



OKDHS Executives Assume New Roles

The final step in the realignment of management responsibilities at the Department of Human Services took effect Oct. 1. OKDHS Director Howard Hendrick named six senior OKDHS executives to revised assignments.

The new assignments functionally align the Department to improve the agency's operations, Hendrick said. Several senior members of our staff will take on new leadership responsibilities. I am proud of the leadership these persons have demonstrated in their prior responsibilities, and I have every reason to believe they will continue to improve the ways we meet the needs of Oklahoma's most vulnerable citizens.

Revised assignments:

Farilyn Ballard is now chief operating officer of OKDHS



Farilyn Ballard

Human Services Centers, which include the Family Support Services Division, the Children and Family Services Division and Field Operations. Ballard has served in a number of field and administrative positions during her 25-year tenure in the

Department, including Cleveland County director, Field Operations area director, and most recently heading the Division of Children and Family Services.



Raymond Haddock

Raymond Haddock is chief coordinating officer for OKDHS Vertically Integrated Services Divisions, which include Aging Services

Division, Child Care Division, Child Support Enforcement Division and Developmental Disabilities Services Division. He has served in a number of capacities since joining the Department in 1971. He was interim director of the department in 1998 and, most recently, head of Family Support Services Division. Haddock also served as the state's Medicaid Director during the early 1990s.

Larry Harmon is chief

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Promoting Patriotism: Nancy Thrasher (left), Secretary of the Durant lodge of Woodmen of the World, presents an American flag and an Oklahoma flag to Rhonda Rowe, OKDHS Bryan County director. The flags will be displayed in the lobby of the county office. Woodmen of the World lodges maintain an ongoing program to promote patriotism throughout the community by presenting flags to government and non-profit organizations.

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Larry Harmon

administrative officer for Administrative Services. He will lead all major support services of the Department, except those delivered by the Finance, Data Services, and Legal Divisions. He previously served as associate director during which time he headed the Department's Y2K contingency planning effort for two years. Harmon has provided information systems and administrative leadership in a number of capacities throughout the Department for 30 years.

Marq Youngblood is chief information officer overseeing the Data Services Division. He is charged with leading the Department's information technology and network communications systems efforts. Youngblood has

worked in the Department's information systems area for 23 years and served as Data Services division administrator since December 1999. The new alignment recognizes accurate and timely information networks as essential to the agency's commitment to improving customer service.

As part of the realignment, Jean Derry is director for Field Operations Division. Derry served as interim division administrator since May and was previously deputy administrator of the division overseeing oper-



Jean Derry



Marq Youngblood

ations for more than 4,000 employees working in the 90 OKDHS local offices across the state. She has served in a variety of frontline, supervisory and administrative capacities within the Department during her 29-year career.

Other realignments that took effect October 1 include the transfer of Adult Protective Services from Aging Services Division to Family Support Services Division. Also, the Office of Policy, Planning and Research was formed by combining the Policy Management and Analysis unit from Office Support Services Division and the Planning and Research unit from Office of Finance. Marilynn



Marilynn Knott

Knott, a 32-year human services veteran, heads the Office of Policy, Planning and Research.

Williams Named Director of Cleveland County

Debbie Williams, a 32-year veteran of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, has been named director of the DHS office in Cleveland County.

Williams began her DHS career as a clerical worker in Pontotoc County and later became a social worker. She has worked in Child Welfare and as a social services supervisor. Williams has served as county director for Murray County for the past 17 years.



Debbie Williams

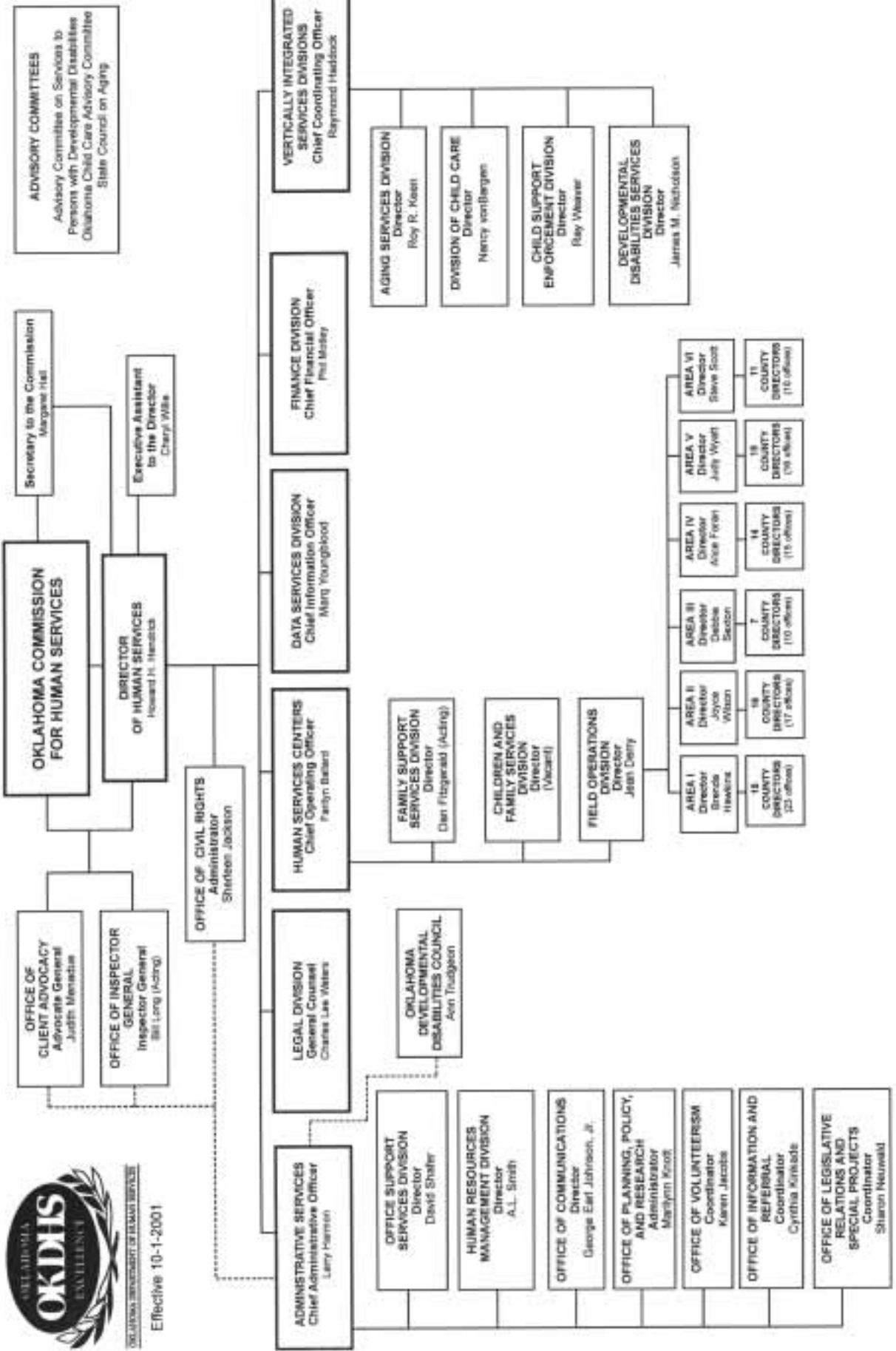
Williams has served as president of the Sulphur Business and Professional Women's Club and has been a member of the Murray County Emergency Food and Shelter Board, the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, the Murray County Youth Improvement Board and the Ardmore Local Workforce Development Council.

She graduated from Latta High School and received her bachelor's degree in elementary

and special education from East Central University (ECU). She received her master's in social work administration and program planning from the University of Oklahoma.

Williams has two children, Amanda, 21, a senior nursing student at the University of Oklahoma and Alison, 19, a freshman at ECU.

Send your story ideas to communications@okdhs.org or call Office of Communications at (405) 521-3027



Nurses and Home Health Staff Receive Awards

More than 150 nurses and home health staff from across the state met for the annual OKDHS Aging Services Division Nurses Conference, Sept. 26 — 28.

The event closed with an awards banquet and luncheon.



Annetta J. Spencer



Sherry Clay

Annetta J. Spencer, LeFlore County, was named State Nurse of the Year. Named State Long-Term



Karen Coburn



Barbara Cottier

Care Nurse of the Year was Cheryl Kilgore, Craig and Nowata counties. Statewide Social Worker of the Year honors went to Mary Jean Rogers, LeFlore County, and Statewide Control Clerk of the



Peggy Henry



Reba Holt

Year was Jacquelyn Johnson, Oklahoma County 55C.

Receiving Area Long-Term



Pulling a Name Out of the What? Well, a hat wasn't available, so Director Howard H. Hendrick gingerly selected door prize names from equipment provided by nurse Lea Ann Cook, co-chair of the Nurses Conference planning committee.

Care Nurse of the Year honors were Beverly Jones, Beckham County, Area I; Laura L. Bigger, Carter County, Area II; Brandy Wheeler, Lincoln County, Area III; Louise McMennamy, McCurtain County, Area IV; Cheryl Kilgore, Craig and Nowata counties, Area V; and Sandra Wilson, Tulsa County, Area VI.



Jacquelyn Johnson



Beverly Jones

Receiving awards for Area Social Worker of the Year were Judy Osburn, Logan County, Area I; Gerald Lawrence, Stephens County, Area II; Sandy Bendele, Lincoln County, Area III; Barbara Cottier, Pittsburg County, Area IV; Mary Jean Rogers, LeFlore County, Area V; and Keith

McNickle, Washington County, Area VI.

Area Control Clerk of the



Cheryl Kilgore



Gerald Lawrence

Year honors went to Karen Coburn, Logan County, Area I; Peggy Henry, Carter County, Area II; Jacquelyn Johnson, Oklahoma County 55C, Area III; Sherry Clay, McCurtain County, Area IV; Reba Holt, Haskell County, Area V; and Debbie Turner, Washington



Louise McMennamy



Keith McNickle

County, Area VI.

Gene Holliman, Hughes County director, accepted a special award for service above and beyond in helping a nurse in need on behalf of the county office staff. The whole office stepped up to assist with driving, dictation, data entry and other duty tasks for the nurse who found herself with only one useable hand while the other healed from surgery.



Judy Osburn



Sandy Rendele



Laura L. Bigger



Mary Jean Rogers



Debbie Turner



Brandy Wheeler



Sandra Wilson



Gene Holliman

Delaware County Quenches Thirst

Karen Allen was answering intake calls at the DHS Delaware County office on a hot Tuesday morning in August when she received a call from a man in Colcord, a town of about 600 in Delaware County.

The man said Colcord had been without water since Saturday when the water tower broke down. Since the town had no backup, every faucet was dry.

Fearing the effects of the extreme August heat on the elderly and vulnerable citizens without water, Allen called the Salvation Army, Red Cross, National Guard and Oklahoma Department of Civil Emergency Management to see if something could be done.

After being notified of the situation, Civil Emergency Management delivered two 5,000-gallon water trucks to Colcord that day, and the Salvation Army and Red Cross

delivered eight pallets of bottled water from the Oklahoma Food Bank.



Karen Allen

The town's water service was restored later that day, but the town remained on a boil order for the next ten days.

None of these agencies had been notified until Allen called. Thanks to her efforts the people of Colcord were able to get water and survive what could have been a trying and dangerous dry spell.

Welcome to the land of WAG

WAGLAND

In the far north of the kingdom, on the edge of the unknown land of Kansas, lies the fiefdom of WAG.

A typical day — when there are such — in the land of WAG is reported to run something like this:

Early in the morning gladwags, with waggbags under arm, joyfully announce, "Wagsaway!" and hit the wagways. Other Wagites go about the business of tending waggstuff in the waggam and maintaining the waggstats. At the end of a full day, weary wagites, some experiencing waggtag, head for their homes looking forward to the morrow.

Those unfamiliar with the Wag dialect should consult the Wagtionary on InfoNet at the Woods, Alfalfa or Grant County websites. (Go to InfoNet homepage, page down to County Offices. Enter the county web and select Wagtionary. Or on the Internet at www.okdhs.org/insidedhs/wagland/.)

Oklahoma Hosts Southwest Regional Support Conference

The OKDHS Child Support Enforcement Division, together with the Oklahoma District Attorney's Council and the Oklahoma Child Support Enforcement Association, played host to the Southwest Regional Support Enforcement Association's annual conference Sept. 4-7 at the Myriad Convention Center, Oklahoma City.

Nearly 500 child support professionals, district attorney's staff and law enforcement officers from Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma, and the Chickasaw and Navajo nations were present, setting a record for attendance.

This year's conference opened with an awards ceremony. Some of those honored included Judge Doug Revard, Ponca City, who was named Judge of the Year; Rep. Ray Vaughn, Edmond, was named Legislator of the Year; Radio Station of the Year honors went to KVSP 1140 AM in Oklahoma City, and Newspaper of the Year honors went to the Pauls Valley Democrat.

Conference workshop topics included administrative ethics, the federal parent locator service, military issues, motivation and team building and working with tribal courts.



Diana Jarman, Cleveland County Child Support (right), received the Office Manager of the Year award from Ray Weaver, CSED director.

Marshall County Celebrates School



Carla Tate, foster care worker, did an outstanding job in teaching the kids how to sack race as seen by the fact the kids are way ahead.

OKDHS Marshall County staff, along with area businesses, sponsored a back-to-school pool party and hot dog feast for foster children in August.

Then the games began. OKDHS foster care worker Carla Tate taught Sack Race 101. Connie Mason, foster care worker, showed the kids the best way to wear egg in the egg toss contest. All the children really enjoyed this contest, except one four-year-old who did not want to give up her egg.

The older kids enjoyed playing volleyball, while the younger ones played the ring toss. And after playing hard at the park, everyone headed for the pool to cool off.

Marshall County staff members hope to make this an annual event to help reduce the dread of going back to school.



Connie Mason, foster care worker, took time out from the egg toss to demonstrate for the kids the "Best Way to Wear Egg."



OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Mary Breshers Selected for National Honor

A retired OKDHS adoption worker, who was primarily responsible for initiating the nationally recognized One Church, One Child adoption recruitment program in Oklahoma, was selected to receive an Angels in Adoption award from the Congressional Coalition on Adoption during a national ceremony in Washington, DC.

The ceremony scheduled for Sept. 11 was postponed.

U.S. Sen. James M. Inhofe nominated Mary L. Breshers, MSW, of Oklahoma City, for the award.

Breshers, a native of Muskogee, was selected for her successful efforts in bringing the adoption program to Oklahoma and nurturing its growth.

The program was founded in 1980 in Chicago by Father George Clements, a Roman Catholic priest, and was designed to reduce the rapidly increasing number of African American children who need adoptive home placements. The program is based on the premise that if one family in each church, in every community opens their hearts and homes to adopt an African American child, far fewer children would wait in foster care for permanent homes.

Breshers, a 28-year veteran of OKDHS child welfare services, worked quietly and with purpose to establish the program in Oklahoma in 1988, starting with a 14-member ministerial advisory council, which today is a 21-member board of directors. Their collective efforts under her leadership has moved the adoption of African

American children in Oklahoma from about 25 a year then, to current numbers of more than 100 children annually.



Mary Breshers

It is an honor to be selected to receive this national recognition and to be a part of raising public awareness about children in our communities who are waiting for a sense of permanency through loving adoptive parents, Breshers said. When I receive this award, I will see the names and faces of countless friends and co-workers who have labored tirelessly to breathe life into the collective vision we have to make life better for these children.

Breshers redoubled her efforts after retiring from OKDHS in 1989, working as a volunteer and now as a consultant to the program. More than 1,000 African American children have found loving parents and permanent, adoptive homes

through One Church, One Child since the program started 13 years ago. Breshers believes this is an accomplishment all Oklahomans can be proud of.

There is still a lot of work to be done Breshers said. While we have experienced some real successes in the past few years, we find that more children are coming into the system with different sets of emotional and physical challenges. Most are school age, and many are brothers and sisters who need to be placed in a home together. But we can't give up on them. They still deserve to have parents to love and care for them and a place to call home.

There are 565,000 children in America's foster care system. Some 6,200 children are in foster care in Oklahoma. Of these foster children, 1,700 are available for adoption and nearly one third are African American.

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption is a bicameral, non-partisan alliance of 160 members of Congress dedicated to improving adoption policy and practice of the nation. It created the Angels in Adoption program to raise public awareness of the many different ways dedicated, compassionate persons can help children and families through adoption.

Mary Breshers was in Washington, D.C., for the awards luncheon of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption. The luncheon was scheduled for Sept. 11. Because of the Attack on America, the awards luncheon was postponed indefinitely. Ms. Breshers remained in Washington for several days until she could arrange for return to Oklahoma City.

Effort Helps Family Find New Home

Ursula Dekle, a social worker in the Rogers County office, was taking a food stamp application from a couple with three children. The father had worked hard at the same job for 15 years, but the family still needed help making ends meet.



Ursula Dekle

They were not eligible for food stamps, but during the interview Dekle learned that the family had been renting the same house for several years. The family was shocked when Dekle told them they had paid about \$32,000 in rent the past eight years. But,

the family felt that they wouldn't qualify for a loan to buy a house.

After the couple left the office, Dekle noticed a poster for Habitat for Humanity put up by another employee. She thought of the couple, took an application packet by their house on her lunch hour, and helped them fill it out.

Dekle was just one person putting forth a little extra effort

Habitat for Humanity selected the family to get a new home, and the family is expected to move in early next year.

Dekle herself plans to pitch in and help with its construction.

For information about Habitat for Humanity chapters in your area, call 1-800-HABITAT, or visit www.habitat.org.

Staffer Published



Richard Ingham

Richard Ingham, Legal Services Developer in the OKDHS Aging Services Division, authored an article in a

publication of the American Bar Association. Ingham reports on Oklahoma legislation that established the Office of Elder Rights and Legal Assistance Services Development in the summer issue of BIFOCAL, Bar Associations in Focus on Aging and the Law. The publication is the newsletter of the ABA Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly. Find the text of the Oklahoma Act establishing the elder rights and legal service development office at www.tcs.org/keating.htm.



A Kiss...
.....is just
a Kiss

OKDHS Webmaster Jenifer Fryar won a hard-fought contest over six other Data Services Division administrators vying for the privilege of raising the most money for the division's Employee Recognition Committee activities. Employees voted with their cash for the administrator they wanted to see kiss a pig. Fryar performed her appointed task with some trepidation and with assistance from a trained professional, Leslie Brodell, who organized the fundraiser.



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