

The Inside Word

Employee Newsletter – February 2006

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Phyllis Talbot -Editor

A Message from our Director

Happy Valentine Month or in remembrance of my shy grade school days – Will you be my Valentine? The thing I liked then was the candy that you got with the cards. Well my weight is an issue now and instead of Happy Valentine wishes, I receive questions about planning for the upcoming budget for the new fiscal year.

February traditionally starts the budget process for Edgecombe County Department of Social Services as with all DSS agencies across the state. However, we have learned to be looking at issues and things on a year round basis. We are earnestly punching numbers from now until the County Commission approves the 2006-2007 budget expected in June 2006. More on this as we move forward over the months ahead.

Also, in February, there is the Social Services Board Retreat. This is a full day discussion between the Social Services Board members and top agency management which reviews the past accomplishments and plans for the future. Our theme this February is "Mission Reviewed and Revitalized." We want to take a look at how we have been doing related to meeting our mission and how we might be able to revitalize our efforts. Your help and support is essential to our success.

Mauri E. Rouse

Customer Service – That's What It Is All About!

Do you have a copy of our mission statement? If so, set aside time to review it. You'll find that our mission statement is a general overview of what kind of "personality" our company wants to project. It is how you would want your customers to describe you—and the service you deliver—to other people they know. Does our mission statement describe you?

Edgecombe County Department of Social Services Mission Statement

*To form partnerships with families and communities to enhance the Family's quality of life.
Family Focused – Community Driven*

The core beliefs of the Edgecombe County Department of Social Services as excerpted from its mission statement are embodied in the following:

- 1. We believe that the family unit is the primary and preferred resource for meeting the needs of children and adults.*
- 2. Emphasis is placed on maintaining children and disabled adults in their own homes through the provision of needed services to improve and strengthen family functioning. Out of home placement services are available when the care and safety of children/disabled adults can not be insured in their own homes.*
- 3. Community based preventative services offer the necessary support to families and disabled adults in their quest to remain at home as long as possible.*
- 4. Edgecombe County citizens will be respected and supported in their interactions with our agency.*

A good attitude and the desire to serve our customers is the foundation of great customer service. Being friendly, efficient, knowledgeable, honest and helpful are just a few of the attributes needed in order to be a successful customer service representative. Make all customers feel important and give them your full attention. They will appreciate your positive attitude and YOU!

February Service Anniversaries

<i>Employee</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Yrs.</i>
William Staton	Maintenance – Tarboro	27
Darlene Nobles	Clerical – Tarboro	22
Beverly Perry-Clark	Food Stamps – Rocky Mount	19
Janice Bulluck	Child Support – Rocky Mount	17
Isham Spann	Work First – Rocky Mount	16
Charlene Barnes	Medicaid – Tarboro	10
Marisa Spruill	Medicaid – Tarboro	9
Sherrece Cousar	Work First TIP – Rocky Mount	7
Jennie Hanson	Medicaid – Tarboro	7
Dorothy Rowe	Child Support - Tarboro	7
Darnise Bryant	Child Support – Rocky Mount	6
Janet Thursby	Children Services - Tarboro	5

February Birthdays

<i>Day</i>	<i>Employee</i>	<i>Unit/Area</i>
Feb 4	Sherwood Pitt	Child Support – Rocky Mount
5	Bonnie Whitehurst	Children Services – Tarboro
7	Imel Griffin	Food Stamps – Tarboro
8	Sequita Mungo	Food Stamps – Rocky Mount
21	Dorothy Baylor	WFFA – Rocky Mount
23	Tianna McDonald	Children Serv. – Rocky Mount
27	Deloris Council	Adult Services – Tarboro
28	Janice Bulluck	Child Support – Rocky Mount

Promotion / Transfers within the Agency

Congratulations to Dorothy Rowe who was promoted to the position of Child Support Agent II in the Tarboro Office. Dorothy previously worked in the Tarboro Medicaid Unit as Income Maintenance Caseworker II. This promotion is effective January 23, 2006.

Congratulations to our New Employees

Michael Jelovich

Michael began working on December 21st in the Medicaid Unit in the Rocky Mount office. Michael was featured last month but we didn't have a photo.



Dorothy Hedgepeth-Baylor

Dorothy began working on January 9th in the Rocky Mount Work First Family Assistance Unit.



Sequita Mungo

Sequita began working on January 9th in the Rocky Mount Food Stamp Unit.



Yulanda Garris

Yulanda began working on January 10th in the Rocky Mount Work First TIP Unit.



Retiring from the Agency

Congratulations to Janet Keys who retired from the position of Adoption Social Worker III in the Children Services Unit in Rocky Mount. Janet's retirement was effective January 31, 2006. Janet had been working with Children Services Adoptions for 38+ years. Janet was honored at the January Social Services Board Meeting with a plaque and presented a gold watch from Edgecombe County at the January Management Team Meeting. Shown in photo (left to right): Assistant Director Clifton Hickman, Janet Keys, Children Services Administrator Marlon Land, and Director Marvin Rouse.



Also retiring from working with the agency was Charles Parker, Social Worker for the Blind and disabled. Charles actually worked for the State and was located in the Social Services office. Charles retired with 30 years of services and was presented a plaque from the Social Services Board at their January meeting.

DSS Weight-Off Project

January's Weight -Off Winner will be featured in next month's newsletter. Information was not available at publishing time.

Who They Are & What They Do

Guardianship

Edgecombe County serves as "Surrogate Decision Maker and Advocate" for Individuals who lack the capacity to make and communicate important decisions about their personal and financial affairs. Guardianship should be used as the alternative of last resort and only if less intrusive alternatives are not appropriate and will give the individual a fuller capacity with his or her rights. The Guardian should give the ward as much control over his/her life as possible and allow the individual (ward) the opportunity to exercise those rights that are within his/her comprehension and judgment. The decisions that the Guardian makes must be sensitive to the ward's needs, values, wishes, and in the ward's best interest. As an Advocate for the ward the guardian should support the ward in developing the necessary skills needed to assume responsibility for their own decision-making.

Guardianship services are provided to individuals for whom the agency director has been appointed as legal guardian or other clients who are alleged to be in need of a legal guardian. Director Marvin Rouse is the actual legal guardian of the wards served by the agency and he makes the final decision regarding service delivery. The Social Worker who serves as case manager of Guardianship cases is tasked with the responsibility of keeping Mr. Rouse abreast of the individual's circumstances so that he can make an informed decision. The Adult Services Case Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of cases. It is that social worker's responsibility to seek as much prior information regarding the ward's lifestyle, value system, beliefs, family, friends, and any information that will assist the director in making a decision as true to what the ward would decide if able to comprehend what is needed. There has to be a court proceeding before an individual can be adjudicated incompetent and the appointed a guardian thus becoming wards of the state. Family members are considered first and then others within the community but in instances where there is no other appropriate guardian, the Department of Social Services or some other disinterested agency is appointed. Guardianships should be limited to the needs of the wards with the ward maintaining as much decision making power, as he/she is able to comprehend.

The Adult Services Team of the Edgecombe County Department of Social Services provides Guardianship Services to wards of the state which are currently residing in some type of facility or structured environment that can provide around the clock care and supervision. There are three basic types of Guardianship: The Guardian of the Person is responsible for making decisions about personal issues, the Guardian of the Estate handles the financial issues, and the General Guardian assumes responsibility for both the personal and financial needs of the ward. The various powers and duties of a Guardian are outlined in the NC. General Statutes 35-A. Wards are entitled to a court hearing to have their competency restored if desired.

The agency has pamphlets available that further describe Guardianship services or you can call Donna Bass-Phillips with the Adult Services Team at 641-7883.

Work First Working with Local Businesses

The Work First Program is built upon the premise that all people have a responsibility to their families and community to work and to provide for their children. In order to put this premise into effect, one must become self-sufficient. The Total Independence Program/Work First Program have found that one of the most effective means of increasing family self-sufficiency is to develop partnerships with businesses and other community agencies. In order to assist families with self sufficiency, it is important for each organization to combine resources. Work First has partnered up with various businesses and organizations, one being the Rocky Mount Area and Tarboro/Edgecombe County Chambers of Commerce.

Through contractual services, the two chambers serve as liaisons to the business community, as job developers. They also market the Work First Program to local businesses, employers and other non partnering agencies. The marketing is done to survey and gauge the business community interest in possibly being a partner or possibly providing some assistance to the project. The two chambers promote hiring and gaining commitments to customers with private employers. Another organization the Work First Program has partnered up with is Work Central.

Work Central utilizes its regional electronic job retention center to follow-up with families who are seeking employment, employed and those who have gained employment, to provide a vast array of support services, including job counseling, job seeking skills, financial management and planning, promoting career advancement, assets building and other services necessary to ensure success. Work Central also provides tax consultation and preparation. Their primary goal is to assist employers in receiving tax credits for recently hired low-income employees through federal and state incentives and assist working low-income families in receiving earn income tax credits. This helps to generate more income for the Work First Participants, in return helping them to become self-sufficient.

One of our newest community partners is WEST. As the tele-service's industry leader, West offered our Work First participants, cutting-edge professional career opportunities. When they join West, they are rewarded with not only a competitive compensation and benefits package, but ample opportunity to rise as far and as fast as their talents and commitments will take them. West believes in promoting from within; therefore, encouraging our participants to excel in their careers. The possibilities are endless. This enables our participants to become self sufficient, puts money back into the economy of Edgecombe County and provides a means for people to support their families.

Work First is Working in Edgecombe County

This month, we would like to comment on some activities that are related to preparing individuals for the "World of Work" in addition to being focused on youth.

We had previously discussed the work being done by the Edgecombe Nash Youth Congress. We are happy to report that the Youth Congress continues to meet and is planning a seminar/workshop for April 2006 to better assist us to help families and youth to meet the challenges of gangs, drugs, and premarital sex. You can be on our email list by sending an email to phyllystalbot@co.edgecombe.nc.us.

Additionally, a recent seminar was held involving Work First related youth and the youth in Foster Care to help them explore skills necessary to be successful in the World of Work. By all reports, our youth are hungry for well meaning adult mentors and see themselves in need of guidance and support which many (at least those attending the seminar) do not get at home. Please note that the number one problem facing our youth as identified by the Youth Congress is the lack of parental involvement in the needs of their youth. We (the Youth Congress) are taking action to improve parental involvement and participation and one of the non-profit organizations working with us is the Nash/Edgecombe Boys & Girls Club. Like most non-profit community based organizations it is in need of financial support from individuals, groups, and businesses in the community in which it serves. We recognize that the future workers (youth) of our community need wholesome supportive activities and therefore we encourage your support of the Boys & Girls Club "It Just Takes One" Annual Campaign.

We hereby provide excerpts from the "It Just Takes One" Campaign.

- ▶ The campaign will raise funds for the Boys & Girls Club after-school and summer programs and services for youth ages 5-18, living in Edgecombe and Nash Counties. Scheduled to run through March 31, 2006 the campaign seeks donations primarily from individuals.

- ▶ Serving as the campaign's Chair is Evelyn Wilson, who also is the Edgecombe County Board of Education Chairperson. The campaign's goal in its first year is to raise \$60,000 for the Clubs' annual operating budget. Evelyn Wilson added, "We are proud to announce that to date our campaign has raised \$15,000 as a result of some early lead gifts and gifts from 100% of our board members and staff. All we need now is the rest of our community to show their support and we will be able to reach, maybe even exceed our goal."
- ▶ Our Clubs are making a difference in the community. Last year, our local Clubs served 1,200 youth, a 41 percent increase from the year before. "There are still many more children in our community that need the kind of positive influence and guidance the Clubs provide, and we want to reach out to these youth and their families," said Charles Penny, Chief Volunteer Officer for the organization.
- ▶ Funds raised will help sponsor youth to attend summer camp and provide quality after-school programs such as the Power Hour homework help program, computer skills training, career exploration, arts & crafts, fitness and sports, and character and leadership programs such as SMART Moves and Youth of the Year.
- ▶ The Boys & Girls Clubs of Nash/Edgecombe Counties founded in 1966, is a non-profit, privately-funded 501(c)(3) organization and depends on private donations and volunteers to accomplish its mission. The Clubs annually serves some 2,000 youth through Club membership and outreach initiatives in the community. To make a donation or to volunteer contact the Boys & Girls Club office at (252) 977-9924 or visit the website at www.bgcnc.org.

Work First is Working in Edgecombe County because the Business Community recognizes the importance of developing a well educated sustainable work force for now and the future. The Edgecombe/Nash Youth Congress is but one more example following that philosophy and support for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Nash/Edgecombe counties gives individuals and businesses another avenue to be involved in developing our future Work Force.

Leadership

Projecting a Successful Leadership Image

1. Remember that opinions are formed from what people "see" as well as what they "hear." Your attire sends a message about your agenda. When in doubt always ask what the attire is. (It can be very uncomfortable to arrive at a formal event dressed casually or vice versa).
2. When making appointments remember to leave your phone number in case the person you're seeing has a change of plans. Get the phone number of the person you're seeing in case your plans change. When you find that you can't keep an appointment always call and cancel or arrange to reschedule.
3. Don't make commitments that you can't keep. Follow through is important. It lets people know that you are responsible and dependable.
4. Do your homework! Always verify information before passing it on. (The passing of unverified information is called "spreading rumors")!
5. When you have received assistance from someone, it is important to acknowledge their help in the appropriate forum(s). A little "thank you" goes a long way.
6. Conduct a personal "attitude check". Are you helpful, pleasant, and positive? Remember, you set the campus climate.

Relay for Life

We Remember. We Care. We "Relay."

Have you ever experienced losing a child? Be it during childbirth, from a stillborn birth, through an accident, or through a disease such as cancer, it leaves a void that can never be filled.

The chasm of life and death separates you from the little one that held your heart in his or her hand. In the case of accidents we feel powerless. What could we do? In the case of cancer, and childhood cancer, the Edgecombe County Department of Social Services is working to prevent this painful loss. The American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life's" goal is to help provide the funding to find a cure for cancer. That is why the ECDSS "Relays for Life."

Just last week ECDSS experienced the gripping hand of death through cancer. Kayla Lyons, granddaughter of IMC II Beverly P. Clark, succumbed to cancer. Beverly has long been a supporter of ECDSS' efforts to assist the Edgecombe County Chapter of "Relay for Life." It is unfortunate that our co-worker must feel the pain of cancer's merciless sacrifice.

The Edgecombe County Department of Social Services' Mission Statement clearly emphasizes its active "partnerships with families and communities to enhance the family's quality of life." What better way to enhance a family's life than to "Relay," and eradicate cancer? We are "Family Focused and Community Driven." We remember you Kayla. We Care. Our ECDSS Team will "Relay" for you. We will find a cure.

Our goal for the year is 30 team members and \$3000.00. This is not a lot to ask of a Human Services Agency with 160 plus employees. The Registration fee of \$10.00 and this includes your t-shirt!! Registration forms and packets can be obtained from Carol or Linda. We will send them to whomever requests. We can be reached at the following numbers: Carol Mitchell @ 985-5041 or Linda Jackson @ 641-1464

Friday Jeans Day: Don't forget that you can wear your jeans on Friday for \$3.00. Stickers can be purchased from the Fiscal Unit or Phyllis Talbot in Tarboro or Carol Mitchell in Rocky Mount. If you see someone wearing jeans and you don't see a sticker Ask them where it is! It's not fair if someone ignores the rules and doesn't pay.

Note from our Director Marvin Rouse: Our Team has selected Sailing for a Cure as our Theme this year. I hope that everyone will help. Therefore, if 100 staff members contribute 10 dollars each, I will contribute 100 dollars in memory of Beverly's Grandchild Kayla.

Agency News

Day Care:

- "Uncertified Midwife – A Hero in the Child Day Care Unit" - Let's all give Lnette Dundas a hand. On January 10th at 1:58 a.m. Lnette received an emergency call from her expecting girlfriend that her baby was on the way and she needed to get to the hospital. At the time that Lnette arrived to the home of her friend, she was passed the telephone and was told by the Edgecombe County Emergency Squad Operator that she was going to have to delivery the baby. Lnette stated that her first thought was "DELIVER A BABY!!! I CAME OVER TO TAKE HER TO THE HOSPITAL!" Lnette stated that the Emergency Operator said "You are going to have to help me help YOU delivery the baby." Lnette remembered her training recently from the CPR class which was to stay calm and focused. The NIMS classes taught her that the objective is to save a life and the first person to the emergency scene is in charge and to keep the emergency under control until the emergency squad arrives. So she took change and with the guidance of the Emergency Operator, she was able to successfully deliver a healthy 6 pound 10 ounce baby girl. Both baby and mother are doing fine, but Lnette is still in shock. Look out for her book entitled "I Don't Believe It Either." 😊

Fiscal Unit:

- The Fiscal Unit wants to thank everyone for their help in collecting the aluminum cans. Each month they sell the cans to raise their unit's contributions for the agency's Relay for Life team. Thanks for you support!

TIP – Rocky Mount Unit:

- The TIP unit would like to welcome Yulanda Garris. We are honored to have you!

Children Services – Rocky Mount:

- Elizabeth Beasley's daughter, Nakia Speller, was recently recognized as the only Edgecombe County recipient of the North Carolina Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service. Nakia started volunteering with My Sister's House in June of 2004 through an internship project with Edgecombe Community College. After the internship ended, she continued to volunteer by carrying the beeper and helping women in crisis. Elizabeth is very proud of her daughter and we extend our congratulations too!

DSS Relay for Life Team

- We hope that all staff will stop by the Food Stamp Hall in the White House and visit the Relay for Life "Silent Auction," from Wednesday, February 1st through Friday, February 24th.

Just for Fun

Everything You Need to Know You Can Learn From a Cow

1. Wake up in a happy moo-d.
2. Don't cry over spilled milk.
3. When chewing your cud, remember: There's no fat, no calories, no cholesterol, and no taste!
4. The grass is green on the other side of the fence.
5. Turn the udder cheek and moo-ve on.
6. Seize every opportunity and milk it for all its worth!
7. It's better to be seen and not herd.
8. Honor thy fodder and thy mother and all your udder relatives.
9. Never take any bull from anybody.
10. Always let them know who's the bossy.
11. Stepping on cowpies brings good luck.
12. Black and white is always an appropriate fashion statement.
13. Don't forget to cow-nt your blessings every day.