare agencies across the nation are focusing on programs to increase father involvement.

"Historically, there has been a lack of services for and attention to fathers from the national level down to the local level," says social worker Emery Jefferies, who coordinates Fathers in Touch, a DCHS program that helps fathers develop or enhance parenting skills. "These programs are bringing more dads to the table."

Traditionally, the main focus in child welfare has been on mothers, leaving noncustodial fathers largely overlooked or dismissed. But research shows that responsible father involvement with children reduces their chances for depression, delinquent activities and failure in school while also increasing positive outcomes in physical, cognitive and social emotional health.

Over the past year, Child Welfare Services has been taking steps to

Continued on page 3



Accomplishments and Priorities



DCHS Director Kate Garvey

AS OUR FISCAL year is ending, it is a good time to reflect on our accomplishments and focus on our priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

We recently shared some of our accomplishments with the City Manager's Office, and they included:

- ▶ The CORE (Community Re-entry) program was cited as a model program that will be replicated across the state as part of the Governor's initiative to improve community integration and reduce recidivism for ex-offenders.
- ▶ In partnership with community organizations, veteran homelessness was functionally ended in the City of Alexandria.
- ▶ The Children and Youth Master Plan was implemented. System work related to Early Care and Education as well as Out of School Time Programs has moved forward significantly. A 2016 Profile of Children and Youth Well Being updates and builds on data collected for the 2013 Profile.
- ▶ Full Citrix desktops were implemented for remote users.
- ▶ Improvements were achieved

in the completion and timeliness of evaluations.

- ▶ Audit findings were eliminated or reduced in programs that previously were cited.
- ▶ The Workforce Development Center (WDC) and Alexandria Court Services Unit partnered to build an integrated infrastructure of support for juveniles at post release that connects them to career exploration, job search assistance, labor market information and employer recruitment information.
- ▶ In collaboration with Virginia Tech and George Mason University, Child Welfare Services completed a self-assessment and developed action steps to address disproportionality in Alexandria's child welfare system.
- ▶ The Permanent Supportive Housing model, a best practice housing and support service practice to replace the mental health supervised apartment program, has been adopted and begun to be implemented.
- ▶ The Office of Community Services restructured to provide comprehensive community based services

to households seeking assistance to obtain or maintain permanent housing.

- ▶ Enhancements to Alexandria's system of care for children included intensive interagency trainings by the Alexandria Court Services Unit, DCHS Child Behavioral Health and DCHS Child Welfare. The year is ending with only 12 youth in congregate care despite an unprecedented level of referrals of children with complex needs.
- ▶ More than 22,000 Alexandrians were provided with benefits.

These are just some of the wonderful things that have been accomplished here at DCHS this year.

What are some of the accomplishments you are most proud of for yourself or your team or the organization? What part did you play in this achievement? I would love to hear from you about the accomplishment that has been significant for you this year. Thank you for your hard work and dedication and for using your gifts and skills to ensure that those who use our services continue to reach their goals and accomplish their dreams. 🌱

FATHERS AT THE TABLE — CONTINUED FROM PG 1

The missing element is that fathers are not involved. And that isn't because fathers don't want to be involved.

find more ways to increase responsible father involvement.

One of those efforts included a survey of CWS staff to assess how they are engaging and involving fathers as well as to identify opportunities to increase involvement. George Mason University graduate students and DCHS interns Shante Johnson and Harrison Grant conducted the 30-question survey and shared the results in a presentation to staff last April.

The survey revealed several strengths. For example, a significant portion of staff are open to constructive criticism when it comes to personal bias related to fathers, share responsibility for engaging fathers as clients, and agree that supervisors tend to encourage healthy father-child relationships among clients.

The survey also revealed opportunities, including training needed in cultural and familial barriers and best practices for father involvement.

Johnson and Grant's work helped raise awareness of the necessity for fatherhood programs in helping DCHS clients become healthy families, says Jefferies.

"Research shows that fathers have a huge impact on their children," says Grant. "We are doing well with moms, grandmothers and the kids. The missing element is that fathers are not involved."

And that isn't because fathers don't want to be involved, says Grant. He and Johnson also conducted surveys of fathers participating in Fathers in Touch, which revealed that the men wanted to learn how to be effective fathers, be valued members of the family and be better role models and dads than their own fathers.

"Almost 89 percent were not raised by their own fathers," says Johnson, who adds that the men they surveyed expressed the need for services ranging

from communication skill training to employment and housing.

Fathers in Touch helps meet some of those needs, says Jeffries.

"They go to Fathers in Touch and learn the elements of being a supportive father and how to communicate with the mother," says Jefferies. "For a lot of them, this is the first time anyone taught them these things."

After completing the program, Grant and Johnson reported that 50 percent of the men enrolled displayed a positive increase in attitude, knowledge and perception of fatherhood as well as an increased involvement with their children.

In addition to the survey results, Johnson and Grant developed ideas to help increase father involvement ranging from inviting speakers and coordinating with community fatherhood organizations and programs to developing policies and practice to increase father engagement and involvement. Johnson also worked with Jeffries to create a Fatherhood Toolkit to help men navigate the child welfare system, introduce them to the services offered by DCHS and understand what to expect from the courts and the process.

The experience of working together increased Johnson and Grant's support for more cooperation between policy makers and direct service workers. Johnson's focus as a graduate student is on the policy macro level while Grant is a clinical student, focusing on face-to-face connections on the micro level.

"Often times, policy makers are not engaged with the people doing the work and visa versa—there's a disconnect," observes Grant. "There could be a tag-team type of approach where policy people are listening to workers and workers are



Intern Harrison Grant, Family Engagement Unit Supervisor Anita Martineagu, Family Services Specialist Stephanie Morrow, Intern Shante Johnson and Fathers In Touch Coordinator Emery Jefferies.

listening to policy people."

"The micro or direct service worker is on the ground and knows what is going on and what the clients need, what their strengths are and the issues within the system," says Johnson. "It's important for decision makers to understand what's going on at the ground level and for policy makers and the macro level to stay connected to direct service workers."

Both Johnson and Grant also expressed their gratitude and respect for Child Welfare staff.

"Being with them on a daily basis, I had no choice but step up my game and be an effective partner," says Grant. "They allowed me to become involved and taught me what they do."

Jefferies is grateful for the Grant and Johnson's work. "The work they've done will go beyond today," he says. "It will give us direction for where we want to go in the future."

From his experience at DCHS, Grant believes fatherhood engagement training will help build a more holistic approach to child welfare practices.

"And Alexandria is going to set the bar on this," he concludes. 🌱

Please email Emery.Jefferies@alexandriava.gov with candidates for Fathers in Touch. The client doesn't need to be a "problem dad" in order to benefit from the program, and referring a dad to FIT does not prevent the closing of a case.



Strengthening Intercultural Work

Principles and tools to successfully serve people from different cultural backgrounds

ALEXANDRIA is a richly diverse city whose residents come from a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Thirty percent are foreign born, and there are 80 countries and 60 languages represented in the City's schools.

At DCHS, our mission is to provide effective and essential safety net services to improve or maintain the quality of life for this diverse community—and in order to do that, we need to be able to successfully interact with and serve people from a wide range of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

As part of its goal to help staff develop knowledge, sensitivity and skills related to working with individuals from different cultures, the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee is interviewing staff from

a variety of DCHS programs that exhibit skillful intercultural service to identify promising practices.

"We want to identify and document models and approaches that truly reflect cultural and linguistic compe-

tence so that we can share it throughout the Department," says committee chair Allyson Coleman. "Our hope is that these examples and practices will help other programs and staff strengthen their own intercultural work."

So far, Coleman and Dr. Bob Weigl, a clinical and cross-cultural psychologist who consults with the committee, have interviewed staff from the Substance Abuse Outpatient Program, the West End Wellness Center, Child Welfare Services and the Workforce Development Center. While both agree that we have yet to learn how broadly the lessons from these programs apply throughout DCHS, several preliminary themes have started to emerge that can help other teams strengthen their intercultural work and cultural competence.

More than one-shot training sessions. Though isolated training events can help, developing intercultural competence must be imbedded, continuous and "second nature" for treatment teams. Be aware that group dynamics and the supervisory process of your team will play a part in inte-



IMAGES BY FREEPIK.COM



Learning How to Use Language Interpreters

On June 9, DCHS staff attended *How to Work Effectively Using Language Interpreters*, where they learned the importance of using an interpreter when working with individuals with limited English proficiency and how to get the most out of the encounter—whether using a trained or untrained interpreter. They also gained an understanding of common interpreter practices, identified ways to work with untrained interpreters and explored how literacy, culture and limited English proficiency impacts effective communication. 🌱

grating knowledge and skills.

Cultural issues as a core concern. Cultural concerns should be a regular part of team agendas and at the center of team discussions and deliberations. To help make cultural issues a core concern, the team could focus on cultures of both clients and those delivering the service, develop formats for clients to address culture in client groups and focus on both cultural differences and issues of acculturation for immigrants and refugees.

Supervisors are key. A focus on cultural knowledge, gaps in knowledge and the operation of service provider biases have to be part of regular supervisory meetings and job performance standards and evaluations. Supervisors and team leaders play a critical role in identifying when interpersonal behaviors are biased or inadequate in inter-staff and staff-client interactions. Where these are problematic, they need to be addressed supportively and firmly.

Intercultural competence and racial equity: Two foci for development. Both intercultural competence and racial and social equity and implicit biases (regarding religion, gender, sexual orientation, race, etc.) must be addressed within teams as well as between client and service providers in order to provide effective services. Individuals and teams can assess intercultural development using tools like the Intercultural Development Inventory (idiinventory.com). The Harvard Implicit Association Test (implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html) provides opportunities to become aware of and begin to

mitigate biases when making decisions or interacting with clients. While there is some overlap between communicating and behaving across a cultural divide and addressing racial equity, it is not enough to focus only on intercultural competence to address disparities, inequities and disproportionality.

Respect different levels of readiness to change. Staff have different degrees of interest in and flexibility to change attitudes and behaviors. A minimum of competence should be expected of everyone, but identifying staff on a team with openness to and strengths in intercultural interactions to serve as leaders and innovators will help strengthen intercultural work.

Language remains a complex issue. Effective communication is critical for diagnosis, treatment and delivery of services. Research shows the direct connection between quality of care, positive outcomes, customer satisfaction and the provision of effective language services for individuals with communication or language needs. With those of the same language group, English proficient persons can help those who are not. In those groups where multiple languages are spoken, learning English becomes an area of mutual aid—among clients as well as between clients and staff.

If you would like more information on how your team can strengthen its intercultural work or cultural competence or you know of a program or team that exhibits strong intercultural work, please contact Allyson.Coleman@alexandriava.gov. 🌱



Cecily Rodriguez, Director, Health Equity Advancement and Workforce Planning DBHDS; Bruce Adelson, Esq., CEO of Federal Compliance Consulting LLC, and key note speaker; Juliette Milushev, team leader with Center for Children and Families and DCHS representative on the organizational committee; and Antonio Acevedo, Compliance Programs Manager, Office of the Arlington County Manager and Arlington committee representative.

Working to Improve Language Access

EVERY DAY, DCHS staff strive to provide effective and essential safety net services that measurably improve or maintain the quality of life for Alexandria residents—and that mission depends on effective communication with clients, regardless of their proficiency in English.

Last April, DCHS staff participated in the fourth annual Northern Virginia Language Access Leadership Conference, which brings together experts from around the region to address the need to improve language access in the private and public sectors.

The only one of its kind in the Commonwealth, the annual conference is a product of collaboration between the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, DCHS, Arlington Office of the County Manager, Fairfax Falls Church Community Services Board and Colaborando Juntos.

This year's conference—*Language Access: The Road to Newcomer Integration*—focused on immigration populations and addressed the challenges of integrating English learners to local communities as well as creating accessibility to services.

Through keynote speakers and workshops, participants learned how language access in the health and human service sector can increase the level of successful immigrant integration, how the public sector can use language access services to develop health and safe communities, and how the elimination of language barriers can help individuals and families become self-sufficient and self-determined, which increases health and well-being and reduces overall costs for public health and human service organizations.

For more information about the Language Access Leadership Conference, visit www.dbhds.virginia.gov/professionals-and-service-providers/oclc or contact Juliette.Milushev@alexandriava.gov. 🌱

GMU Study Informs and Strengthens DCHS

IN EARLY 2016, DCHS Director Kate Garvey and Allyson Coleman, Coordinator of Organization Development, Equity and Training, initiated a project alongside a George Mason University (GMU) research team to conduct an organizational assessment using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a guide.

The project provided valuable insights about organizational dynamics and generated concrete propositions that aim to enhance DCHS knowledge-sharing capabilities.

The intent for the AI project was to garner data and gauge current organizational challenges. A common theme that came up from DCHS project participants was a deficit in the sense of shared unity, stemming from the 2010 merger of three different organizations into one, creating DCHS.

The GMU team decided to recommend that the project be focused on defining the DCHS core values. The basis for the recommendation was that one of the key foundational elements that binds employees together and builds unity in an organization is core values that are lived and that are at the root of much of what is positive in an organization.

The four core values identified were empowerment, innovation, collaboration and appreciation. Some recommended action steps/propositions for each are listed below:

Empowerment: All staff members contribute to decision-making processes by participating in open/transparent discussions with all involved parties.

Appreciation: Leaders provide appreciation tailored to their employee's individual

wants and needs. (Public, Private, Tangible/Intangible, etc.).

Innovation: Employees at all levels accept and embrace all types of learning experiences including successes and failures. Conduct After-Action Reviews (or Retrospectives) to capture the knowledge that emerges from these experiences.

Collaboration: Have a supervisor development training program that builds leadership skills to promote DCHS values. The effectiveness of this program is studied and measured.

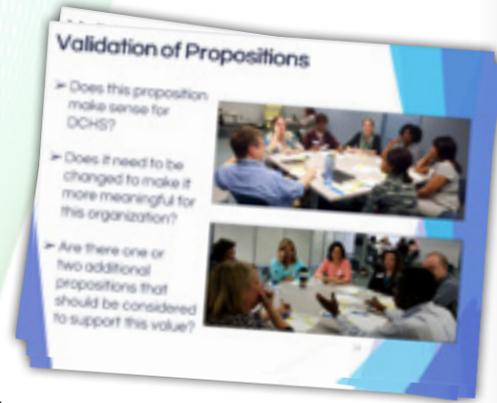
It is important to note that leadership and team decision-making are integral in understanding what drives the core values.

The GMU group, comprised of GMU graduate students in the Organization Development

& Knowledge Management (ODKM) program, conducted four stages of staff engagement: paired interviews, one-on-one interviews, proposition validation, and finally, delivery and presentation of the final report. The study ultimately recommended 14 propositions.

"The Leadership Team has received the recommendations," says DCHS Director Kate Garvey, "and has begun working on identifying which recommendations will be addressed first and the implementation approach."

For a complete PowerPoint summary of the assessment, contact Allyson.Coleman@alexandriava.gov.



Taking Sons and Daughters to Work

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA Commission for Women sponsored the 23rd Annual Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day on April 28. More than 35 students from T.C. Williams High School and the Minnie Howard Campus were introduced to various career fields.

In addition to workplace experiences, the mentees enjoyed a kick-off reception and luncheon featuring guest speakers Mayor Allison Silberberg, Deputy City Manager Debra Collins and T.C. Williams Principal Jesse Dingle, Ed.D.

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day is nationally sponsored by the Ms. Foundation. The event gives youth an opportunity to observe men and women in the workplace.



Above: Students, mentors and speakers gather for kick off reception. Right: Mayor Allison Silberberg and Deputy City Manager Debra Collins speak at the reception.



SPECIAL SERIES DCHS CENTER PROFILES

Over four issues, Connect is highlighting the services and programs of each center in DCHS. While it is not a comprehensive list of all services and programs, we hope it will be helpful to you as a DCHS staff member. This is the third installment.

ADULT SERVICES | CHILD SERVICES | ECONOMIC SUPPORT | ADMIN/OPERATIONS

CENTER FOR ECONOMIC SUPPORT

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Food, Clothing, Furniture, Prescription & Burial Assistance
OCS offers various support resources such as: food, clothing, furniture, prescription drug and burial assistance; transportation, dental clinic screening and referral; and eye exam and eye glasses. 703.746.5700.

Rental Assistance (Homeless Intervention)
OCS provides rental assistance to eligible, low-income persons facing a housing crisis. The goal is to help stabilize the household and to prevent the household from becoming homeless. 703.746.5700.

Utility and Cooling Assistance
Assistance for utility, heating, cooling and fuel is available for income-eligible residents. 703.746.5700.

Homeless Services (Alexandria Community Shelter, Eviction Services)
As part of the City of Alexandria Continuum of Care response to homelessness, the Homeless Services Assessment Center (HSAC) serves as the point of entry for single adults and families seeking emergency shelter in the City of Alexandria. 703.746.5700.

BENEFITS PROGRAMS

CommonHelp
CommonHelp allows Virginia residents to apply for public assistance benefits including: food stamps (SNAP), medical assistance such as FAFIS and Medicaid, child care assistance (TANF) and energy assistance. 1.855.635.4370.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (Formerly Food Stamps)
SNAP assists individuals and families who are unable to purchase sufficient food for themselves. 1.866.281.2448.

Family Access to Medical Insurance Security Plan (FAMIS)
Provides health insurance to children under 19 years-old who are uninsured and who are not eligible for Medicaid. 1.866.873.2647.

Refugee Assistance
This assistance provides financial and medical benefits to refugees. 703.746.5700.

Medicaid
Assistance program that pays medical service providers for medical services rendered to eligible individuals. 703.746.5902.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
The Virginia TANF program provides eligible families with a monthly cash payment to meet their basic needs. 703.746.5902.

Auxiliary Grant Program
An auxiliary grant is an income supplement for individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other individuals with disabilities who reside in a licensed assisted living facility (ALF) or an approved adult foster care (AFC) home. 703.746.5700.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

About WDC
WDC offers staffing solutions that provide businesses with employees who are skilled and ready to work. As a certified One-Stop Center, provides services and resources for job seekers including access to its Career Center, career readiness workshops, career assessments and customized hiring events. 703.746.5990.

Programs and Services
WDC provides a host of programs and services including: Adult Services (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) training, SNAP employment & training, Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare program); Youth Services (Public, Private and WIOA programs; Youth Career Academy); Disability Services (Employment Services, Ticket-to-Work, Assistive Technology); Public Benefits (CommonHelp).

Business Services
WDC offers specific services for enterprise, including: recruitment and labor market services, and business incentives. 703.746.5990.

On-Site Partners
WDC partners with other agencies that offer services through the State of Virginia. This allows the public to utilize the center to apply for benefits and supportive services. 703.746.5990.

Youth and Young Adult Programs (TeensWork!)
Through this program, youth and young adults are paired with a Youth Employment Counselor who assists them in obtaining the skills necessary to succeed in the world of work. There are Public (14-21), Private (16-21) and WIOA (14-24) Programs available. 703.746.5990.



Left: The Employer Panel featured Sandy Harris (Vice President, Global Diversity and Inclusion, Sodexo), moderator Sue Werber (Senior Director, C5 Consulting) and Kia Silver Hodge (Senior Manager, EEO & Diversity at Lockheed Martin Lockheed Martin). Right: Workforce Development Center Training Supervisor Lenwood Roberts (left) and Lauren Goldschmidt (ServiceSource) participated in the Employment Provider Panel.

Increasing Work Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities

ONE IN FIVE Americans has a disability, and the unemployment rate for these individuals is about twice as high as those with no disability. On May 11, DCHS co-hosted a seminar to build stronger partnerships between employers and employment developers to increase work opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

The seminar brought together more than 30 employers looking for talent and employment developers representing those with disabilities. Presented annually by

The Arc of Northern Virginia and the DC Metro Business Leadership Network (BLN), this year's event was funded by a grant from the Alexandria Fund for Human Services.

Keynote speaker Myra Wilder, a senior manager with Marriott International, described employees with disabilities as loyal, hardworking and productive and encouraged employers to seek out employment developers as pipelines for this kind of workforce talent. She also urged developers to spend time researching to better

understand the type of talent and abilities employers are looking for in order to make a good match for both. She reminded attendees that it is not just about finding work but also finding work that is meaningful.

The workshop featured panels of employers, employment developers and partner organizations that explored the myths, challenges and best practices associated with building relationships that result in successful employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Panel members

included representatives from Lockheed Martin, Sodexo, Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, DHCS' Workforce Development Center, Service Source, Didlake, Pathways to Careers National Initiative and Evolver.

Feedback was very positive, according to Rikki Epstein, Executive Director of The Arc. Attendees felt that it was a valuable opportunity for employers and employment developers to connect and learn more about how best to partner and work together in the future.

Raising Funds for ARC

A TEAM OF 12 DCHS staff members participated in The Arc of Northern Virginia Corporate & Community Team Challenge on May 1 at Burke Lake Park. The event brought together companies and the community to raise funds to sustain and strengthen the Arc's work for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Participants in the 2k walk included Randy Arnold, Berline Lewis, Susan Quinn, Phil Caldwell, Sabrina Grant, Stephanie Puszka, Chrissy Campbell, Crystal King, LaVonda Brown, Freeman Mason, Corey Grant and Saba Gebrehiwet. Ten of the 12 are pictured here. ~by Randy Arnold



Youth 'Get Professional' During TeensWork! Career Fair

ON THURSDAY, April 21, teens in Alexandria got a taste of professional development through the Workforce Development Center (WDC) TeensWork! Career Fair at T.C. Williams High School.

More than 40 employers participated, and more than 300 youth job seekers attended the Career Fair.

Youth in attendance were able to make insider connections, get details on vocational training and career education programs, and meet face-to-face with employers offering opportunities for the right candidates.

The industries represented Retail, Hospitality, Recreation, Entertainment and Healthcare sectors—and more.

TeensWork! is an ongoing initiative designed to help youth ages 14 to 21 in the City of Alexandria obtain and keep employment throughout the year. Through multiple TeensWork! programs, youth and young adults are paired with Youth Employment Counselors who assist

them in obtaining the skills necessary to succeed in the world of work.

Programs include:

Public Program: Participants are placed within government and non-profit agencies in Alexandria for a six-week summer work experience.

Year-Round Private Program: Participants work with a counselor and are enrolled in various workshops to increase their employability and allow them to compete with the general public for jobs with private companies.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program:

A federally funded program that assists participants by assigning a counselor to assess their employment, education and training needs, while providing support services for any personal life situations.

For more information about WDC or the TeensWork! Program, visit www.alexandriava.gov/WorkforceDevelopment or call 703.746.5990.



Celebrating Community Action

DURING MAY, the Office of Community Services celebrated Community Action Month. Community Action Agencies like OCS were established across the country after the enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and President Johnson's War on Poverty initiatives with the mission to eliminate poverty and racial injustice. OCS celebrated Community Action Month by putting up an informational display in the lobby at 2525 Mount Vernon Avenue and bagging food at the local food pantry. If you would like further information about OCS and the services provided toward achieving the Community Action mission, contact Hope.Toye@alexandriava.gov. ~by Hope Toyé



DCHS Star Awards

APRIL SUPER STAR NOMINEES

Individual: Angela White

Group: Debbie Ludington & Jennifer Cohen-Cordero

Group: Christine Levine, Peggy Stypula, Becky Tavenner, Cathy Bartholomew, Taren Lambert & Margaret Dhillon

APRIL STAR AWARD NOMINEES

Claudia Atteberry, Jennifer Cohen-Cordero, Joyce Reese-Bey, Janada Williams, Mary Valad, Michelle Stevens, Octavia Rodney, Sorin Cetina, Sara Ebbers, Veronica Rojas-Brewer

MAY SUPER STAR NOMINEES

Individual: Allyson Coleman

Group: Michelle Stevens and Bridget Oriaku

MAY STAR AWARD NOMINEES

Sorin Cetina, Mary Martin, Carmen Andres and Joseph Davis

Star Award Nomination Form:

survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/DCHS-Star-Award-Nomination-Form

Super Star Nomination Form:

survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/DCHS-Superstar-Award-Nomination-Form



Photos by Jan Schrader

An Evening in the French Quarter

THE FUND FOR Alexandria's Child raised \$21,000 through the "Evening in the French Quarter" at the Hotel Monaco on April 8. The event was great fun, with fabulous music, delicious food and a wonderful collection of silent auction items. Winners of the Grand Prize Raffle included DCCHS's very own Mirna Rodriguez, who won a complete Invisalign Package. 🌟

RAFFLE TO BENEFIT

THE FUND FOR ALEXANDRIA'S CHILD
"FOSTERING FUTURES"
Helping our community's foster children
enjoy experiences others take for granted

DRAWING APRIL 8, 2016
DURING THE FOSTER THE FUTURE GALA
- TICKET HOLDER NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN -

YOU COULD WIN ONE OF THREE PRIZES!

Week-long stay at
Carambola Resort & Spa
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands
Including a \$500 airfare credit
- Date to be determined by winner -

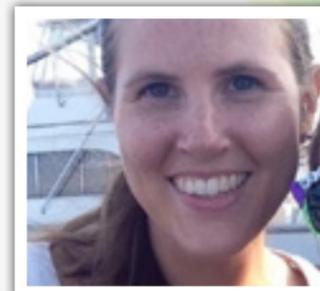
3-night New Orleans Getaway at
Hyatt French Quarter
with Round Trip Airfare for 2

Including admission to
Preservation Hall of Jazz and a Jazz Brunch
or Dinner at Commander's Palace



Hello & Goodbye

NEW STAFF JOB CHANGES



CHRISTINA DAVIS

Christina Davis recently started in the TRAILS program as a therapist and will be working mainly with clients in supported employment and education. She has a Master's in Forensic Psychology and previous experience working at an inpatient psychiatric hospital and outpatient psychosocial rehabilitation program. Christina is excited for the opportunity to work with teenagers and young adults. She enjoys spending weekends at the beach and spending time with friends.

CHAWANTA WILLIAMS

Chawanta Williams joined Public Benefits as a Benefit Programs Specialist. She has a BSW in Social Work and comes from Chesapeake and Chesterfield County, where she worked in child protective services and public benefits.

Jessica Lurz is the Director of Office of Community Services in the Center for Economic Support. **Michele Mintling** is a Family Services Specialist II with Adult Protective Services. **Lisa Ton** is a full-time Senior Therapist with the Preschool Prevention Team. **Priscilla Willett** is a Family Service Specialist with the Early Childhood Division

RETIREMENTS

Linda Horn, Benefits Manager with the Center for Economic Support, retired April 30. She worked for DCCHS for 14 years. 🌟



Staff Recognition



Margaret Dhillon, a supervisor with Child Welfare Services, was recognized as an Outstanding

Community Social Worker by George Mason University at the Celebration of Social Work on May 11 for her work in the community, with student agencies and the area's most vulnerable residents. She was nominated by Sharolyn Dugger, Director of Field Education for GMU's Department of Social Work in the College of Health and Human Services, where Dhillon also teaches.

On May 12, City Manager Mark Jinks presented **Lionel Ward** with an Industrial Athlete Award at the annual Health, Wellness and Benefits Fair. Ward, who has worked



for the DCCHS since 1998, is a cook for Substance Abuse Services. Emergency Preparedness, Safety Orientation and Incident Reporting are mandatory annual trainings for his position, which involves constantly conducting risk assessments as incidents may occur in the kitchen at any time. The kitchen serves 90 people three times a day, seven days a week, requiring all employees to uphold principles of a positive safety culture. Safety is a priority for Ward, who has suggested positive changes in values and attitudes towards workplace health and safety and innovative initiatives regarding health and safety practices. One of his initiatives is the kitchen safety log, on which all concerns, license expirations and certifications are documented. 🌟

News You Can Use



PIT COUNT DECREASE

The 2016 Annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count revealed 224 persons experiencing homelessness in Alexandria:

- ▶ 28 Households with Adults and Children (31 Adults and 64 Children)
- ▶ 129 Singles (97 Men and 32 Women)
- ▶ 12 Unsheltered Singles (9 Men and 3 Women)
- ▶ 47 Chronically Homeless Singles
- ▶ 5 Veterans

This is an overall 16 percent decrease from 2015, including a 19 percent decrease in single adults, an 18 percent decrease in families and a 13 percent decrease in persons in families.

The annual enumeration, traditionally held on the last Wednesday of January, provides a one-night unduplicated “snapshot” of persons experiencing homelessness as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development: those unsheltered and in temporary shelter made available by homeless services providers). This year’s PIT Count was on Thursday, January 28, the designated inclement weather date, due to the arrival of the 2016 blizzard a few days earlier.

A team of DCHS staff led by the Homeless Services/PATH Coordinator manually counted

and surveyed persons who were “unsheltered,” sleeping outdoors or in places not meant for habitation.

PIT Count results help convey the scope of homelessness, identify and assess unmet needs and gaps in services, inform funding and other planning decisions, and evaluate progress made in preventing and ending homelessness.

See [Homelessness in Metropolitan Washington](#), for the complete report of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments’ regional 2016 PIT Count results. For more information, contact the DCHS Office of Community Services Director, Jessica Lurz at 703.746.5973 or Jessica.Lurz@alexandriava.gov.

WIZARDS CELEBRATE

The Bellefonte Wizards celebrated their annual Athletic Banquet and Award Ceremony Night on May 13. The event was organized by the Members of Bellefonte as an opportunity to bring members of the Community, Bellefonte residents and DCHS staff together for night of good food, music and celebration.

NEW WEBINARS

The Employee Assistance Program offers webinars on a variety of topics, ranging from emotional and physical

health to financial and estate planning. The webinars are offered on demand, with a new webinar released each month. This summer you can watch new webinars on retirement, dealing with the addiction of a loved one and the changing relationship between you and your aging parent or relative. To start your login, go to www.inova.org/eap and enter your user name (“Alexandria”) and password (“City”). Once you’ve been directed to your Work Life site, scroll down to reach the Online Seminar link.

4480 KING ST. GETS WIFI

Another DCHS location now has WiFi. Like other locations, the 4480 King St. network has two sides, **Private** (CoA) and **Public** (CoA_Guest).

The **Private** side is for internal use and intended for use by city employees with city issued computers. Use your network login credentials (*firstname.lastname and password*) to connect to the network. Once you authenticate you should have access to city network resources and will be subject to the same network access policies as your wired connection.

The **Public** side is intended for use by visitors on non City-issued laptops and for **all handheld devices** such as iPhones and iPads. The **CoA_Guest** network only has

access to the Internet and not internal city resources. It does not require a password, but it does require that the user accept the usage policy. ✦



Connect seeks to inform DCHS employees about programs, services and changes within the Department. It also introduces you to one another on a more personal level, recognizes employee and team accomplishments, and helps foster relationships between programs and employees across DCHS. It features program activities and special events and helps keep you informed on departmental initiatives.

We are always looking for news and ideas for stories. If you have an idea for a story or content, contact Carmen Andres at carmen.andres@alexandriava.gov or call 5753.

To report significant errors in this newsletter, please email carmen.andres@alexandriava.gov