



DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES



July 2007 Issue

Administrator's Corner—FERNANDO SERRANO

First of all, I would like to thank all DCFS staff for your collective efforts during the 2007 Legislative session. Many staff helped prepare testimony presented to legislative committees, others personally testified regarding legislation affecting DCFS. Since testimony is often prepared from reports or databases completed and updated on a regular basis all staff contributed in some form to legislative efforts, therefore, I extend my appreciation to all of you.

Much media attention was given to child welfare issues during calendar year 2006, so it was no surprise that the majority of legislation and budget enhancements were in the child welfare arena. Child welfare legislation ranged from clarification of child death/missing child disclosure procedures, restrictions on congregate care, to state oversight, and licensing responsibilities. Budget enhancements funded additional social work staff, foster care recruitment and training, and an increase in the foster care rate of pay.

Mental health programming was also enhanced during the 2007 session. Desert Willow Treatment Center (DWTC) will be expanded by one new unit of 15 beds and one unit which will be converted to a co-occurring disorder unit. The Adolescent Treatment Center in Reno will be re-modeled and expanded, and the pilot for a mobile mental health crisis team project will soon be launched in Las Vegas.

As DCFS moves forward there are four areas I would like to emphasize. First, we must increase our collaborative efforts internally, with our sister agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services and with the external agencies who provide services to youth and families. Second, the three services within DCFS, child welfare, mental health and juvenile justice must work to increase family involvement and make families partners in their child's care. Third, cultural diversity must be considered and addressed by all of DCFS. Juvenile Justice Services is required to address cultural differences through the federally mandated core requirement of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974 which states that if the proportion of a given minority group of youth who are detained or confined in a State's secure detention facilities, secure correctional facilities, jails, and lockups exceeds the proportion of that group represented in the general population, the State is required to develop and implement plans to reduce the disproportionate representation. However, every discipline should be cognizant of the need to be active in identifying and addressing the causes of minority over-representation in our respective systems. Fourth, data will need to be recorded, measured, and evaluated if we are to successfully communicate our progress overall. Therefore, data collection (UNITY, AFCARS, etc.) will receive special attention as we move forward. These four areas of emphasis will be the topics of discussion at our upcoming Systems Management Team meeting.

I believe that for DCFS to reach its full potential, employees must have as much decision making authority as possible. The work environment must be conducive to the exchange of ideas, which allows us to challenge the status quo with a goal of improving the process in which we deliver services to youth and families. We will work to incorporate this philosophy in our day to day activities.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Administrator's Corner	1
Legislative Update	2
The Journey to Cultural and Linguistic Competence	4
System Transformation and Why is it Important	5
Rural Region Update	6
Child Care Chat	7
Juvenile Justice Services Update	8
Washoe County Department of Social Services	12
PIP	13
Thank you	13



DCFS sponsored two bills during the 2007 Nevada Legislative Session which were passed into law and tracked an additional 100 Bill Draft Requests (BDRs) that turned into 25 critical bills that could have an effect on children, youth and families. A brief review of the bills with the most significant consequences to DCFS follows. For complete details regarding all bills considered by the 2007 Legislative Session, please link to: <http://leg.state.nv.us/>

Senate Bill 32, one of two DCFS bills approved by the legislature, amends the current statute to authorize a juvenile court to order a delinquent child who is at least 18 years of age but less than 21 years of age and who has been released on parole to be placed in a county jail if the child violates a condition of his parole. Effective July 1, 2007.

Legislature Works to Meet Deadline

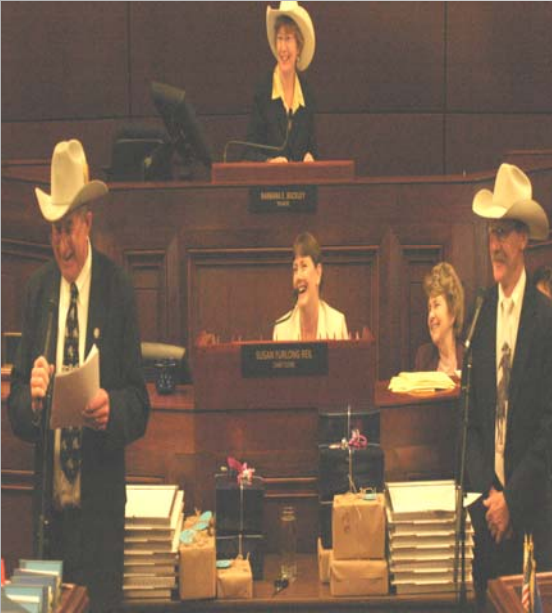
Assembly Bill 263, the second of two DCFS bills enrolled by the Governor, amends NRS 432 and NRS 432B in several ways including:

- Section 4: allows the Administrator of DCFS to organize a multidisciplinary team to oversee any review of the death of a child conducted by a multidisciplinary team organized pursuant to NRS 432B.405. Such a team is entitled to the same access and privileges granted to a multidisciplinary team to review the death of a child allowed in NRS 432B.407;
- Section 8: strengthens DCFS' ability to enforce public child welfare agency compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, statewide policies and plans to improve public services which may include recommending corrective action;
- Section 12: adds provisions that require a child welfare agency that is investigating a report of abuse or neglect of a child to interview the child's siblings. Effective October 1, 2007.

Assembly Bill 147, sponsored by the Subcommittee to Oversee the Consultant to Study the Health, Safety, Welfare, and Civil and Other Rights of Children in the Care of Certain Governmental Entities or Private Facilities (AB580 Subcommittee) amends provisions regarding congregate and shift care for certain children. Specifically, AB147 prohibits placement of children under the age of 3 years into congregate care facilities (16 or more children) unless appropriate foster care is not available and shall make reasonable efforts to place siblings in the same location. In addition, AB147 provides that on and after January 1, 2009, the prohibition regarding children under of the age of 3 years applies to any child under the age of 6 years. Sections 1 to 5, inclusive, and 7 and 8 of this act become effective on January 1, 2008. Section 1 of this act expires by limitation on December 31, 2008. Section 6 of this act becomes effective on January 1, 2009.

Assembly Bill 148, introduced on behalf of the Attorney General, is one of several anti-methamphetamine bills contemplated by the 2007 Legislature. AB148 limits the sale of some cold medicines by requiring sellers of products that contain precursors used to manufacture methamphetamine to be locked up or kept behind a store counter so the public does not have direct access to the product. Moreover, AB148 establishes limits on the quantity of certain chemicals that can be sold to the same person during a 24-hour period.

Effective August 1, 2007.



Assembly Bill 261, another child welfare bill sponsored by the AB580 Subcommittee makes various changes to statute regarding missing children and release of information. Effective July 1, 2007.

Assembly Bill 272, introduced on behalf of the Department of Administration, makes an appropriation to DCFS juvenile justice facilities for replacement of vehicles, appliances, radios and other equipment. The sum of \$54,315 is appropriated to Summit View Youth Correctional Facility for equipment including a dishwasher, a walk-in freezer, hot water heaters, a culinary blender and meat slicer. The sum of \$100,073 is appropriated to Nevada Youth Training Center for two-way radios, a riding lawn mower, washers and dryers for cottages, an infirmary refrigerator, lockers for cottages, an industrial fryer and maintenance utility vehicles. The sum of \$86,425 is appropriated to Caliente Youth Center for agency-owned vehicles and equipment for youth dormitories, the facility kitchen and grounds maintenance. Effective June 13, 2007.

Assembly Bill 353, introduced on behalf of Assemblymen Gerhardt, Buckley, Leslie, et. al allows that under specific conditions a court may restore parental rights that have been terminated or relinquished. Effective July 1, 2007.

Assembly Bill 424, introduced on behalf of Assemblymen Leslie, Gerhardt and Arberry and Senators Heck, Carlton and Horsford, provides definitions for the terms “clinical professional counselor”, “practice of clinical professional counseling”, and “clinical alcohol and drug abuse counselor”. This bill establishes the requirements for a license to practice as a clinical professional counselor, clinical alcohol and drug abuse counselor, and establishes requirements for certification as interns of both clinical professional counselors and clinical alcohol and drug abuse counselors; places both licensures under the Board of Examiners for Marriage and Family Therapists and adds two members to the Board-both who are licensed clinical professional counselors; requires reimbursement by any policy of health insurance that provides coverage for treatment of an illness authorized within the scope of licensed clinical professional counselor or licensed clinical alcohol and drug abuse counselor. AB424 becomes effective upon passage for adoption of regulations and July 1, 2007 for all other purposes.

Assembly Bill 507, the last of the AB580 Subcommittee child welfare reform bills, ensures that employees of certain facilities that have custody of children receive training within 30 days after employment and annually thereafter. Further, the bill directs DCFS to physically make an annual inspection of facilities where children are placed, both in state and out of state. Lastly, the bill adds “child care institutions” to facilities licensed by DCFS' Bureau of Services for Child Care regardless of whether there is a county or city licensing agency. AB507 becomes effective June 2, 2007, for the purpose of adopting regulations and on October 1, 2007, for all other purposes.

AB508, introduced by the Select Committee on Corrections, Parole, and Probation, creates an Advisory Commission on Sentencing. A requirement of the Commission is to evaluate, review and comment upon issues relating to juvenile justice. Effective July 1, 2007.

Senate Bill 356, introduced on behalf of Senator Horsford and Assemblywoman Kirkpatrick, requires DCFS to adopt regulations establishing reasonable and uniform standards for determining whether immediate action is necessary to protect a child from injury, abuse or neglect. SB356 also requires the Legislative Commission to appoint a subcommittee to conduct a study of issues relating to the placement of children in foster care and methods for reducing the number of children placed in foster care. Sections 4 and 5 of SB356 become effective July 1, 2007 and Section 2 becomes effective October 1, 2007.

THE JOURNEY TO CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE—SHARON JAMES

The demographics of the nation are changing rapidly. By the year 2050 the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that nearly half of the U.S. population will be Hispanic, African American and/or Asian. The U.S. Census Bureau also reports that currently there are 42,485 linguistically isolated households in Nevada and that Nevada has experienced the highest rate of population increase during the past decade.

In an effort to meet the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse population, DCFS recognizes the need to increase work force capacity and to achieve cultural competence.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) awarded DCFS a five-year Child and Adolescent State Infrastructure Grant in 2002. Subsequently, DCFS Children's Mental Health created a Cultural Liaison position to facilitate the process of achieving cultural and linguistic competence for all of DCFS. The Cultural Liaison, hired in 2005, is a member of the Statewide Children's Behavioral Health Team and consults with the National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University which provides technical assistance for the development of this initiative.

In 2006, the Cultural Liaison attended several national Native American conferences and participated in national forums to gather information for DCFS. Participation in the events has provided resources to construct a Native American Report that will increase knowledge regarding the cultural diversity of the tribal populations in Nevada. The report includes an overview of persistent disparities and an introduction to a conceptual framework and model to achieve cultural competence in Nevada.

The journey to linguistic competence began with the development of a language access plan for rural region foster parents with limited-English proficiency (LEP). The Rural Region Manager and Cultural Liaison began ongoing meetings in January 2006 to develop an action plan. In collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General, and the Office for Civil Rights providing technical assistance, an action plan has been developed that includes an assessment of the LEP population, an analysis of the findings, the development of policies and procedures, training timelines and the options for procurement of a telephone interpreter service.

The next steps to advancing the Cultural and Linguistic Competence initiative include:

- Conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment to establish a baseline measurement of the cultural competency of all participating child serving agencies in the developing system of care; and
- Train staff to gain a full understanding of the procedures to assess language needs and then to provide appropriate language access services to the individual and/or family.



“Resources at your finger tips”

For more information about the Cultural Liaison and her responsibilities, please contact Sharon James at (775) 684-7960 or sjames@dcfs.state.nv.us



SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT



“Historically in the United States many children with serious emotional and behavioral concerns and their families have not had coordinated services. Children and families might receive services from one agency specific to a particular issue, but other areas of concern would often require support from another organization with little or no coordination between providers. This created a situation where families struggled to meet the requirements of multiple, unrelated delivery. This is often referred to as a categorical approach. In a categorical system, children and families may have access to an array of services through child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, education, public health and others. However, federal, state and grant funding is often ‘categorized’ or restricted by regulations and policies about how and for whom it can be used, creating barriers to developing an effective combination of supports and services individualized to meet a child and family’s complex needs” (Burns and Goldman, 1998, p 11).



System transformation is the process of eliminating these barriers and creating strategies to overcome them so that families have integrated access to services and flexible fiscal policies which promote individualized service plans. The current children’s behavioral health system in Nevada has many outstanding programs and initiatives, but these are fragmented and sometimes duplicative. The ultimate goal of system transformation is for all child serving agencies across all systems, both private and public, to work together to minimize and obsolete the complex maze families face when trying to access services for their children, develop consistency in approaches across child serving agencies, and increase the likelihood of successful outcomes for children and their families.



The work of systems transformation in children’s behavioral health is a complex, multi-level endeavor requiring maximum commitment and resources. However, the work of transformation is critical to ensuring positive and needed changes with which to improve outcomes for children and families, worker satisfaction and efficacy, and organizational efficiency. Transformation initiatives also allow for increased data collection and analysis capability which support infrastructure building including expansion of funding streams and other needed fiscal supports that will better serve Nevada’s children and families and which will better support the workforce in the critically important work of serving Nevada’s children and families.

Burns, B., & Goldman, S.K. (Eds.) (1998). Promising practices in wrap-around for children with serious emotional disturbance and their families. *Systems of Care: Promising Practices in Children’s Mental Health*, 1998 Series, Volume IV. Washington, D.C.: Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, American Institutes for Research.

RURAL REGION UPDATE—SUZANNE WRIGHT

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

On April 5, 2007, Governor Gibbons issued a proclamation in recognition of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Nevada. In addition, Nevada State Legislators endorsed this effort by wearing specially designed blue ribbon pins and by displaying pinwheels at their desks. The pinwheels were part of the national Pinwheels for Protection campaign, which seeks to increase awareness of child abuse and neglect in communities across the country. To further raise awareness of Child Abuse Prevention Month, Nevada joined states across the country on April 27, 2007 to remember the thousands of children lost in the last year to violence. The symbol of this observance was the display of the Children's Memorial Flag over the State Capitol.



May is National Foster Parent Appreciation Month



Governor Gibbons and First Lady Dawn Gibbons joined licensing and recruitment staff from the Carson City District Office, Sierra Foster Parent Association, DCFS Administrator Fernando Serrano, Rural Region Manager Patricia Hedgecoth and Central Office Manager Novia Anderson in a ribbon tying event at the Capitol Building on May 12, 2007. This event “kicked off” the appreciation activities with each ribbon symbolizing a child in foster care in Nevada.

Foster Parent Appreciation Dinners were held around the state, with over 425 people in attendance, to honor and recognize all Nevada's foster/adoptive parents who have opened their hearts and homes to children in need. Elko, Carson City, Pahrump, Winnemucca and Fallon all hosted dinners, barbeques or parties to celebrate these families. Families came from Ely, Battle Mountain, Tonopah, McDermitt, Grass Valley, Fernley, Yerington, Hawthorne and Smith Valley and each foster/adoptive parent received plaques and certificates of service.

Statewide Licensing Report

One of the goals of the Rural Region licensing program was to increase the percentage of licensed Family Foster Homes by 20% (from 126 to 151) by June 2007. (Baseline: 126 Family Foster Homes on the Statewide Foster Care Licensing Reporting Form as of July 2006). In fact, this goal has been surpassed. In the Rural Region of Nevada there are now 185 licensed homes, 153 of which are foster family homes including 125 non-relative placements and 28 relative placements and 32 which are group homes. There have been several specific positive increases in the Rural Region including:

- Three new licensed homes in Lovelock during 2006
- One new licensed home in Tonopah during 2006
- Two new licensed homes in Storey County during 2006
- An overall increase in the number of licensed homes throughout the other Rural Regions during 2006.





Regulation Update

Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 233B.050(e) “requires that an agency shall review its regulations at least every 10 years to determine whether they should be amended or repealed and shall report to the Legislature.” DCFS’ Bureau for Child Care follows this mandate by continuing to work on the proposed regulatory process.

In 2005, the Bureau initiated the regulatory review process by soliciting statewide participation. In response, five workgroups were formed as follows: Safety Issues, Child-Staff Ratio, Training Requirement, Types of Child Care Facilities and Other Regulatory Issues. The workgroups compiled and gathered an extensive amount of research and revised, added or opted to omit specific 432A regulations. On December 20, 2006 the Regulatory Adoption Hearing occurred, which resulted in a recommendation to the Bureau to review all workgroups, workshops and Adoption Hearing minutes to identify the regulatory areas requiring further clarification, revision and exploration. The Board for Child Care recommends the workgroups focus on conducting and gathering additional research to support opposition and present at the next Adoption Hearing. In addition, it was recommended to reconvene the workgroups in order to ensure adequate community representation before any regulations would be adopted. Towards the end of December 2007, the Bureau will present the remaining regulations that the majority of the providers are in support of to the Board for Child Care.



Legislative Update

During the 2007 Legislative Session, four bills were enacted that directly impact child care.

- AB147- Makes various changes concerning the placement of a child into protective custody
- AB507 -Makes various changes to provisions concerning facilities that have custody of children pursuant to the order of a court
- AB283- Requires child care facilities to maintain and provide complaint information against the facility to parents and guardians
- SB354-Related to firearms on the property of Child Care facilities

EUDL - Kathy Bartoz

The Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Project (EUDL) is currently distributing the 2007-2008 law enforcement funds. Enforcement agencies that are not currently receiving a grant, and are interested in initiating EUDL operations in their jurisdictions may call Kathy Bartosz: (775) 684-7294

The 2007 EUDL Awards were held on April 24, 2007. The following individuals and organizations were recognized:

- Jared Adams, Carson City Sheriff's Department-Law Enforcement Officer of the Year
- Mary Boettcher, Healthy Communities Coalition-Community Advocate of the Year
- Ron Kendall-Volunteer of the Year
- Tonopah Youth Prevention Team- Youth Team of the Year
- Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department-Law Enforcement Agency of the Year



Juvenile Justice Programs Office - Pauline Salla

The Juvenile Justice Programs Office and the Nevada Juvenile Justice Commission have just completed grant awards to local jurisdictions statewide as well as community based programs for Federal Fiscal Year 2007. This includes the Formula Grant, Juvenile Accountability Block Grant and Title V Delinquency Prevention Block Grant provided through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Justice.

Larry Carter, Assistant Director of Clark County Juvenile Services and Nevada Juvenile Justice Commissioner has received National Recognition through the Coalition for Juvenile Justice. Mr. Carter received the prestigious Tony Gobar National Specialist Award at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice Spring Conference, June 9-12 2007 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Nevada Juvenile Justice Commission in conjunction with the Juvenile Justice Programs Office is sponsoring training by Dr. Nicholas Taylor Ph.D. on methamphetamine and Cutting Edge Community Based Effective programming. The training will be held in Elko Nevada on August 15, 2007. In the morning, Juvenile Justice Personnel will learn about community based programming to help youth stop using Methamphetamine. The afternoon session designed to give the Nevada Juvenile Justice Commissioners an overview of the effects of methamphetamine on the brain of users and what types of community-based treatment alternatives exist to help them end their addiction.

THE EVENING REPORTING PROGRAM

Transitional Community Reintegration— Mark Humphries



DCFS Youth Parole and Rite of Passage (ROP) have partnered to create the Evening Reporting Program. In response to the need for transitional community reintegration services in Las Vegas. The program began operations in February 2007 and is overseen by ROP, which bring extensive knowledge of community transition services and over 20 years of experience working with at-risk youth. The program is comprised of Day Program Services and Transitional Group Home Services, with the objective of assisting male and female youth with their successful transition back into the community and toward independent living as law-abiding citizens.

ROP in collaboration with Westcare and the Center for Independent Living, provide services for these at-risk youth. WestCare and the Center for Independent Living both offer a high-quality treatment milieu system combined with a highly structured environment especially designed to help adolescents with their successful transition into the community. Program services are offered to 24 youth, male and female, with a length of stay between 30 to 60 days.

The Day Treatment Program operates five days a week, between the hours of 3:00pm and 8:00pm, with service coordinators on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. ROP operates the program with the mission and responsibility of placing the highest emphasis on core services designed to meet the individual needs of all youth.

The services offered in these programs include educational services, GED preparation and tutoring, vocational training, and self-development and skill building. The program also provides assessments, counseling including family, individual and group therapy, mental health services, crisis intervention and assistance with specific family needs such as transportation, housing or medical attention.

The Evening Reporting Program brings together a broad range of community-based organizations to offer structured recreation and leisure activities and to link youth to other community support services as well. Services are provided by qualified staff which helps to formulate a treatment plan with goals based on a youth's strengths. Service coordinators and therapists seek to learn what youth and families want out of life and then help to achieve those goals. The ROP staff's role is to listen, teach, and encourage, while the youth's role is to express concerns, learn and implement change.



HYBRID GANGS—DAVID WALLACE



Gangs—What you Need to Know...

Gangs cross all ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, gender and geographic boundaries. Their goal is to commit crime for personal gain, bring fear and violence to neighborhoods, traffic drugs, destroy property, involve youth in crimes and intimidate local and national businesses to pay money for community (Store) protection. Because of the huge media, marketing, and promotion of gangs and violence (i.e. Movies, Clothes, Music, Graffiti, Magazines) many kids and teens are lured away from school and home and recruited into a lifestyle of gang activity and violence.

Gangs capitalize on opportunity and often prey on individuals young and old that are not aware of gangs or the mentality of a gang member. People who are not aware of their environment and youth who are wanna-be's (imitate gang members' dress, talk, walk, music, etc.) often get hurt. Staying informed, being aware and taking simple steps to safeguard your safety and your loved ones can make the difference between your child joining a gang, you or your child becoming a victim or you being safe.

What is a Hybrid Gang? “Hybrid—A Composite of mixed origin

Hybrid gangs are becoming more popular in the United States. Their members are often youth and adults from the age of 9-22. They are unique because of their changing nature which makes it difficult to track, identify and respond to them. Hybrid gangs usually establish “**Clicks**” which are offsets from their original gang. “**Clicks**” are usually various **gang members and/or associates** (Small group) **from different sets (Gangs)** that have agreed to bond together for the sake of **putting in work, (Doing crime, Robberies, Home invasions, Drugs, etc.)** and **have no allegiance to anyone but themselves. There is no “Leader.”** **Hybrid gangs** do not follow the same rules and methods of operation of traditional gangs. It's all about **Making Money, Being Cool, Bling Blinging (Wearing Jewelry, Flaunting Dollars, Cars, Proper Gear -Clothing)** and being **Down for the cause**. Unlike T.V. Gangs, it's not about the Neighborhood, Race, Gender or the color of the Rag. It's all about “**Money**” being in the “**IN Crowd**” (**socially accepted by peers**) **that have embraced the Hip Hop Culture, which has replaced the racial and socio-economic culture that has existed for so long.**

The Hip –Hop Culture has changed the focus from **socio-economics, racism** and **discrimination** to a new sub culture of the “**Have and the Have Nots.**” You're either “**In**” or you're “**Out.**” You can be from any neighborhood across America and now claim your fame to the gangster lifestyle through the Hip Hop Culture, which has become one of the same in the recent years. This is the reason that so many of our children and youth today are starting to join these **Hybrid Gangs' “Clicks”** to prove that **they are down (Ready to do whatever)** or “**Just as hard as the next youth.**” Unfortunately, many of us (parents, workers, community leaders, etc.) aren't paying attention or listening to our children through their body language and conversations. We're not spending the quality time with our youth and are therefore opening the backdoor to our homes and allowing them to run to the streets (Gangs). Most of us don't even monitor our children's computer activity, which is one of the methods of gang recruitment and second only to the cellular phone for communication between youth today.

Word to the Wise, **Be aware of MySpace.com. (Alert)** Check your Child's computer to see how often he or she has visited the various Myspace.com sites. Many gang members and sex offenders have been identified and convicted by information retrieved from Myspace.com.

If you are a parent, youth worker, teacher, child, student or member of society, this information should prove to be helpful to you in many ways. I once was asked by a parent, “Who has the most influence over a child? The **gang member** or a **parent?** My reply was,” **He who cares the most.” If you care, be there for your child...**

Nevada Youth Training Center Helps History Repeat Itself - Dale Warmuth



After 14 years of wear and tear by exuberant youth in the Elko community, Johnny Appleseed Park was in dire need of repair and refurbishment. The community of Elko joined together to help history repeat itself and to recreate the magic of the original building efforts in 1993. Once again, a massive fundraising drive occurred. This time the event raised over \$150,000 and was spearheaded by hundreds of local volunteers, whose numbers swelled to 2000 strong for the actual rebuilding of the park.

Twenty youth and staff members from the Nevada Youth Training Center (NYTC) worked eight hour shifts for the eight day project in mid-May to ensure the project was completed on time. The twenty youth involved were participants in either the Construction Trades Program or the Pre-Parole Program at NYTC. The youth developed construction related skills, as well as people skills that will benefit them greatly later in life.

Following the completion of the park, the youth and staff were invited to a recognition luncheon and grand re-opening ceremony at the Johnny Appleseed Park. When Mayor Mike Franzoia recognized the youth from NYTC, they were rewarded with a standing ovation from the other volunteers and citizens of Elko.

Caliente Youth Center Coordinates with Nevada Partners, Inc. - Jamie Killian

In 2005 the Caliente Youth Center (CYC) lost a valuable program component when the Nevada Business Services, Incorporated (NBS Inc.) lost its ability to provide funding for various educational and vocational opportunities for the youth at CYC. However, beginning in January 2007, another organization, Nevada Partners Inc. coordinated efforts with CYC to provide additional training and work experience opportunities for male and female youth committed to CYC. Funded by the Southern Nevada Workforce Investment Board, Nevada Partners has students at CYC once again benefiting from additional program experiences to help them become successful members of the community.

While offering opportunities for work experience similar to that of NBS Inc., including the CYC State Parks work crew, culinary arts work crew, and C.O. Bastian High School educational tutors and aides, Nevada Partners adds an additional component. Students in the program benefit from the work experiences and weekly classes facilitated by the Nevada Partners Case Manager. As part of the program, all students must attend a Leadership and Resiliency class and youth participating in the culinary arts program also attend a special class that deals specifically with the art of cooking.

The Leadership and Resiliency class focuses on career planning, personal finances, self-esteem development, conflict resolution, diversity in the workplace, communication and interpersonal skills, and other issues facing the workforce. The philosophical foundation is based on a Cognitive Behavioral model so these classes compliment current programming offered at CYC. Basic training includes instruction on resume writing, the employment application process, interviewing, skills and work experience assessment, networking, demand occupations, job search strategies, and credit counseling.

The work experience and training sessions last 12 weeks. CYC students have just completed the second 12-week session, graduating 25 youth in the first session and 22 in the second session. Upon successful program completion the youth receive a \$1,000 stipend. Not only are there monetary benefits, students can continue the association with Nevada Partners upon their discharge from CYC. Assistance may also be offered for employment opportunities, internships, continuing education and training, transportation, housing and clothing assistance.

Nevada Partners tracks achievements of program participants, and initial reports indicate that the CYC participants are successful in the community which is the common mission or goal of CYC and Nevada Partners Inc.

Updates - Jeanne Marsh

Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) Expands Response to Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect

Beginning July 9, 2007, reports of child abuse and neglect can be made through the WCDSS 24 hours a day. WCDSS can also initiate an immediate and direct response by a child protective services emergency response worker 24 hours a day.

“We see an average of about 375 investigations a month from phone calls and reports right now,” Mike Capello, Director, WCDSS said. “There is a need for a more timely and effective response to reports of child abuse and neglect after hours so we expanded operational hours to respond directly to reports of child abuse and neglect 24 hours a day.” Prior to this, WCDSS was only fully operational from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except for emergency or high-risk cases.

WCDSS child protective services emergency response unit staff doubled to cover the additional hours of operation. This increase in the Department’s ability to receive calls and respond 24 hours a day is made possible through collaboration with the Crisis Call Center and the approval of additional funding by the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners. Calls are received at WCDSS until 10 p.m. and after that calls are automatically routed to the Crisis Call Center who then contacts the on-call emergency response workers.

Foster Care Sunday

Residents of Washoe County were invited to attend and learn about volunteer opportunities to help children and families in our community at Foster Care Sunday on June 24, 2007 at the Central City Church at Vaughn Middle School in Reno.

Pastor Otto Kelly worked closely with WCDSS over the past several months to strengthen the church’s involvement with social services. Pastor Otto’s dynamic leadership made a positive influence in engaging families interested in serving their community through fostering. This recruitment event for foster care was enhanced by other agencies’ participation including providing information about volunteer opportunities.

“We’ve invited other organizations to the event so people can look at options of serving families and the elderly if fostering is not an option,” Binnie Lopez, supervisor of Washoe County’s foster care support program said. Ms. Lopez has been working with Central City Church and other groups to make it easy for people to find out about foster care as well as ways of helping families other than through foster care.

“Washoe County is always looking for foster families, and there is an especially strong need for homes for infants right now,” she said. Lopez said it’s important for people to realize that foster children have needs but it’s a great reward knowing you’ve helped those children meet their needs.

“We want to find people willing to enter a flexible family approach - to take children and work through medical needs, for instance, or are willing to serve families by maintaining children in the home until the child’s parents’ needs are met and the family is either reunified or the child joins a permanent family,” she said. Foster Care Sunday was hosted by WCDSS, Central City Church, Nevada One Church, One Child program, and the Sierra Association of Foster Families. Representatives from community organizations who were on hand to answer questions included: WCDSS Foster Care and Adoption Program, Children's Cabinet, Sierra Association of Foster Families and Washoe County CASA.

Events such as this resulted in a net increase of 48 homes over the previous fiscal year.



Nevada's Program Improvement Plan for Child Welfare Praised

A letter dated June 11, 2007, from Susan Orr, PhD., Associate Commissioner, Children's Bureau, to Michael J. Willden, Director of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services states:

"The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the State has successfully completed all action steps and benchmarks in the PIP ...Nevada can and should take pride in the actions it has taken to improve its services to the children and families in the State."

Director Willden said, "This good news for the children of Nevada can be attributed to many individuals and groups, including the support our efforts have received from Governor Gibbons and the 2007 Legislature. Further, I want to compliment our Division of Child and Family Services staff who have worked diligently and effectively with the Clark county Department of Family Services and Washoe County Social Services to incorporate these much needed changes, which better ensures that children in the care of the state and counties will receive the protection they justly deserve."

Please visit the DCFS Web-site at:
<http://www.dcfstate.nv.us/>
And view the 2005-2006 Biennial Report

Nevada's PIP was originally based on the results of the state's 2004 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The Plan was later amended in September 2006 to include 10 new action steps and 73 new benchmarks following the publication of the Independent child death Review Panel relating to child welfare in Clark County.

Thank you to all, who took the time and made the effort to contribute to the July 2007 edition of the DCFS quarterly newsletter. Suggestions for articles for the next newsletter and/or feedback on the current newsletter would be most appreciated.

Please e-mail your comments or ideas for future articles to Chrystal C. Main at cmain@dcfs.state.nv.us (775) 684-4453

