

## Happy 67th Birthday, OKDHS



# Marathoners Run The Distance For Good Health

By Kevan Goff-Parker  
Inside OKDHS Editor

Creek County Director Richard Davidson may be a grandfather of four, but this 22-year OKDHS veteran isn't about to let anything slow him down – especially not a little thing like running the grueling 26-mile Boston Marathon.

His time was 3:38 – a respectable performance for any accomplished athlete. Davidson, 55, also recently won first place during the OKDHS 17th Annual State Games in the Men's 5-K Run division, as well as placing first (along with three teammates) in the game's 1 Mile Co-ed Run division.

"Food just tastes better and the air smells sweeter when you are physically healthy," Davidson said.

But Davidson wasn't always the iron man he is today. He said he was in decent shape in 1970 after being honorably discharged from the U.S. Marine Corps after earning the rank of Lance Corporal. By age 32, the father of two boys (David and Tracy) was a three-pack a day smoker, working a heavy schedule and was out of shape. Worse, he was also struggling with periodic bouts of depression.

He and his wife, Ruth (now a retired OKDHS Okmulgee County caseworker), ran an Okmulgee-based drive-in restaurant that



*Creek County Director Richard Davidson recently ran the Boston Marathon in 3:38. Davidson said along with the health-related benefits of running, he enjoys the freedom from other activities as he beats the streets in quest of his running adventure.*

Davidson purchased from his father in 1977. In 1980, Davidson met some other runners and decided to change the direction of his life. He soon joined the pack in an effort to improve his overall physical and mental happiness.

"When I began running, I soon realized that I wouldn't be able to smoke and run," Davidson said. "I started using smokeless tobacco, but soon realized it was worse than cigarettes."

The following year, he began working as a Child Welfare worker in Okmulgee County and sold the drive-in in 1982. At 40, he decided to attend graduate school and eventually earned master's degrees in social work and public administration.

"During that time, running was a real physical outlet for me," Davidson said. "I was running all day and studying at night, and I needed a way to get rid of the nervous energy that would build up. It's a great stress reliever."

About five years ago, he competed in shorter competitive runs and said he had no desire to try long distance running, but a knee injury added swimming and biking to his workout routine. Participating in triathlons seemed the logical next step. Two years later, he participated in an Iron Man distance triathlon.

Meanwhile, Davidson's hard work paid off. Not only did his

*MARATHONERS continued on page 11*

# We're All On The Field To Make A Difference

By Don Henderson  
Garfield County director  
and OKDHS chaplain



A sports enthusiast my entire life, I've always enjoyed watching people compete. At age four, I fell in love with baseball, would never miss a radio broadcast and often went to bed clutching my glove. As the announcer described the action, I dreamed of the time when I could hit the field. That opportunity came a year later when my older brother's team didn't have enough players. Then, you had to at least be six years old to play, but they granted an exception and let me play at age five with a team consisting of mostly eight year olds.

Stuck way out in right field and often told not to swing the bat (generally I always could draw a walk), I thought baseball was OK, but it had lost some of its appeal. One day as a big game unfolded, we found ourselves behind with two outs and a runner on third. I was at bat, and all knew exactly what I was going to do. My coach was giving me the take sign, teammates were distraught that the outcome of the game would be dependent upon me, and my big brother had a personal talk with me before I headed to the plate begging me not to swing.

As I watched a couple of balls float by and heard that umpire's "strike one, strike two," my knees began to shake. I was scared to death that I would cost us the game. My feet struggled to stay still, and my hands were doing well to just hold the bat.

Then, my opponents made a crucial mistake! A kid yelled out, "He ain't gonna swing, he can't hit the

ball!" Those words made every part of me concentrate on that next pitch. With no fear of failure, I forgot what everyone had told me to do because I was going to hit that ball. As the ball approached, I took a mighty rip. Everyone in the ballpark was stunned, including myself, as the ball sailed past the second baseman and into right field. It was my first hit, and it was at that point I became a real ballplayer.

I think sports can relate to many situations that we face in our own life, as well as on the OKDHS playing field. In life, as in baseball, we have a tendency to focus on one inning or one at bat, rather than the entire game. It takes a team to be successful. Individual players can't be concerned with their own success or fear of failure, but remember they are playing for a greater goal. There will be days that we don't feel like ballplayers, social workers or public servants, but that is where our skills and talents reside, and even on those days, we have to be prepared because we are on this field to make a difference.

When the ball doesn't bounce our

way or if the umpire makes a bad call, stay in there and be ready. Things are not always going to be smooth, and we're placed in one of the toughest leagues where life throws lots of curve balls. Although the media seldom mention the good plays or our victories, deep down we know we are doing the job. Practice and patience are vital to success, but you must have a love for the game and those you represent.

Remember, the ball game is never over until the lights grow dim and the final out is recorded. Even when that happens, tomorrow is another day – another chance to get back on the field and make a difference. And who knows? Tomorrow may be the day you get the key hit. Be a difference maker, and be prepared to step up and meet the challenge wherever it may occur – it could be on the field, in the locker room or even outside of the ballpark. But somewhere in the stands, a child, a young mother or a senior citizen is depending on you because you're a real OKDHS ballplayer.



Many of these OKDHS employees recently participated in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life at Lake Hefner in Oklahoma City. Relay for Life offers communities the opportunity to participate in the fight against cancer, while empowering cancer survivors. Credit Union One provided food and beverages for OKDHS employees. The total OKDHS participation earned more than \$3,500, with an overall total of \$108,000 in donations raised to help fight cancer.

# Hartpence Scholarship Fund Continues Legacy Of Giving

By Dustin Pyeatt  
Office of Communications

After a lengthy career working for OKDHS, Mary Louise Hartpence was determined that her legacy would be to continue helping foster children. When she died in 1983, she



*Mary Louise Hartpence Scholarship Fund award winner Marvla Robinson is now employed as a Child Welfare worker in Canadian County. She recently told the Oklahoma Commission for Human Services how grateful she is for the scholarship and for the encouragement she received from OKDHS employees while growing up.*

left her \$300,000 estate in a trust to be used as a scholarship fund for children in OKDHS custody. It is known as the Mary Louise Hartpence Scholarship Fund.

The Oklahoma Commission for Human Services recently awarded post-secondary scholarships totaling \$33,000 to 21 former foster youth for the 2003-2004 academic year. Marvla Robinson, a past recipient, recently began working for OKDHS as a Child Welfare specialist. She and another recipient, Amanda Dembowski, recently described to the

Commission how the scholarship helped them both as they pursued their academic careers.

“It was a great honor to receive this scholarship and it helped me tremendously,” Robinson said. “I was in foster care for seven years. I didn’t know I was capable of going to college. But through the support of some really good case workers and some really awesome foster parents, I became the first person in my family to graduate from college. I want to help other children and teenagers realize that their goals are important, and even though they were in foster care and may have had some difficult situations in their lives, that they can still succeed. There are people willing to encourage and back them in that endeavor.”

Since its inception, these scholarships have benefited 220 youth in their pursuit of higher education. To date, 29 recipients have earned bachelor’s degrees. Most recently, four recipients graduated with individual degrees in a variety of areas, including veterinary medicine, sociology, social work and nursing. This year, nine first- and second-year students will each receive \$1,000 scholarships, nine third-year students will receive \$2,000 and three fourth-year students will receive \$3,000. To qualify, all students must retain a 2.0 grade average or better.

The increase in the number of foster children in Oklahoma who apply for this scholarship has contributed to its depletion of funds. As of June 1, it was projected that less than \$33,600 in funds are available. Last year, the scholarship was awarded to 12 recipients, but this year because of limited funds, only four of the 14 first-time applicants were awarded scholarships.

The Oklahoma Commission for Human Services acts as trustee for

the Mary Louise Hartpence Scholarship Fund. This is the 18th group to receive the scholarship. Hartpence was a 32-year veteran of OKDHS whose last gesture of kindness will continue to touch the lives of young people for years to come.

If you would like to contribute to the Mary Louise Hartpence Scholarship Fund, please send donations to the Oklahoma Human Services Foundation c/o the Hartpence Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 52946, Oklahoma City, OK 73125-2146. Please make sure all donations are clearly marked for the Hartpence Scholarship Fund.

To learn more about becoming a foster parent, please call 1-800-376-9729, or click on <http://www.okdhs.org/fostercare/>



*Amanda Dembowski, a married mother of two, recently described how the Mary Louise Hartpence Scholarship Fund helped her to graduate from the University of Oklahoma. The scholarship award winner also told the Oklahoma Commission for Human Services that she hopes to eventually be hired by OKDHS as a Child Welfare worker.*

# Area IV APS Setting Standard In Teamwork



(L-R) Detective James Brown, Tecumseh Police Department; Deputy Randy Willis, Pottawatomie Sheriff's Department; Paul Greenwood, department district attorney, San Diego County Office of District Attorney; Jean Ann Elliot, Pottawatomie County OKDHS APS; Marilyn Tate, Pottawatomie County OKDHS APS and Associate District Judge John Gardner, Pottawatomie County.

By Dustin Pyeatt  
Office of Communications

On a recent warm, rainy day, Oklahoma Department of Human Services Area IV Adult Protective Services' staff, county directors, police officers, sheriff's deputies, district attorneys and judges all gathered at Lake Texoma Resort Park to do something extraordinary ... talk.

"We hope to break new ground with law enforcement that hopefully will be duplicated across the state," said Bill Wilson, OKDHS Area IV Director, as he addressed a crowd of more than 70 participants during the two day Area IV APS Law Enforcement and the Courts Conference.

Though this is only the second year the conference has been held, it has already gained significant recognition in Oklahoma by earning an OKDHS Quality Award.

During the conference, Keynote Speaker Paul Greenwood, who serves as deputy district attorney and oversees the Elder Abuse Unit at the San Diego County Office of District Attorney, told attendees that in regards to California's APS, "Okla-

homa is doing a fabulous job."

During his lecture, Greenwood talked about the exploitation and undue influence on the elderly. He also helped APS staff and law enforcement build a dialogue by helping each side understand the other.

"APS needs to understand that not every case can be prosecuted and that law enforcement is limited in what they can do," Greenwood said.

"Law enforcement should also realize the importance of APS as a resource to the elderly. Both sides need to build a climate of cooperation, air frustrations and find solutions – respect and cooperation can be built."

Participants also heard about "Gray Crimes" from Joseph Soos, a retired homicide detective who currently researches, designs and conducts training for criminal justice, human and elder services and medical personnel. His work has been featured in The Washington Post and he has testified before the U.S. Senate concerning elder abuse.

"Law enforcement doesn't rely on APS to investigate other crimes, why crimes against the elderly?" Soos asked. "APS has to investigate crimes without guns, a squad car, armed back-up or forensic expertise. Mail carriers have more protection than APS workers."

Sally Jo Andrews, APS, Choctaw County OKDHS, said the conference has helped to renew her vigor and compassion for APS.

"APS workers are usually the only one in their county," Andrews said. "This reminds me that we're part of a larger group."

## News Briefs

### Adoptions Reach All-Time High

In fiscal year 2003, 1,314 children were placed in trial adoptive homes in Oklahoma. This exceeds the all-time adoption placement high set last year when 1,210 children were placed.

During the past six years, more than 6,323 children were placed in trial-adoptive homes – more than the previous 15 years combined. This number also accounts for 40 percent of all children placed in adoptive homes since 1967, when records on adoptive placements began.

### OKDHS Walkers Raise Nearly \$6,000 for March Of Dimes

Team OKDHS walkers in the Oklahoma City metro raised \$5,802.56 for the 2003 March of Dimes campaign "Driving Towards a Healthy Future for America's Babies." For its efforts, Team OKDHS received a plaque as members of the \$5,000 Club.

# Celebrating Successes Is Important for Personal Morale

August 6th was the 67th anniversary of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, and we celebrated our collective successes. In the last few months

## Best Foot Forward



we have held a number of celebrations across the Department. In April, we honored our volunteers who gave freely of their time, talent and resources. In May, we honored our own through the “Best of the Best Awards,” because their words, deeds and actions through local leadership led us to improved excellence. The “Quality Awards” honored those who worked as well-netted teams to produce operational efficiencies and cost savings in Department programs, services and community activities.

In June, we began the first in a series of monthly programs to share our collective successes with a summer of brown bag lunches. With the help of local sponsors, OKDHS offices held lunches, picnics and other events to take time to get to know one another a little better. When co-workers in the workplace come to a common place to work and don’t take time to know whom they are working with, it often signals that morale will soon deteriorate.

These celebrations are one way to put our Best Foot Forward in building the types of relationships we want to see in those who come to us for health and human services. It’s a chance for us to communicate with each other on different planes. Good morale is so

important in the work we do. We are most often faced with clients, patients and customers who are in the midst of personal and family crises. They come to us, or we are sent out to them, to bring some sense of order to the events that have unsettled their lives.

When we take time to celebrate – there is a purpose. It’s a place and time in our working environment where we can acknowledge that what we do is important, and that it makes a difference in the lives of those we serve. For that, we need to recognize our own successes. We need to let this praise carry us through to allow us to help the next

clients and customers that come through our human services’ doors.

We don’t have to wait for the next big Department celebrations to celebrate success. When you have a chance to recognize your own or a co-worker’s successes, put your Best Foot Forward and realize your actions will improve the morale in your working environment. Giving praise to a co-worker can only come back to you multiplied when it’s genuine and heartfelt. So recognize the successes around you, and your personal morale will be improved, too.

– George Earl Johnson Jr.



Folks were having fun and learning during the recent OKDHS 2003 Oklahoma Teen Conference! Pictured from left are Cathy Connelly, OKDHS Independent Living Services, Mitchell Gray and Josh Shipp, keynote speaker and a former foster youth. This year’s teen conference seemed like a family reunion for Shipp because Gray is the grandson of Shipp’s foster mother. The pair used the time before Shipp’s presentation to catch up. The Oklahoma Teen Conference is an annual event where foster youth involved in the Independent Living program come together to network with other youth and to learn the life skills they’ll need once they leave foster care. The Oklahoma Teen Conference is sponsored by the OKDHS Children and Family Services Division Independent Living Program and coordinated by the University of Oklahoma National Resource Center for Youth Services. – DP

**August 2003 OKDHS  
Calendar Of Events**

*Editor's Note: Details about most of these events may be found on the OKDHS InfoNet*

- Aug. 11-29**  
FSSD New Worker Academy
- Aug. 12**  
Advisory Committee on Services to Persons with Developmental Disabilities
- Aug. 12**  
OKDHS Child Care Forums
- Aug. 12**  
Statewide Adoptive Staffing
- Aug. 12-15**  
Adult Protective Services Academy 2003-3 (New Staff)
- Aug. 14**  
Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council
- Aug. 14**  
Older Women's Initiative
- Aug. 15**  
NAPIS Task Force
- Aug. 18**  
Adult Protective Services Field Liaison Meetings
- Aug. 18-22**  
Adult Protective Services Academy 2003-3 (New Staff)
- Aug. 19**  
Court Appointed Advocates for Vulnerable Adults (CAAVA)
- Aug. 20-22**  
County Director Academy 7
- Aug. 20**  
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Housing Task Force
- Aug. 25**  
Human Services Center Meeting
- Aug. 25-28**  
Adult Protective Services Academy 2003-3 (New Staff)
- Aug. 26**  
OKDHS County Directors and Child Welfare LGC Grievance Training
- Aug. 26**  
Private Facilities Serving OKDHS Custody Children Grievance Training
- Aug. 27**  
FSSD Field Liaison Meeting



**Caught Working**

Inside OKDHS recently dropped in on the staff of the Kay and Noble County Offices and all were "Caught Working" and doing their best to strengthen the many families they serve in Ponca City and Perry, Okla. Featured here (from top and clockwise) are Kay County's Marsha Crilly, a customer service representative; Ed P. Faagai, social services specialist I; John Hunt, social services specialist IV, Ruth Daugherty, administrative assistant and Barbara Wright, child welfare specialist. From the Noble County Office (continued clockwise) are Lou Ann Hunt, social services specialist IV and Nanette Skidgell, social services specialist II.

**Congratulations And Best Wishes To Our Recent Retirees!**

- Adair County**  
Sue Ogden  
38 years
- Muskogee County**  
Letha Vincent  
17 years
- Oklahoma County 55-A**  
Linda Kay Howard  
29 years
- Oklahoma County 55-C**  
Inga Lill Johnson  
5 years
- Phillip C. Nero  
22 years
- Oklahoma County 55-F**  
Clara B. Breaux  
16 years
- Ottawa County**  
Carolyn Sue Blakenship  
19 years
- Sequoyah County**  
Robert McEver  
30 years
- Tulsa County 72-D**  
Sandra Kay Aston  
24 years
- Wagoner County**  
Pricilla Donnelly  
22 years
- NORCE**  
Angie M. Ingham  
16 years
- Jerald D. Kreplin  
20 years
- Elsa E. Lee  
19 years
- Michael E. Wherry  
22 years

## News Briefs

### Gov. Brad Henry Appoints Two To Committees

**Norma Lee Goff**, programs administrator for Personal Care Services, Aging Services Division was recently appointed to the State Agency Review Committee. She has worked for OKDHS for 18 years. **Rodney Davidson**, Applications Specialist IV and Web Administration Team lead, Data Services Division, was recently appointed to the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Task Force. He's been with OKDHS for eight years.

### Tips To Avoid Scam E-mail

Despite the recent addition of anti-spam software, OKDHS employees need to maintain vigilance in identifying potential scams residing in their e-mail inboxes.

The software should catch many of the questionable e-mails, but others may avoid detection and end up in mailboxes, Chief Information Officer **Marq Youngblood** said.

He suggested the following tips to help avoid the pitfalls of e-mail scams:

- ✓ Verify the legitimacy of who is sending the e-mail. You can contact the Office of Inspector General or your local Better Business Bureau.

- ✓ The old adage, "If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is too good to be true," should apply to any questionable e-mail.

- ✓ Be careful about using your e-mail address on message boards or for online registrations.

- ✓ Verify the questionable e-mail with people that you trust.

- ✓ Use common sense.

### InfoNet's InfoSearch Improves Online Searches

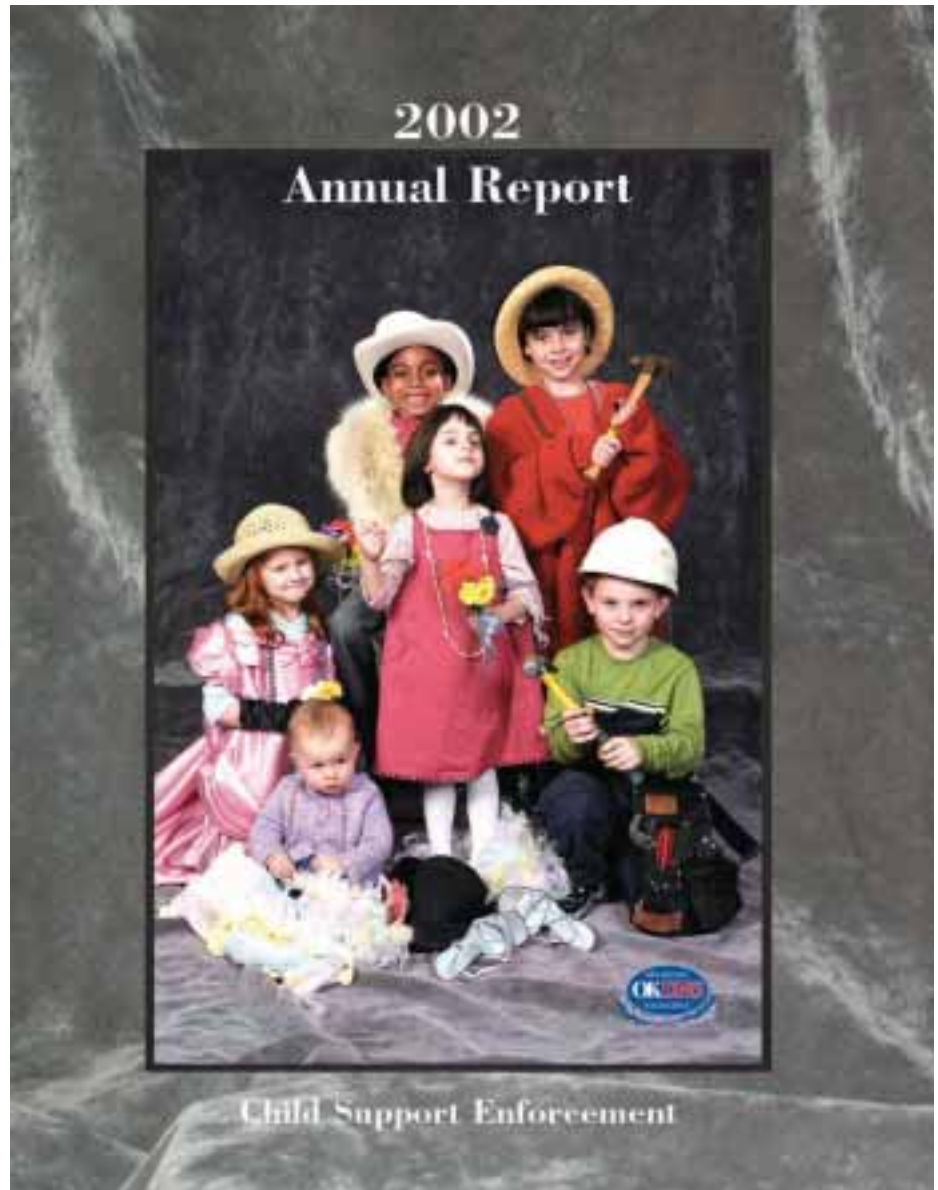
Trying to find the names and photographs of the Marshall County staff or others on the OKDHS' InfoNet will soon be just a keyword

and mouse click away.

A new OKDHS InfoNet search tool – InfoSearch – became available June 28. To use the improved search, enter a keyword into the search box found on the top right corner and click the accompanying button.

**Randel McKee**, a Data Services Division Web designer and developer, said the InfoSearch should help staff more easily locate sought-after information.

To access the InfoSearch, go to <http://s99web01/infosearch/>



OKDHS celebrates August as Oklahoma Child Support Enforcement Month. The Child Support Enforcement 2002 Annual Report (the cover featured above) was recently released and details work done by the Child Support Enforcement Division. The division has 36 offices statewide. The average statewide caseload for state fiscal year 2002 was 149,885 – an increase of 6,508 cases from the previous year. Total dollar collections distributed was nearly \$143 million. The division describes itself as “an intricate part of a tribal, local, state and federal partnerships, whose purpose is to establish, monitor and enforce the financial responsibility of parents for their children.” – KGP

# Director Hendrick Honored For Five Years Of Service

By Kevan Goff-Parker  
Editor Inside OKDHS

What's it take to lead the largest agency in Oklahoma state government? If you ask many OKDHS employees, the answer is simple. Many seem to believe it takes the vision of a leader like OKDHS Director Howard H. Hendrick.

Such sentiments were proudly echoed when more than 100 employees, state dignitaries and friends and family recently gathered for a brief surprise ceremony at the Sequoyah Building. The event was designed to honor the director for his five years of service leading the agency. With the exception of L.E. Rader, Hendrick has served as director longer than any other director in recent state history.

During the event, numerous employees shared their thoughts, including Farilyn Ballard, chief operating officer, Human Services Centers. She said over the years she's come to believe it a "privilege" to work with Hendrick.

"I think the thing that I appreciate the most about our director is his godly character," Ballard said. "You know that whenever he makes a decision, he is always going to try to do the right thing. And in this agency, it is incredibly important that we do do the right thing, because whatever we do, it affects thousands of people's lives ... I just appreciate your vision, your leadership, and I've even come to appreciate all the questions you have!"

The last comment drew laughter from the crowd because the director, an attorney, CPA and former Oklahoma State senator, is well-known for asking employees discerning questions in his quest to find solutions to the myriad challenges facing OKDHS.

Along with other officers, Phil Motley, chief financial officer, Finance Division, described the Director as a person of "moral integrity."



Larry Harmon, chief administrative officer, Administrative Services (far right), praises OKDHS Director Howard H. Hendrick during the director's five year service anniversary celebration held recently in the foyer of the Sequoyah Building in Oklahoma City. Also featured from left are Phil Motley, chief financial officer, Finance Division; Marq Youngblood, chief information officer, Data Services Division; Raymond Haddock, chief coordinating officer, Vertically Integrated Services Divisions; Director Howard H. Hendrick; Farilyn Ballard, chief operating officer, Human Services Centers and Charles Lee Waters, general counsel, Legal Division.

Chairman for the Commission for Human Services Steve Bailey then said Hendrick's reputation for excellence preceded him prior to coming to work at OKDHS. He said that each time the commission expresses their appreciation for the "wonderful job" he's performing, the director defers back to OKDHS employees as the key to his success.

"He's always quick to point out the reason for it ... he's surrounded by wonderful people," Bailey said. "Not just department heads, he talks about the people throughout this agency, what great contributors they are and how hard working you are. And always, (it's) a universal statement he makes no matter what we're talking about when we talk about this agency and how well this agency is now run."

Touched by the words of praise, Hendrick thanked the crowd, speak-

ers for their statements and said the day was extra special because it was also his 26th wedding anniversary.

"This is really a great experience for me because I get to work with all of you ... you guys are doing a great job!" Hendrick said. "The bottom line is it's about helping individuals and families in need."

Afterwards, George Earl Johnson Jr., director, Office of Communications, continued the surprises by presenting the director with a scrapbook full of warm wishes, letters and cards sent by employees throughout the agency. The crowd then enjoyed cake and ice cream.

Later, Oklahoma Senator Ben Robinson from Muskogee, Okla., told *Inside OKDHS* he believes that "the luckiest day Oklahoma's had in a long time is when Howard Hendrick accepted this job" and that he was also proud of him.

# Quilting Family Sews Yesterday And Today Back Together

By George Earl Johnson Jr.

Kay County Family Support Services Specialist II Karen Maker, along with two cousins and a client in need, had a life-refreshing experience this summer.

Cousins Millicent Gillogly of Oklahoma City and Judith Wiens of Colorado Springs, Colo., got together to look over old quilts and photos from years gone by. In the process, they discovered unfinished family business.

Nannie Maker, their grandmother, had long been a quilter, and in unpacking old boxes this summer, the cousins found 72 10-inch quilting squares that had never been made into a quilt. The squares all predate 1945, the time their grandmother died.

Maker said an aunt recognized several pieces and told about the clothes the pieces of the squares were cut from. The conversations brought back to life their family history through the old squares of sewn cloth. The cousins have committed themselves to working on finishing this undone family business during the next year.

During her interview with *Inside OKDHS*, Maker also shared what she believes has kept her happy working for the agency during the past 16 years.

"It's kind of a family affair," she said. "I have good co-workers around me, and we look out for each other. We really want to help the clients we see."

Maker reflected on one recent visit with a client who had separated from her husband and who needed help with a number of things for her children and herself.

"I spent two hours with this woman, which is more than you normally spend taking an application, but I could tell she needed more than food and benefits," Maker said. "Sometimes reaching out emotionally is just as important as any of the



*Kay County Family Support Services Specialist II Karen Maker displays one of the many quilts begun by her grandmother prior to 1945, which today remains a work in progress.*

program benefits we offer."

She said the conversation brought a little more peace of mind to the client and allowed the pair to build a relationship. Maker showed the client how she could be helped by OKDHS and how she could also

access other community resources.

The time invested by Maker allowed her to sew a few stitches into the fabric of a client's life – just as she and her cousins will invest time into piecing together an unfinished quilt left by Grandma Maker.

## Marathoners continued from page 1

health improve, his career took off. He was named Creek County director in 2002.

“While getting in shape for the Iron Man competition, I ran a marathon in 2001,” Davidson said. “Last December, I ran another and qualified for the Boston Marathon, which I ran in April. It takes a lot of perseverance and willingness to go out when it is rainy and cold and put in the miles.”

Davidson describes the Boston Marathon (the second biggest spectator sport in the world) as an exciting event. He said it is held on Patriot’s Day, a commemoration of Paul Revere’s ride through the streets of Boston and the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

“For 26 miles, there are just tiers of people along the road,” he said. “Being involved in social work and community networking activities, I was amazed by how much the community was involved in putting together the event. Competing in the Boston Marathon is kind of the top tier for amateur runners.



*Creek County Director Richard Davidson, who recently ran the Boston Marathon, displays more than a dozen running medals he's won during the OKDHS State Games and other sports-related trophies.*

“About 17,000 people ran. It was a huge race. It was a real feeling of accomplishment.”

Now married 32 years and with four grandchildren, Davidson said

he feels great, enjoys his work and encourages OKDHS employees to get active and stay healthy.

“The Lord is good to me,” he said. “I really believe I’ve been blessed and am fortunate for having health that allows me to do some of these physical activities.”

Echoing Davidson’s thoughts is Lori Stephens, a Child Welfare worker II in the Grady County Office, who has worked for the agency for 12 years. She ran the 26.2-mile Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon this spring.

“The health benefits are just amazing,” Stephens said. “You feel better, look better and have more energy.”

Stephens, in her 40s, said she started running when she was 16. She admits it is hard to train for a marathon, but is already considering participating again next year.

“My whole goal was just to finish,” she said, laughing. “I ended up with 5:34 time and beat about 200 people. I encourage all employees to try – even if it is to just walk or jog.”



*(L-R) John Coleman, programs administrator for Risk, Safety and Emergency Management for OKDHS, thanks Maj. Gen. Jerry W. Grizzle, U.S. Army National Guard, for his participation in the recent OKDHS Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Conference 2003. Grizzle is commander of the Joint Task Force Civil Support. He recently spoke to approximately 350 OKDHS employees during the conference held at the Meridian Convention Center in Oklahoma City. – KGP*

*Hungry for more news? In our upcoming September 2003 issue, learn about how OKDHS works with the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and other partners to feed the hungry in Oklahoma.*



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Howard H. Hendrick, Director  
*Department of Human Services*

George Earl Johnson Jr.  
*Director of Communications*

Alice Carrillo  
*Publications Section Supervisor*

Bob Ferguson  
*Print Shop Supervisor*

**Editorial Team:**

Kevan Goff-Parker, Editor

Dustin Pyeatt, Associate Editor

Douglas Doe, Associate Editor

Stephanie Bond, Publications Editor

Carla Garrett, Office Manager

Casey Harvey, Asst. Office Manager

Tony Hennigh, Graphic Artist

Jim Gumm, Photographer

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