



The Oklahoma Department of Human Services

Nurses and Home Health Workers Gather for Conference

Nearly 150 nurses and home health staff from across the state met for the annual DHS Conference on Long Term Nursing Care, Oct. 3-5 at the Holiday Inn, Norman.

"We are very pleased with this years conference," said Norma Goff, Programs Administrator. "These conferences are an excellent way for our nurses, not only to discuss better ways of delivering services, but to network with each other and exchange ideas."

Speakers for the conference included: author, lecturer and counselor Doug Manning who spoke about grief and the healing power of listening; psychiatrist Dr. Deborah Jennings who

spoke about referring seniors for inpatient psychiatric care; financial consultant and BancOklahoma Investment Center Assistant Vice President Jennifer Weinland who spoke about financial issues related to aging; and Holistic Dimensions director Bren Barrie who spoke about designing a nutritionally fit lifestyle.

The second day, those at the conference attended their choice of breakout sessions, with topics including planning for retirement, Parkinson's diagnosis and treatment, ovarian cancer research and osteoporosis.

The event closed with an awards banquet and luncheon. Control Clerk of the Year honors went to Yvonne Waggoner,

Oklahoma County 55-B. Also honored in the field of excellent control clerks were, Elaine Branham, Pawnee County, Vivian Benge, Cleveland County, Mary Rich, Pontotoc County, Connie Miller, Sequoyah County and Tracy Easley, Osage County.

Receiving the award for Social Worker of the Year was Rita Pruitt, Marshall County. Also honored in the field of social work were Janet Lowe, Kay County, Jane Flippen, Stephens County, Asya Alaleem, Oklahoma County 55-B, Nelson Bewley, Sequoyah County and Ruth Williams, Osage County.

Renee Foust, Sequoyah County, was named Long Term Care Nurse of the Year and Lea Ann Cook, Area V, was named Area Nurse of the Year. Other

*See Nurses
page 2*



From left, Area Nurse of the Year - Lee Ann Cook, Area V; Long-Term Care Nurse of the Year - Renee Foust, Sequoyah County; Control Clerk of the Year - Yvonne Waggoner, Oklahoma County 55-B; and Social Worker of the Year - Rita Pruitt, Marshall County.

ASD Project Gets Research Institute Attention

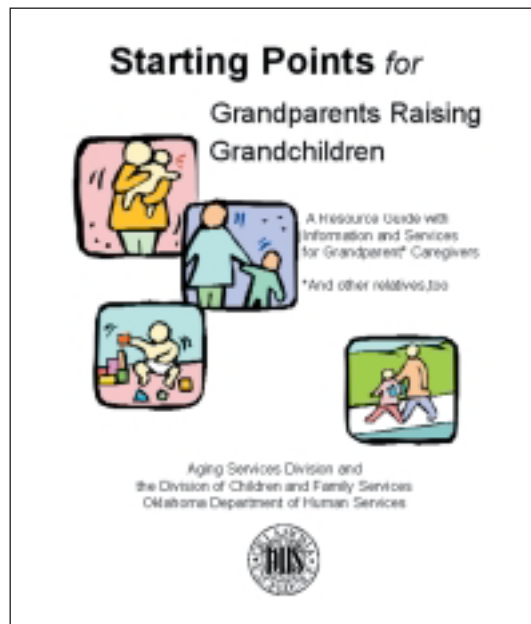
A project in the DHS Aging Services Division has attracted the attention of a prestigious Washington, D.C., research institute which plans to visit the state to find out more.

The Urban Institute will have staff members in Oklahoma in mid-November to review the development and operation of the Grandparents Initiative project.

Oklahoma is one of six states UI researchers have chosen to visit under a contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to study alternative kinship care programs nationwide.

The other five states are California, Florida, Colorado, Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

Roy Keen, ASD Division



Grandparents Handbook

Administrator, said, "The Grandparents Initiative has been a tremendous help to the growing number of grandparents - and other relatives - who

find themselves at a later stage of life in the position of again raising children."

The initiative began four years ago as the "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference." The project now includes annual conferences in Oklahoma City and Tulsa; grants for establishment of local support groups for grandparents and other relatives as parents - with funding from a grant from the Brookdale Foundation; and creation and updating of a Grandparents'

Handbook in conjunction with the Division of Children and Family Services and the Family Support Services Division.

Researchers from The Urban Institute will meet with administrators, supervisors and workers in Aging Services, Family Support Services and Child Welfare, as well as with clients.

The institute is a nonpartisan, nonprofit economic and social policy research organization established in 1968.

The Urban Institute website is at www.urban.org.

2000 Statewide Outreach Award



photo by Jim Gumm

Carolyn Bryan, Associate Director for Field Operations, shows the 2000 Statewide Outreach Award presented to the Department of Human Services for its Medicaid Outreach program. The award was presented by the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy for DHS efforts beginning in 1999 to reach an estimated 200,000 Oklahoma children not then enrolled in the SoonerCare program. This unprecedented initiative laid the groundwork for a variety of outreach activities statewide. As a result of the combined efforts, the number of children insured by SoonerCare increased by 32 percent.

Nurses from page 1

nurses honored for outstanding work were, Donna Munyon, Garfield County, Connie Lutonsky, Caddo County, Debbie Thompson, Oklahoma County 55-A, Barbara Lanning, Marshall County and Ruth Hale, Washington County.

Directors Message



Shortly, amidst all the speed and noise of the holidays, we will stop. We will sit down with our family and friends. We may bow our heads; we may raise our arms and eyes; or we may just reflect in silence.

Then, we will give thanks.

Each year when I pause to reflect on the things for which I'm thankful, I see

a longer and longer list. In the last couple of years, my list has not just increased; it has been multiplied by dozens of shared feelings, friends, successes and challenges.

Being your director has taught me much. I am closer to the hardest problems facing thousands of Oklahomans. But it has been a great opportunity to witness hope first hand. You have shown me that our shared diligence matters, and together we are crafting solutions to these challenges, one neighborhood, one family, one consumer, one senior, and one child at a time.

I am thankful for each of the employees of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. Each of us plays a part in seeing that Oklahomans in need will also have much for which to give thanks.

On Thanksgiving, when Tracy and I sit down with our children, our thoughts will include you, your families and the thousands of other families we have collectively helped. My prayer is that each of us will experience God's hope, His peace, and a safe, Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Howard H. Hendricks".

ADvantage Program Provides Dignity

Since its inception in 1994, the ADvantage Home and Community-Based Waiver program has not only saved the state nearly \$75 million, it has provided nearly 16,000 Oklahomans with an alternative to nursing home care.

The ADvantage program provides in-home services to older Oklahomans and adults with physical disabilities who are eligible for nursing facility care under Medicaid guidelines.

"The ADvantage program is one of the most wonderful things for the elderly and physically disabled," said Dea Younger, Long-Term Care Nurse Supervisor, Comanche County. "It gives people a better quality of life at home with their families."

The average Medicaid cost of nursing home care is more than \$11,500 a year per person, versus \$7,200 a year per person for in-home care through ADvantage. That's a savings of more than \$4,300 a year per person. Less than 35 percent of those participating in the ADvantage program eventually enter a nursing home.

The ADvantage program is funded through a partnership between the state and federal government and administered through a partnership between the Department of Human Services Aging Services Division, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority and the Long-Term Care Authorities of Tulsa and Enid.

Group Home Supervisor Has Big Family, Heart to Match

by Dustin Pyeatt

She speaks of her girls like any mother would. The look in her eyes and the concern in her voice are evidence that she cares for them very much.

"The girls in this home are as ordinary as any girl. They need love, support and guidance because too often they have been overlooked."

And even though she's not really their mother, she's the closest thing some have ever known.

Dianne McDaniel has been supervisor of the Deborah Roth Group Home for girls in Oklahoma City for more than a year and an employee of the Department of Human Services 20 years.

McDaniel began her career in child welfare and joined the foster care unit where she recruited and trained foster parents and certified foster homes. She served as a child welfare specialist at the Pauline E. Mayer Shelter in Oklahoma City prior to moving to the group home.

The home was started in 1970 and provides long-term group home care for girls. The large two-story home accepts teen girls who have been adjudicated deprived and placed in DHS custody. The home has eight residents ranging in age from 13 to 18 and nine staff members.

"Success comes from surrounding yourself with good



Dianne McDaniel

photo by Jim Gunn

"He (my father) told me that I could be anything I wanted to be and made me feel like I could. I try to pass this on to the girls at the group home."

people," said McDaniel. "I've had very good supervisors who have trained me in the field of social work. Our success at the Roth home comes from having a good staff of people committed to children, not for the pay, but for the reward of seeing a child blossom into a healthy adult."

McDaniel has a special bond with the girls at the group home. She was born to a 14-year old teenager in Arkansas who gave her up for adoption. She was placed in the care of the nuns at St. Benedictine Catholic orphanage in Little Rock where she stayed for 18 months until adopted.

"Back then people didn't think

adoption was such a neat thing," said McDaniel. "I remember my grandmother told my parents that since I was adopted they had no way of knowing how I'd turn out. My father told her that they could have a child and still not know. He told me that I could be anything that I wanted to be and made me feel like I could. I try to pass this on to the girls at the group home."

McDaniel is a member of St. John Missionary Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, where she works with the church's social service commission in helping families in distress and need. She serves as liaison from Delta Sigma Theta sorori-

ty to the League of Women Voters, president of her neighborhood association and PTA member at her girls' school.

"I want community service to become a part of the girls' lives," said McDaniel. "I want them to look for every opportunity to give back. Even if it's just visiting an elderly neighbor."

Being in charge of such a large family may seem daunting, but McDaniel says it has its rewards. "When a kid gets a twinkle in their eye, when they accomplish in school, tidy their rooms, cook a meal, walk away from a fight, all the small things that any normal mother would like," she said. "That's what's rewarding, the little things."

In 1997, McDaniel retired from the Army Reserve as a sergeant first class after 20 years of service to her country. During that time she served as a personnel specialist and attended inspector general school.

McDaniel received her bachelor's in home economics and early childhood education from the University of Central Oklahoma. She is currently working on her masters in family and children at UCO. After she retires, McDaniel plans to become a licensed practical counselor so she can donate her time to families in her church and community.

When she's not at school or work, McDaniel spends time with her daughter, Atiffany, 25, and her 3-year old grand daughter, Arianna.

Okmulgee County Fall Fun Festival

Okmulgee County custody children, their caregivers and county office staff joined together in October for the DHS Fall Fun Festival.

"The Fall Fun Festival is a great thing because it gives us the opportunity to spend some time with the kids that isn't directly case work related, we just got to have good old fashioned fun," said Jawanna Wheeler, Permanency Planning.

The children participated in sack races and played horseshoes, hay scrabble and football. They were treated to a petting zoo, pony rides, clowns, hotdogs and cotton candy. Representatives from the Okmulgee Police and Fire departments and the National Guard talked with children about safety and prevention.

The children were also given the opportunity to have their

portraits taken by a professional photographer. Exhibitors at the festival included CASA, CROOKS Mental Health and Deep Fork Community Action.

"The festival is such a positive experience for our foster children and really affords our employees the opportunity to strengthen their personal relationship with the foster children, caregivers and the community," said Curt Been, Assistant County Director. "The teamwork and coordination was unbelievable. The turnout of volunteers, community participation and the children's smiles are truly what Child Welfare is about."

This is the second year Okmulgee County has sponsored this event. Last year's event, held in July, recieved an Honorable Mention Award at the DHS 2000 Quality Awards in May.



Okmulgee County DHS staff at the Fun Fest are, from left, Pat Wilson, Quannah Gee, Carolyn Herbert, Brenda Jeffries, Joyce Nation, Laura Buell, Estelita Rodriguez and Virginia Arnold.

Client Advocacy, Data Services Launch New-Tech Database

The Office of Client Advocacy, in partnership with the Data Services Division, launched the first DHS web-enabled database July 1, making OCA one of the most technologically advanced components of any agency in the state.

able to access, input and review data from any computer via the Internet.

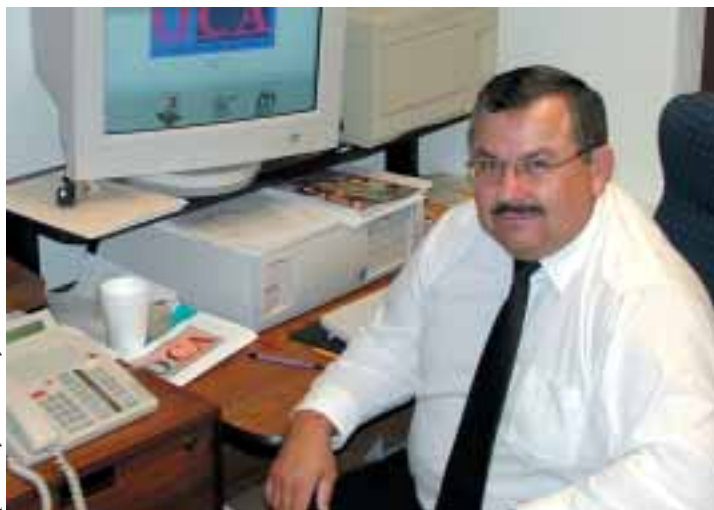
"This new database will allow the sharing of information that was not possible before," said Walter Davis, OCA supervisor and project coordinator. "With

this new database we will be able to track a case throughout the system by assigning a unique reference number for each type of client service provided."

The tracking of cases will make it easier for OCA to spot

strategies aimed at reducing caretaker misconduct. The new database features live, real-time updates 24-hours a day, allowing reports that in the past could take up to 6 months to generate to be done overnight and contain data entered as early as the previous day.

"Our partnership with OCA has produced a database that has increased security and is more accessible, user friendly and stable than the old system," said Sherri Naff, Information Systems Applications Specialist III. "This is only the first phase in our partnership with OCA. We are working together to meet their basic needs first and we have planned scheduled updates in the future." -dp



Walter Davis

With this new web-enabled database, OCA staff will be

able to track trends, conduct statistical analysis and develop proactive

Governor's Proclamation of Adoption Month in Oklahoma

WHEREAS, Oklahomans open their hearts and their homes to children and acknowledge the need for neglected, abused and abandoned children to be loved as part of a permanent, nurturing family; and

WHEREAS, more than 1,400 Oklahoma children, through no fault of their own, find themselves today in the custody of the state and assigned to foster care homes and other temporary settings; and

WHEREAS, these children eagerly await that special moment when they can join a loving adoptive family; and

WHEREAS, through the Swift Adoption program of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, more than 1,000 children in the past

year have joyously embraced and been embraced by an adoptive family; and

WHEREAS, caring and dedicated members of many groups, including the One Church One Child Board of Directors, the Casey Foundation, the Urban League of Oklahoma City, the Indian Child Welfare Association, the Oklahoma Adoption Coalition and adoptive parent support groups are working to recruit families and develop more adoptive homes for children;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Frank Keating, Governor of the State of Oklahoma, do hereby proclaim the month of November 2000 as ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH in the State of Oklahoma; and do also proclaim the week of November 19-25, 2000, as ADOPTION WEEK in the State of Oklahoma.



Officially Open in Rogers County



photo by George Johnson

Members of the Claremore Chamber of Commerce, legislators and state officials take part in the Oct. 19 ribbon cutting ceremony for the building which houses DHS Rogers County Office and the Office of Juvenile Affairs. From left are Rose Ann McCaw, Century 21 Realty; Marv Gregory, Copy Express; Don Freed, 1st Bank of Oklahoma; Rob Deweese, Bank of Chelsea, Sequoyah Branch; Tracie LaCroix, Office of Juvenile Affairs; Maggie Box, DHS Rogers County Director; Representative Tad Jones, Claremore; Representative Joe Eddins, Vinita; DHS Area V Director Judy Wyatt; and Larry Rahmeier, attorney. The building was completed in July and provides 13,600 sq. ft of space for 58 DHS workers. The Office of Juvenile Affairs occupies an additional 1,400 sq. ft.

Rebecca Thulin Heads Ottawa County Office

Rebecca Thulin, a 10-year veteran of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, was named Director of the DHS office in Ottawa County.

"I'm very pleased to welcome Rebecca to the Area V leadership team," said Judy Wyatt, Area V Director. "She has been a champion of families and children throughout her career and will continue to work hard for the people of Ottawa County."

Thulin began her DHS career as a Family Support worker in Ottawa County. She served as a Child Welfare worker before being promoted to Child Welfare Supervisor.

"I am very excited about this opportunity," said Thulin. "I hope to work with the staff here

to ensure that we continue to provide excellent services to the citizens of Ottawa County and maintain an environment where people feel comfortable seeking services from DHS."

Thulin graduated from Miami High School. She earned her bachelor's degree in Social Work from Pittsburg State University, Kansas, and her master's in Social Work from the University of Oklahoma.

Thulin serves on the Board of Directors for the Community Crisis Center, Inc. and works with the Partnership for Ottawa County Youth.

Thulin's husband, Russell, is an automotive technician. They have two children, Jared, 15, and Matthew, 11.

Harkreader Named Social Services Specialist

Barbara Harkreader, a 6-year veteran of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, was named Social Services Specialist IV for Sequoyah County.

Harkreader has served as a social worker, child welfare worker and family support day-care liaison.

Harkreader graduated from Merced High School, Merced, California. She earned her vocational nursing degree from Merced College and bachelor's degree in human services from Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, Texas.

Harkreader's husband of 26 years, Glenn, is retired from the military. They have two sons, Bobby, 13, and Mitch, 16.

Gene Holliman Named Hughes County Director

Gene Holliman, a 27-year veteran of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, was named Director of the DHS office in Hughes County.

"Gene has dedicated much of his time to the people of Hughes County," said Alice Foran, Area IV Director. "His experience and commitment to public service make him a welcome addition to the Area IV



Gene Holliman

management team."

Holliman has served as a Social Services Specialist in Seminole County and as a Social Services Supervisor in Hughes County. Before coming to DHS, Holliman worked for the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety.

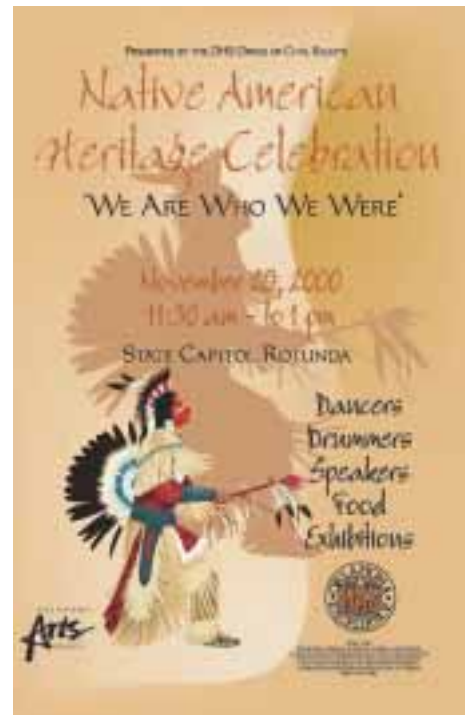
"I am excited about the opportunity that I have been given," said Holliman. "My goal for Hughes County is to ensure that when someone comes to our office for services, they leave with the satisfaction that the staff have done everything possible to see that their needs have been met, either through available DHS programs or community resources. I also want our community partners to know that we are here as

resources for them as well."

Holliman received his associate's degree in Business Administration from Eastern Oklahoma State College, Wilburton, and attended East Central University, Ada. He is a city councilman and vice mayor in Holdenville.

His wife, Donna, is an administrative assistant at the Hughes County Health Department. They have two grown children, Angie, 28, and Todd, 25.

Native American Heritage Celebration



Worker's Son, 21, Has Heart Transplant

Marcus Tyler, 21, of Enid has recently undergone heart transplant surgery in Oklahoma City. He is the son of Elizabeth Ann Speight, a Social Services Supervisor in the Garfield County Office and a DHS employee for 14 years.

The 2 1/2 hour transplant surgery was done Nov. 1 at Integris Baptist Medical Center, and twelve days later Tyler was doing well.

The surgery was needed because of a rare heart condition, dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) which weakens the heart muscle. His father died from DCM 10 year ago.

Tyler graduated from Enid

High School in 1998 and is a student at Northern Oklahoma College in Enid. He is a member of Progressive Missionary Baptist Church and active in the men's brotherhood group.

Cost of the surgery was more than \$200,000. Contributions can be made to the Marcus Tyler Heart Transplant Fund at any Bank of Oklahoma branch.

Rev. Ronnie D. Jacobs, Pastor of Progressive Missionary Baptist Church, said donations could also be mailed to the church at 702 N Walnut, Enid, OK 73701. Rev. Jacobs' wife is Karen Jacobs, special assistant to DHS Director Howard H. Hendrick.

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