



## The Oklahoma Department of Human Services

### *Persistence and Determination*

## Two DHS Workers Find Ways to Fix Things

When a DHS worker finds that a client's needs cannot be met through DHS services, then, most often, the worker becomes an advocate for the client.

Jenny Geiszler is an Aging Services Division nurse based in Hollis and covers Harmon and Jackson counties. Last summer she visited a client to do an assessment as part of an application for the ADvantage Waiver program. When the assessment was completed, she became an advocate.

The client was a 49-year-old heavy equipment operator who received severe injuries in an auto accident.



Jenny Geiszler

care for two children, it was impossible for the wife to leave the home to work.

And, Geiszler saw a problem needing immediate attention while applications for public assis-

*See Jenny Geiszler Page 2*

Paula Fly, an Adult Protective Services worker in Oklahoma County 55C for 5 years and a DHS employee for 18 years, knows when a situation needs fixing.

The situation she has confronted again and again is the total absence of emergency shelter for elderly persons who are suddenly without a home because of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Fly wants to change that.

Almost a year ago -- just three

days into

the new millennium, Fly got a call to come help two elderly women. The living quarters of the two sisters had been condemned as a hazard to their health and they could not remain in their home.

There was no place for them to go. Homeless shelters could not provide for their needs. They were checked at a hospital emergency room and were in good health. No place to go.

"I literally talked them into a nursing home," Fly said. "No place wanted to take them, but I kept talking until I got them into a nursing home."

The next day she began to plan for an emer-



Paula Fly

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At Work

## **Paula Fly**

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gency shelter for older people. In the next few months Fly walked the halls of the Legislature and talked to fellow workers and anybody she could think of who might help. She got encouragement -- and not much more -- but she kept looking for the right combination to make things happen.

"I just knew this project was supposed to happen," she said.

Then things began to fall into place.

"Late one night I was watching television on a channel I

never watch," Fly said. "And I saw a story about the Daily Living Centers in Oklahoma City."

The next day she was on the phone to Daily Living Centers and soon had a meeting with Bill Weaver, president of the centers which provide adult daycare services.

"He listened to what I was proposing, thought it was a wonderful idea, and suggested other people who might be helpful," she said.

By April a committee of interested people had been formed and a search for property was underway.

By summer, Ray Bitsche, director of Sunbeam Family Services, had joined the committee and brought with him an offer to provide Sunbeam property in Oklahoma City for a shelter and a proposal to administer the shelter program.

By mid-summer of 2001, an emergency shelter for elderly victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation in Oklahoma County should be ready to open.

"I had every confidence this thing would happen. It came together so nicely, so sweet," Fly said. "I am so thankful to my supervisor and the APS state office for allowing me the freedom to act and pursue this dream."

She said that based on a computer check and on surveys of United Way offices and APS offices in other states this will be the first emergency shelter in the nation designated solely for the elderly and disabled adults.

**"The slogan 'press on' has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."  
-- Calvin Coolidge.**

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## **Jenny Geiszler**

*From Page 1*

tance were being processed. Spring winds and hail had damaged the roof of their house, and leaks had collapsed a large portion of the ceiling in the kitchen.

Geiszler said summer high temperatures had been in the range of 103 to 108, and any cooling from the families evaporative cooler was going straight through the hole in the ceiling.

"He had planned to use his income tax refund to fix the roof," Geiszler said, "but after the accident the money went instead for living expenses."

After leaving the home, Geiszler, now an advocate, wrote letters to every contractor and lumber yard she could think of asking for help. But, none replied.

Then, she called a building supply company headquarters in Oklahoma City. She visited with the secretary of the com-

pany president, and soon was talking to the president himself.

The president politely explained that the company often donated materials to charitable organizations, but not to individuals. However, he said, if she would send him details of this case, he would review them.

Geiszler faxed him a letter explaining the families present position, outlining the materials need, and stating she had contacted Altus Air Force Base who had a crew of volunteers standing by and ready to do the repairs.

She received a call from the company president saying he had authorized materials to be delivered in unmarked trucks. He said he preferred that no mention of the company name be made.

**"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence."  
-- Calvin Coolidge**

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**Watch for**

Partnerships  
At Work

This is a sign of the times at DHS and will appear in stories about DHS partnerships.

# Director's Message



Tracy and our children, Chelsey, Cally, Christiana and Hudson, join me in wishing you a wonderful holiday season. . . an inspiring Christmas and a New Year of peace and happiness.

*Howard H. Handrick*



## Huckabay Named to Area V APS Post

Dale Huckabay, an 8-year veteran of the Department of Human Services, has been named Area V Adult Protective Services Liaison.

"We are fortunate to have Dale in this new position," said Judy Ann Wyatt, Area V Director. "Dale cares about his community, its people and how they are treated and he is a welcome addition to the Area V team."

Huckabay began his career with DHS as a social worker in Okmulgee County before serving in APS and Childcare. He later worked in child welfare in McIntosh County before coming back to Okmulgee to serve as an APS worker and later APS supervisor.

Huckabay graduated from Dewar High School and earned a bachelor's in Sociology from East Central University, Ada. He will complete his master's in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma next summer.

Huckabay serves on the Board of Directors for the Connors State College Former Student Association and the Dewar School Foundation. He is also a pastor at Tulledegan Baptist Church, Henryetta.

Huckabay's wife of 19 years, Dana, works for Weight Watchers International. They have two sons, Kyle, 14, and Nathan, 7.

## Foster Father Recovering

A DHS foster father injured in a hit-and-run accident in September is "making progress" in re-learning how to make his body work for him at Integris Southwest Medical Center, Oklahoma City.

Chris Keeling, 24, is recovering from an accident in which he lost his right leg and suffered massive head trauma and a broken left leg and right arm.

Keeling and his wife, Christina, became foster parents in Oklahoma County in April 1999 and have had two foster children in their home.

They have two sons ages five and three, and Christina is expecting a baby in mid-December.

A fund has been established for medical and family expenses: The Chris Keeling Fund, First State Bank of Noble, P.O. Box 599, Noble, OK 73068.

## People, Places and Things

The DHS LeFlore County Office was the top money-raising team in the LeFlore County Literacy Walk-a-Thon in September with a total of \$1,700. Additionally, Freda Reed took first place in individual fund raising for the third year in a row raising more than \$1,500 for the Literacy Council. DHS walkers are, from left, Chuck Hollingsworth, County Director Sevilla Vance, Freda Reed, Judy Billey, Amy Darneal, and Jim Hurst.



Pontotoc County Director Ronnie Magar stands amidst a cardboard box filing system in office space that will soon be the new home of the Pontotoc County Child Welfare unit. The cardboard boxes were a temporary measure while file cabinets were removed and a vertical filing system installed.

DHS 2001 Quality Awards team members began work Dec. 1 to ensure that the DHS Quality Awards and Best of the Best ceremony and reception scheduled for May 9, 2001, will be another successful event. The ceremony will be at the Langston University Oklahoma City Campus. Pictured from left are Office of Finance's Robbie Fleming, Craig County Social Services Supervisor Cheryl Crawford and Creek County Director Don Smith. Nearly 500 people attended last year's ceremony. QAC-1 forms are available on the DHS InfoNet and T Drive. Deadline for nominations is 4 p.m., Feb. 6, 2001.



Seminole County child welfare workers receive Christmas gifts for DHS foster children from the Wewoka Fire Department. Shown are, from left, Nikki Anderson, Child Welfare Specialist II, Shelly Goodnight, Foster Home Developer, Firemen James Keesee and Rick Ayers, Ladonna Sims, Child Welfare Specialist III, and Fireman Fletcher Hulsey. Through the efforts of the child welfare workers and outstanding support from the community, the Christmas Fund in mid-December reached more than \$2,500 as well as a passel of presents - both money donations and presents exceeding the total for last year.

Mary Garcia, Contracts and Purchasing, shows off the 2000 Oklahoma Senior Olympics Championship Trophy for Women's Softball Age 55+. Garcia and her Heartland OKC teammates won the state tournament in Tulsa in September. As state champions, the team qualifies for the National Softball Tournament to be held in Baton Rouge, La., next summer. The team has qualified for the state championship tournament each year for the past eight years. This will be their second trip to Nationals.



Sequoyah County Director Joy Walker, left, and Child Welfare Supervisor Donna Girdner share program successes with DHS Director Howard Hendrick following the Dec. 5 meeting of the Oklahoma Commission for Human Services.



Discussing an adoption placement are, from left, Lesli Williams and Ann Covington, adoption specialists, and Area III Adoptions Supervisor Kathy O'Malley. November was National Adoption Month and adoption specialists across the state put forth extra effort to find the right families for more than 1,500 children in state custody who were available for adoption. First Lady Cathy Keating helped lead a statewide public education and media campaign to tell Oklahomans of the compelling need for families to consider adoption.

# Area VI Celebrates with Luncheon and Laughs

Area VI threw a celebration to recognize employees, and more than 400 area workers turned out Oct. 6 at the Tulsa Technology Center for a luncheon, entertainment and a few



Area VI Director Steve Scott admires the "Big Dawg" Award presented to him at the area employee recognition luncheon.

laughs.

Shirley Roberts, Osage County Director and chairperson of the Area VI Employee Recognition Committee, said the celebration goals included having fun and assuring that Area VI employees felt appreciated for the work they do for clients.

"We feel we accomplished those goals," Roberts said.

Musical entertainment came from the Tulsa Central High School Jazz Quest Band and Tulsa Central C-Sharp Barber Shop Quartet.

Additional music came from The Guilty Party Band, with drummer Jeff Aston, a social services supervisor at Tulsa County 72B. "Their music was

so fine people felt compelled to dance," Roberts said. And people did.

More than 230 awards were presented to deserving, and often surprised, employees. Award categories included the Pollyanna Award, 911 Award, Big Heart, Stick To It, Organization, Helping Hand, Random Act of Kindness, Thomas Edison, Rookie, Transfer and Best of the Best.

The final award of the celebration went to Area VI Director Stephen Scott who was presented The Big Dawg Leadership Award.

As Scott accepted his award, the sound system boomed "Who Let the Dogs Out?"

# Familiar Face Taking on New Challenges

Shade A. Faboro has been a familiar face to many DHS staffers during nearly eight years as a trainer and mentor at the OU-DHS Center For Professional Development. Now, she has taken on a new professional challenge.

Faboro recently joined the Child Support Enforcement Division to help lead efforts in developing a National Child Support Certification program for Oklahoma's more than 300 child support enforcement professionals.

She said Division Administrator Ray Weaver has placed Oklahoma's program in a cooperative effort with five other states to develop training and educational standards for

testing and certifying professionals in child support enforce-



Shade Faboro

ment. The other states are Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland and New Jersey.

"Under Mr. Weaver's leadership, we are developing a certification program to meet Oklahoma's needs while meeting all of the national standards and protocols that may be required by the federal government," Faboro said.

Congress called for states to develop stronger, more aggressive plans to collect child support as a part of the nation's welfare reform efforts.

"Skilled and knowledgeable employees provide better customer service, and improved customer service is a prime factor in increasing child support collections," Faboro said.

# Outstation Workers Meeting Community Needs

Both the Department of Human Services and the Oklahoma Department of Education have worked long and hard for the betterment of Oklahoma's children, and now these efforts are being combined in the School Based Social Work program.

"This is the one of the most exciting programs I've seen in years," said Ronnie Magar, Pontotoc County Director. "None of us can do the complete job for the kids by ourselves, it will take the schools, DHS and the parents."

The SBSW program is a partnership between DHS and local school systems that help students and their families who are at risk or in crisis. By placing a social worker in the school, DHS and the schools can work together to spot the warning signs that something may be wrong in a family situation. And since the program is seen as an extension of the school, families are more receptive to the social workers.

Outstation social workers are currently in the Ada and Byng school systems and at the Carl Albert Indian Hospital in Ada.

"The response from the schools has been positive," said Leslie Bratcher, outstation social worker for the Ada School system. "I feel that DHS and the schools have hit on a great partnership where, together, we are able to pro-

vide needed services to students and their families."

By making home visits to talk with parents about school concerns, they serve as a bridge between the families, the schools and the community resources that can help families.

"I enjoy working with the schools, the children and their families," said Michelle Price, outstation social worker for the Byng School system. "The schools appreciate the fact they have a social worker. They believe it is important to have someone to make home visits and address family issues."

Tonya White has served as the outstation social worker for the Carl Albert Indian Hospital, Ada, for a year and a half. She signs-up patients for Medicare and Medicaid and works with hospital staff to answer questions and take applications for other services like food stamps or social security disability.

"The patients seem pleased with the services and like the convenience," said White.

Shirley Lodes, programs



Pontotoc outstation workers are, from left, Tonya White, medical out station worker at Carl Albert Indian Health Facility; Leslie Bratcher, Ada School System; and Michelle Price, Byng School System.

Partnerships  
At Work

manager in the Office of Field Operations, said, "DHS has had outstation social workers at hospitals for a number of years, and the school-based program grew from the hospital program."

There are now 14 outstation social workers serving in schools in 10 counties, Lodes said.

**Tell us what's happening... so all DHS can know.**

If you have something you can't wait to tell at the office, then chances are everyone in DHS would be interested, too. Send story information or story ideas to **Inside DHS** at [bill.leitner@okdhs.org](mailto:bill.leitner@okdhs.org) or call (405) 521-3027.

# Aging Services Transportation Program Really Rolling

During fiscal year 2000, 180 vehicles active in Oklahoma's Section 5310 transportation program, rolled up 1,062,266 passenger trips moving elderly Oklahomans around their communities and across the state. Many of the trips were to medical appointments, shopping excursions, nutrition centers, meal sites, and social outings.

In 2001, the program will celebrate its 25th anniversary, having provided Oklahoma more than 750 vehicles since the first one was delivered in March 1976.

Aging Services Programs Administrator Robert Adams said, "This is an excellent program of service to the elderly and persons with disabilities and an excellent example of partnerships between public and private agencies. The millions of passenger trips provided during the last 25 years have helped keep a lot of elderly Oklahomans mobile and active in their communities. This is especially true since Oklahoma does not have a significant public transportation infrastructure."

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Section 5310 Federal Transit Authority funds are awarded in the form of vehicles to private, non-profit applicants providing specialized public transportation services to the elderly and persons with disabilities. A 17 percent match is required of applicants for these funds.



A new bus, part of the Aging Services Division Transportation Program, is presented by Robert Adams, left, programs administrator, and Jackie Gunn, center, administrative programs officer, and accepted by Ann Simank, executive director of Community Counseling Center, Oklahoma City.

This year's FTA grant for Oklahoma totals \$1.04 million. Past grants have provided funds for an average of 31 vehicle purchases each year—some years more, some years less. The vehicles have ranged from small sedans to 29-foot buses.

To qualify, grant applicants must be one of the following: a private non-profit corporation or association; a public body approved by the State to coordinate services for elderly and persons with disabilities; or, a public body that certifies to the Governor that no non-profit corporations or associations are readily available in the area to meet the special needs of the

elderly and persons with disabilities.

While grant applications are accepted throughout the year, most of the vehicles are delivered during the spring.



S00154 OKDHS Issued 1/2001  
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