



# *Empowerment*



**Through**



# *Employment*



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## The Mission of DSS

“To meet the needs of Dutchess County’s dependent population as provided by NYS Social Services Law in a courteous, fair and efficient manner with the aim of restoring each beneficiary to maximum independence.”



Dutchess County Social Services 60 Market Street

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### Gail Webster

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## Dutchess County Legislature

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**Alison MacAvery,**  
Vice-Chairman

**Angela Flesland**

**Suzanne Horn**

**Marge Horton**

**Dan Kuffner**

**Steve White**



Eastern Dutchess Government Center



## A Message From County Executive, William R. Steinhaus

**T**hroughout 2008 and continuing today, our Department of Social Services' employees have experienced first hand the results of hard economic impacts in the region. The staff deserves our collective thanks and appreciation for the challenges they encounter daily. As families and adult needs increase, our employees balance heavy workloads as they serve our residents.

The hard work and dedication of the DSS team is evident in their accomplishments. In 2008, the Children's Services Unit completed 34 adoptions. The Child Support Enforcement Unit collected more than \$31 million dollars, nearly a 6% increase over the prior year. HEAP benefits were almost \$1.5 million for the

2007-2008 season. Eight hundred fifty families received assistance with subsidized low income day care program serving more than 1,400 children.

New York State has also recognized the accomplishments of our DSS team. In 2008, our Adult Abuse unit received a NYS OCFS Certificate of Recognition of Outstanding PSA Casework/ Supervision and "Going the Extra Mile." New York State recognized the hard work of the Food Stamps Unit with a bonus award to increase investment in the program.

Also in 2008, DSS opened its first satellite service center at our renovated "green" Eastern Dutchess Government Center (EDGC) in Millbrook. This new facility offers our residents in the eastern portion of the

county an opportunity to make an appointment with DSS for a variety of services including benefit applications for food stamps, child care, temporary assistance and Medicaid, all in a warm, collegial setting closer to home. Additionally, residents can also visit Department of Health, Office of Probation and Community Corrections, Youth Services Unit or the outpatient clinics for mental health or substance abuse services at the EDGC.

As you read through this report, you will be impressed by the many ways our DSS employees continue to strive to help our residents outside of their traditional job responsibilities. DSS employees have dedicated time to assisting residents completing their Earned Income Tax Credit

through VITA; offering 24 TANF youngsters weekend computer training; or completing DCC Spanish 101 on-site during their personal hours and supporting various community organizations both with their time and monetary generosity.

As we move through these difficult times, we are very grateful for accomplishments and dedication of this department and as well as their community partners as they work to help our residents achieve and maintain self-sufficiency and safe homes. Please join me in thanking them.

*William R. Steinhaus*

William R. Steinhaus  
County Executive



## A Message From Commissioner, Robert B. Allers

I find it difficult to review our accomplishments for 2008 at the same time we are dealing with the realities of 2009. In some ways 2008 seems like a long ago memory. The needs of our citizens, our staff and our partner agencies are becoming more pressing and our resources are becoming increasingly strained.

However, our highlighted story for 2008 shows the vision and thoughtfulness of our staff at Dutchess County Department of Social Services. Our belief that a job and a chance are two ingredients that lead to success is certainly as important today as it was in 1996 when we started our welfare reform work programs. The basics then are still true now. Education, work, transportation and child care

were the core elements of support that we provided then and remain our core supports to help our citizens during the stressful downsizing of our economy.

We also should never forget our successes during these tough times. Parents continue to pay more than 85 percent of child support monies owed. Our agencies collections continue to increase in this area, as they have done every year since I have had this position.

We opened with the help of our partners at Community Action Partnership, another fuel site to help persons who run out of home heating oil. Our summer youth employment funds were higher than any other year. The chambers of commerce, the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie,

Astor, Hudson River Housing as well as many of our other partners, served more persons than the year before.

In 2008, like 2009, we were presented with challenges that we have not seen in the last 20 years. However, with our staff and our partners, we feel confident that we will assist Dutchess County residents in overcoming whatever the economy throws at us.

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2008 Annual Report entitled "Empowerment through Employment." Feel free to comment on this report.

*Robert B. Allers*



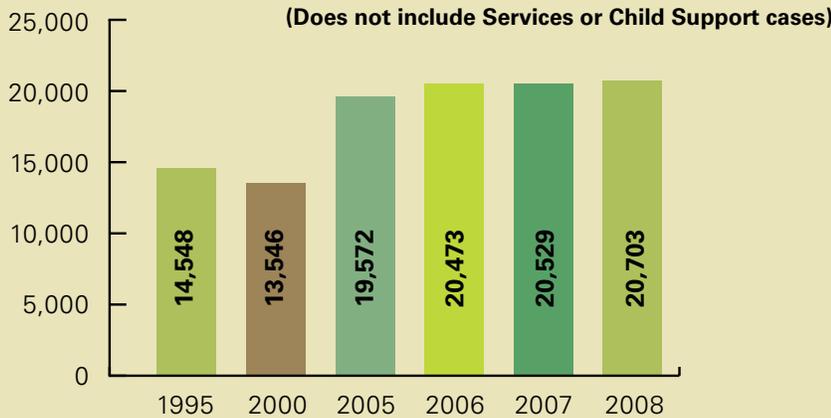
# Organizational Chart



## Goals and Objectives of Dutchess County Social Services

- I. Provide assistance to eligible individuals and families while assisting clients to achieve their full potential.
  - A. Conduct thorough eligibility investigations;
  - B. Apply rules, regulations and local policies objectively, consistently and uniformly;
  - C. Provide clients with all of the benefits to which they are entitled;
  - D. Work cooperatively, as divisions, to meet the separate needs of clients while preserving the integrity of each individual;
  - E. Maintain professional standards in all contacts.
- II. Develop and make available to families and individuals, services that will strengthen the family unit, encourage stability in living arrangements, and provide for specialized care.
- III. Provide protective services to children and adults at risk.
- IV. Provide adequate information to the general public regarding our programs and services and maintain adequate knowledge of community services to act as a referral source.

### CASELOAD SNAPSHOT



### TOP MEDICAID VENDORS IN THE COUNTY

Medicaid payments to local businesses in Dutchess County serve as an economic stimulus and multiplier. Payments in 2008 include:

Hudson Health Plan .....	\$13,866,470	NYSARC .....	\$8,718,220
Taconic DDSO .....	\$12,891,088	Lutheran Center .....	\$8,310,715
MVP .....	\$12,121,708	Greystone .....	\$7,145,170
Vassar Brothers Hospital .....	\$11,678,646	Wellcare .....	\$7,037,210
St. Francis Hospital .....	\$10,642,239	The Pines at Poughkeepsie .....	\$6,368,276
Wingate .....	\$10,642,239	Ferncliff .....	\$6,345,668
DC Department of Health .....	\$9,660,285		
Rehab Programs .....	\$8,808,248		

### TOP NON-MEDICAID VENDORS IN THE COUNTY

Children's Home of Poughkeepsie .....	\$5,002,755
Astor Home for Children .....	\$2,643,799
LaSalle School .....	\$2,082,247
Hudson River Lodging .....	\$1,848,094
Central Hudson .....	\$1,674,820
St. Anne's Institute .....	\$1,669,688
Abbott House .....	\$1,354,122
DC Probation .....	\$1,276,425
DC Office for the Aging .....	\$1,179,593
Family Services, Inc. ....	\$1,041,312

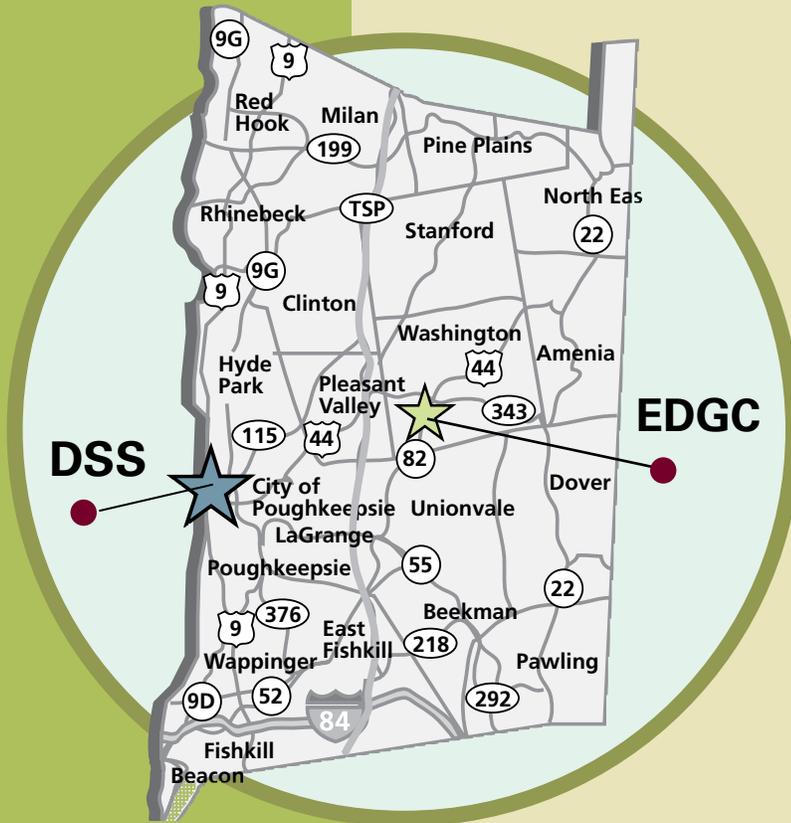
### ACTIVE INDIVIDUALS AS OF 12/31/08

Ages	Numbers	Ages	Numbers
0-4 .....	5,688	31-40 .....	4,693
5-12 .....	7,055	41-50 .....	5,225
13-16 .....	3,003	51-55 .....	2,123
17-18 .....	1,463	56-60 .....	1,602
19-22 .....	2,380	61-64 .....	1,170
23-30 .....	4,357	Over 65 .....	6,209

### ACTIVE CASES BY ZIP CODE

Amenia .....	205
Annandale .....	3
Bangall .....	0
Barrytown .....	10
Beacon .....	2,588
Billings .....	4
Castle Point .....	1
Chelsea .....	18
Clinton Corners .....	149
Dover Plains .....	598
Fishkill .....	763
Glenham .....	28
Holmes .....	127
Hopewell Junction .....	941
Hughsonville .....	22
Hyde Park .....	1,378
Lagrangeville .....	316
Milan .....	40
Millbrook .....	337
Millerton .....	306
New Hamburg .....	18
Pawling .....	370
Pine Plains .....	262
Pleasant Valley .....	602
Poughkeepsie	
City .....	10,248
Town .....	3,098
Poughquag .....	268
Red Hook .....	594
Rhinebeck .....	767
Rhinecliff .....	30
Salt Point .....	170
Staatsburg .....	456
Stanfordville .....	185
Stormville .....	142
Tivoli .....	163
Verbank .....	68
Wappingers Falls .....	2,502
Wassaic .....	169
Wingdale .....	352
Out of County .....	962

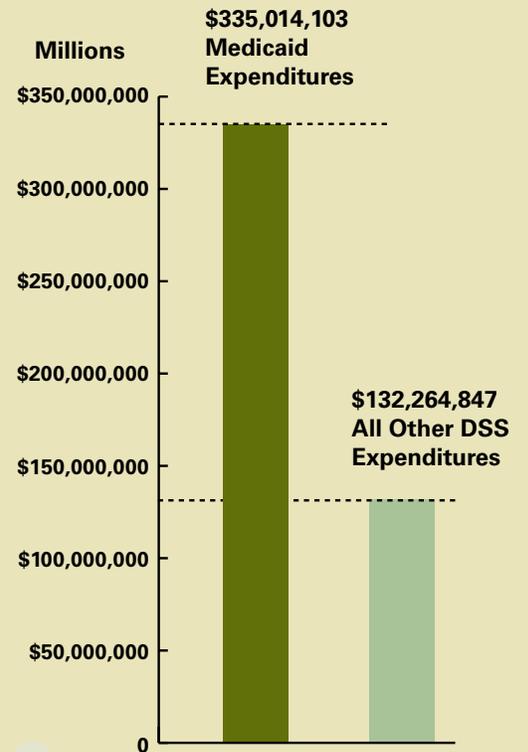
# 2008 FACTS AT A GLANCE



## DSS EMPLOYEES

# 368

## 2008 PLANNED GROSS EXPENDITURES



## 2008 MODIFIED BUDGET

	Appropriations	Revenues
Administration (Salaries, fringe, materials, other) .....	\$29,920,275 .....	\$19,290,798
Non-secure Detention .....	\$1,395,000 .....	\$697,500
Day Care .....	\$5,302,907 .....	\$5,067,907
Services for Recipients .....	\$6,781,196 .....	\$1,576,866
Medicaid – Local Payments .....	\$5,921,303 .....	\$6,063,803
Medicaid – MMIS Payments .....	\$39,223,419 .....	\$8,192,958
Family Assistance .....	\$7,806,634 .....	\$9,140,782
Foster Care .....	\$26,634,028 .....	\$18,324,627
Juvenile Delinquents/PINS .....	\$340,000 .....	\$371,500
State Training Schools .....	\$2,385,663 .....	\$2,000
Safety Net .....	\$5,730,000 .....	\$3,634,500
HEAP .....	\$481,823 .....	\$856,623
Emergency Aid to Adults .....	\$95,000 .....	\$90,500
Food Assistance .....	\$294,602 .....	\$268,102
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$132,311,850 .....</b>	<b>\$73,578,466</b>

## ACTIVE CASES AS OF 12/31/08

Food Stamps .....	6,471
HEAP .....	2,294
Medicaid .....	9,048
Medicaid SSI .....	4,707
Family Health Plus .....	1,463
Family Assistance .....	618
Safety Net Assistance .....	585
Services .....	1,747

# Eastern Dutchess Government Center Opens

The Eastern Dutchess Government Center (EDGC) in Millbrook, NY opened to the public on August 11, 2008. Residents will be able to take advantage of a variety of county services and programs at the EDGC, including immunization clinics, home care and maternal child and health programs offered by the Dutchess County Health Department. Continuing day treatment, clinical services for mental health and substance abuse services will be provided through the Dutchess County Department of Mental Hygiene. The Dutchess County Department of Social Services will be available to provide access to food stamps, child care, and Medicaid eligibility services. Youth and parent group programs and administrative services will be provided by the Dutchess County Probation Department and Community Corrections and the Youth Bureau will offer counseling services.



**Jacky Cooper**  
Social Welfare Manager I



**Karen DeMarco**  
Social Welfare Worker II



**Lorraine Aiello**  
Social Welfare Worker II



**Paige Condon**  
Senior Office Assistant



The Eastern Dutchess Government Center (EDGC) in Millbrook conveniently provides access to valuable services for residents of the central and eastern portions of the county.

## Dutchess County Social Services Goes Green

On April 28, 2008, Dutchess County Executive, William R. Steinhaus announced the launch of a new "Dutchess Goes Green" information section on the County's website, [www.dutchessny.gov](http://www.dutchessny.gov). This was a product of the County's internal "Green Work Group" created by County Executive Steinhaus in 2007. The web pages provide a way for people to share information and learn more about green behavior, and also provide a place to find out the newest initiatives undertaken by County Government to be more environmentally friendly.

The Dutchess County Department of Social Services has seen several changes that reflect the County's "Going Green" initiative. The new purchasing policy requires products used on a daily basis to clean and maintain our facility be "green" or "environmentally preferred." The lighting fixtures in our building have been converted to handle more energy efficient bulbs. The DSS staff that is stationed at the Eastern Dutchess Government site in Millbrook has benefited from the many environmentally friendly decisions made in the renovations of that office.

The building was renovated to meet LEED Silver Certification standards. This includes the use of natural light, the installation of geothermal heating and cooling as an alternative energy source, and a roof design that uses high solar reflectance to reduce cooling costs in the summer.

### 2008 Annual Report Goes Green

In keeping with Dutchess County's "Green Initiative," the 2008 Annual Report was printed using paper from a company that has been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. Products carrying the FSC label are independently certified to assure customers that they come from forests that are managed to meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations.

A decision was also made to print the 2008 Annual Report on lighter weight paper to help lower production costs in these difficult economic times.

# Employee of the Month Award Winners 2008

This is the 20th year that the Employee Recognition Committee has been handing out the **Employee of the Month Award** to employees nominated by their peers. On the first Thursday of every month, the Committee, made up of members from various units, meets to read over nominations and vote the following month's award recipient. Each recipient receives a DSS golf shirt and free parking behind the building for that month.



**January**

**Lucille Coxen**  
(Adult Services)

"Vigilant in her duties and always goes out of her way for her clients."



**February**

**Anthony Torres**  
(Adult Services)

"A team player who is always flexible for the needs of his clients."



**March**

**Lisa Collins**  
(Adult Services)

"A conscientious APS worker who often goes above and beyond expectations."



**April**

**Mary Beth Southworth**  
(Adult Services)

"A seasoned and dedicated worker."



**May**

**Jessica Nelson**  
(Accounting)

"Helpful, respectful and understanding."



**June**

**Natasha West**  
(Adult Services)

"She has a professional attitude and often volunteers to help out where needed."



**July**

**Sharon Tornatore**  
(Children's Services)

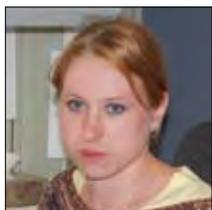
"Always willing to go the extra mile. She often rearranges her own personal schedule to meet the unexpected needs of the children she works with."



**August**

**George Joseph**  
(Intake)

"George is a team player. He is helpful to clients and co-workers alike. He is always polite."



**September**

**Darcy Levy**  
(Medicaid)

"She is a great help to her co-workers. She is always willing to help in whatever way she can."



**October**

**Reggie Duncan**  
(Special Investigations Unit)

"She is a very hard working, caring and considerate person."



**November**

**Karen Leonard**  
(Administration)

"She is always willing to lend a helping hand."



**December**

**Kevin McDonald**  
(Employment)

"He is always willing to help and he is always pleasant to deal with."

## 2008 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

- Opened a satellite office at the Eastern Dutchess Government Center in Millbrook, New York. We have two workers, one supervisor and one support staff at this location. Clients are seen by appointment only.
- Sponsored 24 children at our computer training weekend.
- Hosted our second annual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site for free tax returns.



### Employee Appreciation Day

The 26th Annual Employee Appreciation Day was held on Tuesday, November 18 in the Employee Lounge. This year's theme, "A Homecoming-Tailgate Party" had employees wear their favorite team jersey and had staff participating in a game to see who could name the most "team nicknames" from a list of local high schools, colleges and professional teams.

This year's unit contest had each unit design a miniature "homecoming float." As usual, the creative DSS staff far surpassed expectations and presented the judges with a very difficult decision.

Playing off of this year's "Homecoming" theme, invitations were also extended to retired management staff who had in the past helped to sponsor our Employee Appreciation Day events. Those who accepted the invitation were seated in the "Alumni Section," and staff enjoyed "chatting and catching up" with retired colleagues.

Hot dogs with various toppings, potato chips, ice cream sodas, and homemade cookies were enjoyed by all. Each staff member was asked to donate a non-perishable food items to our own "Elizabeth Karlson Food Bank."

### Foster and Adoptive Family Picnic

*By Donna Robinson and Celeste Ferguson*

"Before we came, we didn't know what to expect. There's such a big age difference between all the children and the older ones didn't think there would be anything for them to do. But they all had so much fun with the activities... they didn't want to leave." Regarding the Foster Family Picnic held in August in Bowdoin Park, new foster parent, Kim S. shared, "We all loved the treats you provided for the kids to do. And for me, it was great to talk with other foster families, and to share our experiences."

Foster families are unique. They provide a safe home, love, and a sense of belonging, while simultaneously expecting these little

ones to leave their home and go back to their "real" families. Yet in their uniqueness, foster parents are very much the same. The specifics of their placements may differ, but foster families have so much in common, including the need for support. The annual Foster and Adoptive Family Picnic provides a day of fun activities, great food, and terrific fellowship and many foster families look forward to this all year.

What made this year's picnic unique? It could be **Shannon Tait's** singing and musical activities, or **Scott Brod's** (son of **Donna Brod**) exciting magic show. Perhaps it was **Dave Garcia** and his team's organized sporting activities. Without a doubt, the children thoroughly enjoyed stamping, painting and stenciling their own tee-shirts, led by the very capable and artistic **Linda Orlando, Ashley Tilton, and Andrea Swart**. Foster parent, Trifene T. shared with us, "It was so exciting for the kids and it made them very happy. They enjoyed the food and the ice cream and all the activities, especially for the different age groups. We all enjoyed socializing with others. I really didn't expect so many people!"

Child Welfare staff want to thank DSS staff for supporting our effort through our bake sale and 50/50 raffle. While money is budgeted for the picnic through the agency, there are many costs beyond the budgeted amount and these fundraisers help us in this effort. This year thanks to you, we raised \$214 through our bake sale and over \$200 in the 50/50 raffle. Thank you to all who baked and to everyone who helped us raise this money. The 30 foster parents and 76 children who attended this year's picnic especially appreciate it.

We also want to thank the many individual staff persons who spent the day with us to create a terrific day for the children. Commissioner **Robert B. Allers, Peter Simon** and **Matt Singleton** "slaved over the open coals" to cook up a feast for our families. **Sharon Avila, Reggie Duncan, Loida Morales, and Liz Piraino** planned the food and shopping list while **Sharon** and **Reggie**

*Continued on page 8...*

## Highlights of the Year

...Continued from page 7

did the shopping. **Nancy Jordan, Karen Leonard, Pat Janos** and **Clayton Herriman** shared their talents and day as well. This picnic team, including Child Welfare and CPS staff too numerous to name, all worked very hard to make this event a success and a highlight of Summer 2008!

### Elizabeth Ann Karlson Food Bank

The Elizabeth Ann Karlson Food Pantry at the Department of Social Services was originally started in 1996 by **Pat Daby** in memory of **Elizabeth Ann Karlson**, a DSS employee. **Pat** recognized a need in the agency to serve clients that could not readily get food stamps or who had run out of food. For 13 years **Pat** almost single handily ran the food pantry which included meat and many items **Pat** made herself.

The food pantry serves clients across all of the DSS program areas. They consist of the homeless and families that have no food for various reasons. At times people applying for food stamps late in the day can receive food while awaiting next day approval. The recession has caused an increase in demand at local food pantries; many have limited access to once a month. Recent budget cuts and increased demand have caused a reduction in local food pantry inventories.

When **Pat** felt she needed to step down from the operation of the pantry, **Reggie Duncan** and **Jennifer Bixby** were asked to take over. The food pantry was moved to the basement and the freezer was removed. **Reggie** and **Jennifer** are very grateful for the support they have received in keeping the food pantry operational. Employee donations are the key to this success. In fact, we now have diapers and baby formula. **Reggie** and **Jennifer** would like to especially thank **Clayton Herriman** for his time and support in creating space for our food pantry.

Food is available from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. most days. If you would like a tour, just ask **Reggie** or **Jennifer** and they will gladly take you to the pantry. Donations of non-perishable items are always welcome. If you have a donation, feel free to drop it off with **Reggie Duncan, 3035** or **Jennifer Bixby, 3324**.

Finally we would like to thank everyone that has helped support the food pantry whether it was through donations, 50/50 raffles or just buying a brownie at our bake sale. Your support is appreciated, thank you.

## Staff Honored for Service

Awards for service were presented by Commissioner Allers at the November 18, 2009 Employee Appreciation Day to the following employees:



**Ann Woolsey:**  
25 Years



**Toni McKenzie:**  
20 Years



**Geetha Prabhakara:**  
15 Years



**Aziz Fahmy:**  
10 Years



**Josia Orende:**  
5 Years

### 25 Years

Kathleen Cole  
Susan Nott  
Theresa Rosencrans  
Ann Woolsey

### 20 Years

Debra Bonnerwith  
Tammy Chenevert  
Ila Gupta  
Karen Hansen  
Toni McKenzie  
Ann Novicki  
Maria Riccobono  
Melissa Robinson  
Kimberly Smith  
Judy Valentino  
Patrizia Weeks  
Lorett Wheeler

### 15 Years

Barbara Austin  
Nancy Corman  
Ellen Gander  
Linda Linenbroker  
Brenda Maeder  
Irene Maiolo  
Geetha Prabhakara  
Deborah Robinton  
Diana Smith  
Mary Southworth

### 10 Years

Gail Bertsche  
Lisa Collins  
Aziz Fahmy  
Sheree Gover  
Patricia Janos  
Ann Sharma  
Natasha West

### 5 Years

Daniel Bianchi  
Jennifer Bixby  
Tina Bocchino  
Sharon Burt  
Maria Coleman  
Tracy Connelly  
Deborah Fox  
Carol Frye  
Nancy Hauser  
Peter Helion  
Gweneth Hobson  
Jamie Jacques  
Theresa Krulish  
Robin Mallory  
Lisa Mazzacone  
Barbara Milera  
Christine Nastasi  
Josia Orende  
Diane Phillips  
Carol Sardo  
Catherine Schouten  
Heather Stickle  
Andrea Swart  
Marsha Thomas  
Ashley Tilton  
Jacqueline Tortora  
Patricia Trepapi  
Brenda Urbanski  
Deborah Wagner



**Deborah Fox:**  
5 Years

## 2008 EMPLOYEE GENEROSITY

In 2008, Dutchess County Department of Social Services continued to support local, state and national organizations.

### The Gift of Giving



**Accounting Unit** collected \$500 for St. Jude's Hospital. They also collected presents for the "littles" of Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

**Administration, Adult Services and SIU staff (Christopher Corman, Robin West)** volunteered as Team Captains for the March of Dimes, March for Babies campaign.

**Adult & Family Services** staff members were involved in a spelling bee for Literacy Connections.

Participated in the March of Dimes walk.

Held a bake sale to benefit the homeless. Also held a bake sale with proceeds going to their "Emergency Fund."

**Children's Services** once again staff members collected hats, mittens and toys to donate to children in Foster Care. Staff members from other parts of the agency, foster parents, and other members of the community also generously donated items and their time to this cause.

**Children's Services** staff sponsored a family for Christmas, providing them with gifts and food and all the makings for a family celebration.

Staff held a bake sale to benefit the Foster and Adoptive Family Picnic.

**Preventive Unit** in partnership with CPS, put together and distributed food baskets for several families, with

turkeys and all the fixings for complete Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners.

**Child Support Enforcement Unit** had a hat/mitten tree for the Grace Smith House.

Workers helped **John Flow-ers** to collect, wrap and distribute stuffed animals to the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie, nursing homes and hospitals.

Individual workers contributed to Toys for Tots and the Salvation Army angel Tag Tree.

**Food Stamps/HEAP** Unit held a "Christmas-in-July bake sale with all proceeds going to their Adopt-A-Family program for the holiday season.

**Integrated Services Unit** Adopted four families for Christmas and collected funds for a fifth family.

Participated in the Salvation Army's Angel Tags.

Worked with Adult Protective staff bringing in slightly used, new-never used articles of clothing, shoes, etc. to distribute to applicants who needed items for job interviews, were burned out of their homes or had no other means of obtaining much needed clothing.

**Legal Services** continued supporting the Heifer Project through the "bad word" box in the unit. In 2008, the "fines" and donations allowed us to purchase a "flock of hope" and bunnies for this worthy charity.

#### Staff in the Legal Unit

continued their contributions to Smile Train as their holiday charity. Smile Train provides cleft surgery, improving smiles where people can't otherwise afford the surgery.

**Medicaid** held their second annual hot dog luncheon to benefit "Adopt A Family." Three families were adopted.

**Special Investigations Unit (SIU)** held a bake sale and 50/50 raffle to purchase a bed for a client in treatments for cancer.

Sponsored two families for Christmas.

**Janice Arico** coordinated the Toys for Tots campaign in DSS.

Held bake sales with proceeds going to the March of Dimes and Relay for Life.

#### Staff Development & Personnel

**Ted Starzyk** coordinated the Dutchess County Government Campaign which collected \$96,443 in pledges.

**Ted** also coordinated the United Way Campaign at DSS.

During Daffodil Days, \$790 was raised for the American Cancer Society.

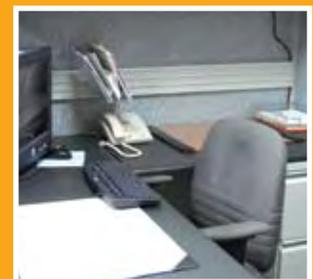
**Ted** also sold 42 bunches of anemones for the Mental Health Association.

#### Transitional Benefits

This division held several fund raisers to assist with adopting families at Christmas.

## DSS Cubicle Upgrades

In 2008, the Dutchess County Department of Social Services completed the first phase of its Unit Refurbishment Program. The plan is to select a unit in each budget year and update cubicles, wiring, desks and carpeting to provide a more professional environment for staff and customers, and to make our units handicap accessible. This also allows us to reconfigure the building's original floor plans in order to increase the number of cubicles and work spaces in each division. The Temporary Assistance Division was completed in 2008.



# 2008 COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

The Commissioner's office includes the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner for Services, Deputy Commissioner for Financial and Supportive Services, Director of Administrative Services, Staff Development Director, Confidential Administrative Assistant, Assistant to the Commissioner for Program Planning and Evaluation, and Fair Hearing Specialist. The Commissioner's office oversees the programs and operations of the department.



## Contracts, Policy and Planning

The Assistant to the Commissioner for Program Planning and Evaluation is responsible for:

- Developing all Department of Social Services plans,
- Preparing funding applications for special programs,
- Overseeing the contracts, and
- Preparing and/or responding to requests for proposals.



## Fair Hearings

Fair hearings can be requested on a denial, discontinuance or reduction of benefits or services, on matters of state policy,

employability status, method of payment of benefits or a failure of DSS to act on an application or request. Hearings are held at DSS and are presided over by a NYS Administrative Law Judge. At the hearing, DSS must justify the action it has taken. Clients can have representatives at the hearing and they can present evidence or bring witnesses. Hearings are usually held about one month after they are requested and decisions are rendered within six weeks after the hearing.

## The Fair Hearing Specialist:

- Represents DSS in administrative reviews requested by applicants or recipients, and
- Serves as liaison to the public utility companies and the American Red Cross.

## Personnel & Staff Development

The Staff Development Director has primary responsibility for ensuring the Social Services'

workforce receives the information and tools necessary to provide services to our customers in a competent, objective, and professional manner. This includes assessing, planning, delivery and scheduling training programs that meet State, Federal, and local mandates.

The Staff Development and Personnel Unit is also charged with providing Personal and Career Development for DSS staff members. Educational programs with Dutchess Community College and Adelphi University are a key component in our program, which are aimed at Workforce Professionalism, and promotional advancement within the Civil Service System.

## The Staff Development Unit:

- Completes state and local surveys, plans all needs assessments related to staffing, training, salaries and turnover.
- Coordinates the completion of the Department of Social Services Annual Report.
- Conducts orientation for all new staff and schedules unit overviews.
- Maintains agency audio visual equipment.
- Conducts training evaluations.
- Maintains the STARS (Statewide Training and Registration System), and data base which registers staff for state training and maintains the employee training history.



## FAIR HEARING ACTIVITY

	2007	2008
Fair Hearings Scheduled .....	722	818
Administrative Disqualification Hearings.....	11	15
Appellant Defaults.....	195	285
Appellant Withdrawals .....	60	84
Cases Resolved at Or Before Hearing.....	76	30
Agency Decisions Upheld .....	151	176
Agency Decisions Reversed .....	37	46
Inter-jurisdictional Hearings .....	3	3

- Monitors CPS worker compliance with State training mandates.
- Coordinates the Dutchess Community College Project through which 32 employees took courses and worked toward a degree.
- Coordinates the Adelphi University Program for Children Services staff through which 8 staff members took courses toward completion of their MSW degree.
- Coordinated the delivery of DCC Spanish 101, a three college credit course. This class was taught on site two nights a week. Although this was free to DSS employees, any county employee could take part in this program by using their CSEA tuition waiver. These employees had to pay the cost of books and fees.

In Dutchess County, the Staff Development Unit also encompasses the Personnel and Payroll function for the Department of Social Services. The unit:

- Maintains the Department's active and inactive personnel files and handles all personnel-related



matters. This includes assisting the County Personnel Department with recruitment of qualified applicants through newspaper advertisements and attendance at job fairs.

- Handles all job interviews for non-management positions and makes the hiring decision.
- Monitors all probationary periods and coordinates the distribution of performance approvals. This also includes the updating of Civil Service Job Specifications as well as title specific task and standards for each job in the Department.
- Maintains all department payroll records, using the LOGOS system and provides employees with information on benefits, leaves of absence, FMLA requests, payroll issues, and applications for retirement.
- Provides management and Department Unit Heads with reports on benefit time usage, overtime, compensatory time, seniority, salary, and other requested information.
- Act as liaison with the Dutchess County Personnel Department, Dutchess County Finance Department, Office of Risk Management and the County Attorney's office.
- Conducts agency exit interviews.
- Acts as management representative at employee grievances, disciplinary proceedings and other related action.

## Staff Development/ Personnel Accomplishments for 2008

- Coordinated the 2008 Annual Employee Appreciation Day celebration and served as Chair of the Employee of the Month Committee.
- Served on the Staff Development Institute Planning Committee for 2008 Institute at West Point.
- Served on NYS Staff Development Advisory Council and on the Temporary Assistance, and Membership sub-committee of the council.
- Served on the NYS STARS User Group, which determines and tests updates to the system.
- Conducted 53 new employment interviews.
- Hired 44 new employees.
- Coordinated and processed 49 promotions and reassignments, 26 leaves of absence, and 44 separations from County service.
- Chaired the 2008 Dutchess County and Department of Social Services' United Way campaign.
- Coordinated the 2008 Daffodil Days for the American Cancer Society and the anemone sale for the Mental Health Association.
- Participated on the Foster Care Review Board.



### CONTRACT ACTIVITY FOR 2008

Assisted Living/Adult Foster Care Services.....	6
Day Care.....	16
Detention/Foster Care Institutions .	42
Domestic Violence Services .....	5
Employment Services.....	12
Nutrition Education/HEAP.....	5
Genetic Testing.....	2
Homeless Prevention.....	3
Interpreter Services .....	1
Legal Services.....	1
Medical Exams/Services.....	5
Memoranda of Agreement .....	81
Personal Care Related Services/Respite .....	17
Other Inter-Agency Service Agreements .....	10
Preventive Services/TASA.....	22
Resource Parents.....	92
Service Agreements .....	10
<b>Totals .....</b>	<b>330</b>

## Commissioner's Office Accomplishments for 2008

- Appointed Deputy Commissioner for Services, Debra Bonnerwith effective October 27, 2008.
- Chaired the New York Public Welfare Association's (NYPWA) Commissioners' Policy Committee on Adult Services, which surveyed all local districts and led to a series of eight regional focus group meetings and the issuance of a paper, "Building a Shared Commitment to Protect and Support Vulnerable Adults."

Committee recommendations included the following:

- Improve access to mental health, developmental disability services and other assistance.
- Coordinate New York State policies across systems.
- Provide housing that is safe, affordable and appropriate.
- Modify policies on financial management, medical decisions and guardianship.
- Increase the availability of home care services and assisted living options.
- Fortify the role of the adult services worker.
- Participated in an advisory group formed by New York State Temporary and Disability Assistance to assess current local options and develop new strategies for managing individuals under the Strict Supervision and Treatment procedures of the Sex Offender Management and Treatment Act. The group was asked to meet with senior officials in the Governor's office to provide local perspectives on the issues around the development of housing options as they relate to sex offenders as well as to ex-offenders.
- Participated in Dutchess County BOCES' Parent Information Night on Long Term Supports, providing information on guardianship with parents.
- Speaker at Dutchess ARC's annual membership meeting.
- Became a member of the Dutchess



County Office for Aging's NY Connects Long Term Care Council, which reviews our long-term care system's planning and development in order to ensure achievement of the goals of and objectives of the Dutchess County Single Point of Entry for long-term care.

- Developed plan for the use of \$6,967,280 in Flexible Funding for Families awarded by New York State.
- Served on the Criminal Justice Council and its Prevention and Sanctions Victims and Women in the Criminal Justice System sub-committees.
- Prepared contracts totaling over \$43,000,000 for services, excluding the value of resource parent contracts and Medicaid-funded contracts.
- Served as chairperson of the Children's Services Council Integrated County Planning Workgroup. Together with the Office of Community Corrections and Probation and the Youth Bureau and with the help of community partners, updated the 2007-2008 Child and Family Services Plan, which sets forth each of those department's service outcomes and strategies with respect to the populations they serve.
- As part of the comprehensive needs assessment for the Integrated County Planning effort, worked with the County Executive's office, the Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Community Corrections and Probation and the Youth Bureau and with the assistance of Marist College's Office of

Community Research to develop a set of data indicators across systems. The resulting document, available at [http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/YouthBureau/2007S\\_electedindicators.pdf](http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/YouthBureau/2007S_electedindicators.pdf), strengthens the understanding of governmental planners, community members, providers and decision makers.

- Served on the Dutchess County's Health and Human Services Cabinet Performance Evaluation Workgroup, which focuses on incorporating performance data indicators into all county human services contracts and county operated programs. As an outgrowth of this effort, managed within the Department centralized outcome performance tracking and compiled an annual report of the Department's contract performance outcomes.
- Served on the Executive Committee for the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness in Dutchess County.
- Issued a Request for Proposal for non-emergency medical transportation services and awarded the contract to Medical Answering Services Inc.
- Participated at the Stony Brook State University Youth Speak Out.
- Member and participant in 2008 Hudson Valley Cash Coalition.
- Served as Chairman at Dutchess County Community Development Advisory Committee of Dutchess County Planning Department.

# 2008 ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Director of Administrative Services helps develop and present the annual budget, and is responsible for the supervision and coordination of the fiscal and operating functions.



The following units are overseen by the Director: Accounting, Central File, Reception, Purchasing, Welfare Management System, and Computer Information Services.

### Accounting

- Audits, processes and accounts for all payments made to or for recipients of assistance or for services.
- Prepares and tracks reimbursement claims made to New York State.
- Receives and disburses income for individuals for whom DSS is the representative payee or guardian.
- Discovers, records and pursues third party health insurance to reduce Medicaid expenditures.
- Serves as liaison with medical providers for billing and implements the Medicaid restriction program for clients who over-utilize Medicaid services.
- Issues temporary benefit cards.
- Maintains the Cash Management System of the Welfare Management System (WMS), which accounts for all repayments and recoupment of benefits for clients who were overpaid.

### Central File

- Maintains all closed case records and retrieves files as needed.

- Handles record retention and annual purges of records in accordance with NYS regulations. Issues case numbers for new applicants.
- Does all the case filing for the Temporary Assistance and Child Support Divisions.
- Processes all voter registration forms and manages the mail room.
- Is in the process of imaging files as part of the NYS Imaging Project.

### Computer Information Services

- Installs, maintains and administers personal computers, servers and systems including the Local Area Network (LAN).
- Develops and maintains local applications.
- Provides local personal computer support via the Help Desk.
- Serves as liaison with New York State and trains workers for state PC-based systems such as CONNECTIONS in Children's Services and the Electronic Eligibility Decision Support System (EEDSS) in Medicaid.
- Does website development and administration and network integration with New York State services.

### Purchasing, Fleet Control

- Purchases supplies and equipment, orders state and local forms, and maintains the stock room.
- Maintains the petty cash account and pays all administrative bills.
- Coordinates the purchase and maintenance of a fleet of 45 cars and vans with the Dutchess County Auto Center.
- Serves as the liaison with Dutchess County Public Works Department for repairs, maintenance and cleaning of the building.



Continued on page 14...

## Administrative Services

...Continued from page 13

### RECEPTION

- Screens all visitors and directs them to the appropriate unit or location.
- Distributes applications for assistance, reviews for completeness, and routes to the appropriate division.
- Accepts and routes to other staff documentation submitted by applicants or recipients.



## Administrative Services Accomplishments for 2008

### Accounting

Staff served on the following boards/committees:

- \* Family Partnership Center Executive Committee
- \* Families First NY Finance Committee
- \* NYPWA Fiscal Committee
- \* Dutchess County Community Action Partnership Board of Directors
- \* Youth Services Committee for Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- \* Harriet Tubman Academic Skills Program Board of Directors
- Maintained accounts for 276 clients and made payments totaling \$1.6 million on their behalf.
- We are maintaining approximately 95% of our reports as PDF files instead of printing and filing paper reports.
- Made over \$42.7 million in payments either directly to clients or to vendors on the clients behalf.
- Made over \$5.1 million in day care payments during the first 11 months of 2008.

### CIS Unit

#### CIS Pilot Programs

- CIS partnered with the state of New York (CIO/OFT) to test and implement an Enterprise Output

Management (EOM) system. This modernization project enabled the state to route the welfare management system printing (WMS) to local DSS printers across NYS.

#### My Benefits

- This new web application was implemented to provide access to numerous state and federal benefits and social services through the internet. CIS supports employee access to this site to facilitate the program which eliminates needless client visits and phone calls to DSS.

#### Onenet

- The state of New York in collaboration with DSS and OCIS has created a network hub for county agencies to simplify access to state applications. Among its improvements are more secure VPN tunnels and firewalls, which has enabled us to expand our network to more remote locations of the County.

#### Imaging and Enterprise Document Repository (IEDR)

- CIS participated in the state's initiative to provide real-time support to DSS employees in retrieval of client information and documentation.

#### Eastern Dutchess Government Center (EDGC)

- Expanded equipment an all network services to serve Eastern Dutchess County.

#### Temporary Assistance Workspace Upgrade

- Provided network support and equipment for remodeling project.

#### Adult and Family Services

- Computer and software upgrades were made for all 40 employees in this unit.

#### Computer Camp

- Participated in teaching computer skills to 24 children on assistance.

#### Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA/EIC)

- Coordinated and provided free income tax services to approx. 29 qualified individuals from within our community.

#### BICS

- Generated 90,000 3209 Authorization Reports.
- Generated 8,000 2970 Service Authorization Reports.

#### Miscellaneous

- Supported approximately 400 computers and seven servers.
- Removed 239 duplicate CINS from the system.
- Installed 15 new personal computers and flat screen monitors.
- Upgraded 60 personal computers from Windows 2000 to Windows XP.

Continued on page 15

## Administrative Services Accomplishments for 2008

...Continued from page 14



- Set up 41 new employees.
- Helpdesk responded to approximately 4,500 support requests.

### Training/Conferences

- Attended both NYPWA conferences.
- NYS LAN Administrators Fall Training.
- VITA training.

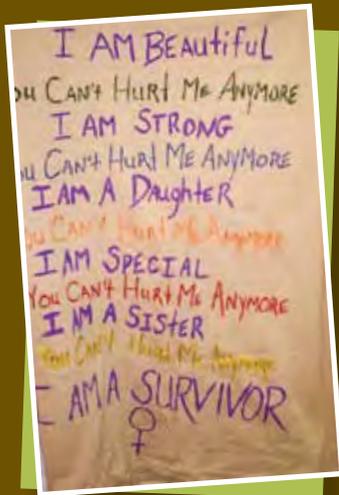
### **File Room**

- Spent 873 hours in Spanish translating. This is up 141 hours from 2007.
- Received 191,383 pounds of mail. This is 9,083 pounds larger than in 2007. MA recerts are done through the mail. This accounts for the increase.
- Assigned 5,403 new numbers to new clients. This is 600 more than in 2007 with Medicaid having the most new applicants.
- Filed over 850,000 pieces of loose filing for Child Support. We also re-file records and pull records for court appearances.
- Processed 6,355 voter registrations and completed 932. This was up 35 percent (presidential year).
- Prepared all TA records for imaging and finished all of the imaging by the end of December. We started sending out work on November 4<sup>th</sup>.
- About half of Medicaid records were prepared for imaging and we started to image them also. Due to the number of Medicaid cases, it will take all year to finish.
- Food Stamps records were started and will take until November to complete.



# 2008 ADULT SERVICES

**Adult Services includes Protective Services for Adults, Adult Title XX Services/Housing, and Domestic Violence.**



## Protective Services For Adults



- Identifies and assists individuals over the age of 18 who, because of physical or mental impairments, can no longer provide for their own needs or protect themselves from neglect or abuse, and have no one willing and able to help in a responsible manner.
- Provides services designed to prevent or remedy neglect, exploitation or abuse and to strengthen clients' capacity to function and their ability to be self-directing. Services may include counseling, locating adequate shelter and clothing, arranging transportation, shopping for the homebound and assisting the client in obtaining other benefits such as Medicaid, Social Security Disability/Retirement, SSI and Food Stamps. The primary objective of staff is to help clients to remain in the community.
- Provides services to individuals without regard to income or resources.
- Pursues legal interventions when necessary including assisting clients

in obtaining orders of protection, securing admission to a psychiatric facility or developmental center or having the DSS become protective payee of the clients' funds.

- Pursues guardianship under Article 81 of the Mental Hygiene Law for protective clients who do not have decision-making capacity.

## Adult Title XX Services/Housing

- Assists protective service clients in addressing issues that will help them function at an improved level and thus eliminate the need for future protective services. Issues may include health, finances,

education, and family planning. These services are provided if the client requests the service and cooperates with staff.

- Attempts to locate housing for Temporary Assistance clients who are faced with an eviction or who are temporarily residing in motels or shelters.
- Arranges for transportation of homeless children to and from school while in temporary shelter and arranges for moving and storage of clients' belongings.
- Works with Dutchess County Housing Consortium to address the housing crisis in Dutchess County.
- Contracts with Family Services, Inc. to run the Teen Parent Program, which provides mandated comprehensive case management for pregnant and parenting teenagers under the age of 18.

## Domestic Violence

- DSS employs a domestic violence liaison who:
- Screens all Temporary Assistance applicants/recipients who self-disclose issues of domestic violence in order to assure that all victims have a safety plan in place,
- Provides information about resources to assist victims and completes an assessment of their ability to safely comply with Social Services Rules and Regulations,
- Networks with the domestic violence service providers on a regular basis,
- Provides information and referral for domestic violence residential and non-residential services,
- Funds both non-residential and residential domestic violence services under Title XX,
- Contracts with Family Services, Inc. and Grace Smith House to provide shelter and non-residential services including advocacy, community education, hotline services, legal services

### TEMPORARY SHELTER EXPENDITURES

Year	Amount	Average Stay in Weeks
1997	\$517,379	3.4
1998	\$624,272	4.3
1999	\$559,950	4.5
2000	\$672,796	4.7
2001	\$752,159	6.2
2002	\$1,697,789	8.2
2003	\$2,381,235	10.4
2004	\$2,914,832	11.0
2005	\$2,881,353	10.0
2006	\$2,960,735	12.0
2007	\$3,095,641	21.0
2008	\$3,106,524	15.0

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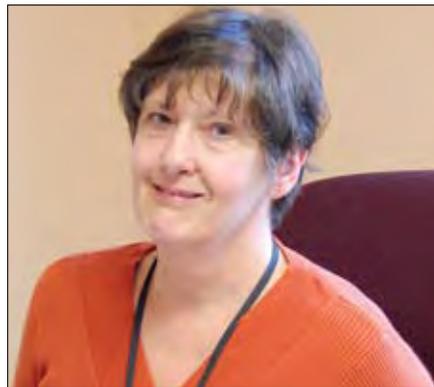
## Adult Services

...Continued from page 16

- and counseling,
- Conducted 82 assessments and 88 re-assessments.
- Maintained Hudson River Housing's Follow-Through Case Management program and the shelter maintenance program including \$30,000 for cash security deposits and short-term (less than four months) rental.
- Continued to provide Hudson River Housing, Inc. with funding to defray the cost of placing individuals who were turned away from the overnight shelter in motels during inclement weather. The amount was \$125,000.
- Continued to enhance our contract with Grace Smith House, for non-residential domestic violence services to include a Latina caseworker to provide outreach and community education services to the Latina community.
- Continued to fund an Intensive Case Manager employed by Grace Smith House.
- Paid \$1,346,028 to the Grace Smith House, Family Services, Inc. and the Office of Community Corrections and Probation for additional services to victims of domestic violence (payments for residential shelter costs are included in temporary assistance payments).
- Legal programs sub-contracted to Legal Services of Dutchess County include a pro-bono legal program, whose purpose is to develop a network of pro-bono attorneys to represent poor and low-income battered women in the Supreme Court of Dutchess

County and Family Court, and a Divorce Representation project.

- Continued a case review team in order to allow staff to discuss difficult cases.
- Dedicated a worker to educating the public about protective services for adults.
- Served as guardian for 32 individuals.
- Served as protective payee for 133 individuals.



### ADULT SERVICES

	2007	2008
Adult Services Cases Open At End of Year .....	349	363
Domestic Violence Screenings .....	137	170
Temporary Shelter Stays in Weeks .....	21	15
Temporary Shelter Expenditures .....	\$3,095,641	\$3,106,524
Adult Protective Services Referrals.....	595	604



## Adult Services Accomplishments for 2008

- Our staff received "new" used computers from the State. While they were to be somewhat better than the ones we had, they did come with their own problems.
- Our staff continued to educate other agencies about the scope of Protective Services for Adults (PSA) and how to obtain services. In 2008, a dozen agencies received training.
- Participated in case consultation meetings.
- Met with the Mediation Center to discuss senior concerns and established a liaison from our division to address concerns and referrals from their agency.
- Provided housing assistance to the Temporary Assistance homeless population.
- Was a member of the Dutchess County Housing Consortium.
- Monitored the family-type home operators.
- Received a certificate of recognition from OCFS for excellence in providing services for adults, outstanding protective services for adults casework and supervision and for going the extra mile.

**2008  
ADULT  
SERVICES**

*Letters of  
Recognition*



**Jennifer Bixby started working in the Medicaid Division in July 2003 and was promoted to Case Manager in Adult Services in August 2004.**

Dear Ms. Bixby:

**T**hank you so much for helping us, you went above and beyond your duties. The time and energy you invested in us means a lot to us. We feel that you were very dedicated to us, you have helped us achieve our goals. Our success would not of been possible without you. We hope you are blessed in all that you do.

K, K and M



**Robin (Dingee) West started working at DSS as a Case Manager I in Adult Services in May 1986 and was promoted to Case Manager II in Adult Services in January 1990.**

Dear Maryanne,

**I**wanted to take some time and let you know all the positive feedback I have received from my Case Managers regarding Robin West. She has worked with many of the staff here and they are constantly coming to me to let me know how extraordinarily helpful she is. They have relayed how well she does her job and how competent and professional she is at all times.

I hear Robin's name almost every week from one staff or another and each one goes on and on about how kind she is and how much she helps our clients. They are constantly raving about her so I wanted to take a minute and drop you a line to let you know how appreciative we are to work with someone of her caliber and her high standard of excellence.

Robin is really a wonderful person and the staff here thinks the world of her. I wanted to express my gratitude and that of my staff for all of her hard work and dedication.

Andrew O'Grady, Director

Mental Health Association in Dutchess County



# 2008 CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Children's Services is an umbrella for many departments; Child Protective Services, Preventive Services, Foster Care, Adoption/ Home Finding and Secure and Non-Secure Detention.



Child Protective Services

Preventive Services

Foster Care

and more...

## JUVENILE PLACEMENTS WITH SOCIAL SERVICES

	2007	2008
Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) .....	20	27
Juvenile Delinquents (JD) .....	20	11

\* From CCRS Monthly Summary Characteristics Report for 12/31/08



### Child Protective Services (CPS)

This unit investigates allegations of abuse and/or neglect of children under 18 years of age. Case managers are available seven days a week, 24-hours per day to investigate reports received through the State Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (1-800-342-3720).

- Assesses safety of and risk to children due to abuse or neglect and provides intervention when needed.
- Arranges on-going case management for families through the Preventive Services Unit and other community services providers when service is necessary.
- Files neglect and abuse petitions to seek from Family Court orders of protection, court-ordered services for the families and/or authority to place children in foster care.
- Participates in the Dutchess County Child Sexual Abuse Team, conducting joint sexual abuse investigations with police departments and the District Attorney. The Sex Abuse Team operates out of the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in the Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse offices in Poughkeepsie.
- Contracts with the Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse to partially fund the operation of the Center and for a Parent Empowerment Program, community education and information and referral services.

- Contracts with Family Services, Inc. to treat sex abuse perpetrators.
- Contracts with the Astor Home for Children for a treatment team for sexually abused children and



for juveniles who have committed sexual offenses. The team provides treatment modalities for both victims and offenders.

- Contracts with Grace Smith House to fund a Domestic Violence Liaison who works with CPS case managers when domestic violence has contributed to child maltreatment.

### Preventive Services

- Provides counseling and in-home services and connects families with community agencies who can provide long-term services, preventing the need for foster care. Referrals are received from the CPS Unit or from other community agencies.

### ADOPTION SUMMARY

	2007	2008
Children Discharged to Adoption .....	28	34
Children in Care with Goal of Adoption at Year end .....	82*	58

\* From CCRS Monthly Summary Characteristics Report for 12/31/08

- Arranges for intervention to address issues which contribute to child neglect and abuse and/or create a risk of foster care placement. Services are provided to address substance abuse, mental illness, developmental disabilities, medical care, counseling, day care and other needs.
- Provides transportation assistance, day care and homemaking services.
- Provides services which have been ordered through Dutchess County Family Court.
- Monitors clients' compliance, reports to court and files petitions when needed.
- Contracts with The Astor Home for Children and Abbott House, for home-

Continued on page 20...

## Children's Services

...Continued from page 19

based case management services for families at risk of placing their children in foster care and with Astor for a Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (CCSI). CCSI is a tiered inter-agency project designed to create a comprehensive system of care in Dutchess County. It provides coordination of services to children with emotional or behavioral concerns that put them at risk of out-of-home placement.

- Contracts with Dutchess County Office of Probation and Community Corrections for PINS and JD Diversion and Supervision Programs.
- Contracts with the Youth Bureau for mandated preventive case management services for youth leaving facilities, who are at risk of returning to placement, and for youth who have school related problems, drug or alcohol use, which creates or increases the risk for out-of-home placements.
- Contracts with the Dutchess County Community Action Partnership for case management services to families who live in the Harlem Valley or southern Dutchess and qualify for mandated preventive services.

### Foster Care

- Directly supervises children in foster family homes and provides case management to children placed in child care facilities such as residential treatment or group homes.

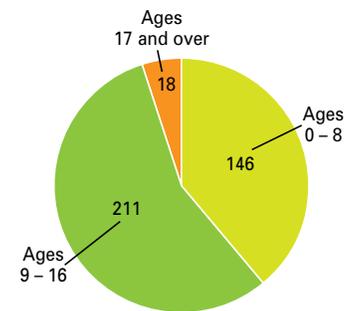
- Ensures that foster children receive the medical, developmental, educational and mental health services they require.
- Supervises Article 10 placements of children with relatives.
- Counsels birth parents of children about their need for treatment for drug or alcohol addiction, sexual abuse, emotional disturbance, physical, mental, housing and employment problems and lack of knowledge of child development and parenting techniques.
- Develops child and family service plans, permanency reports, files court petitions and regularly appears in Family Court. The goal for each child is safe, nurturing temporary care with return to family if possible, or adoption if the family cannot be reunited, or if neither is possible, then preparation for independent living or discharge to another appropriate resource.
- Supervises placements made by other states and counties.
- Contracts with the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie to provide An 18 bed emergency foster care placement cottage which includes diagnostic evaluations when children need them.

### Adoption/Home Finding

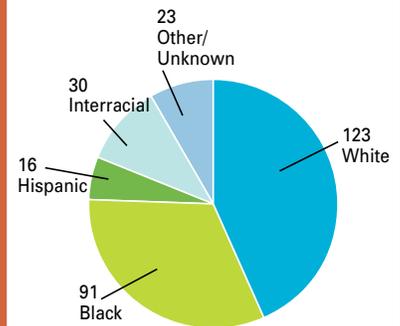
- Children available for adoption may be surrendered by their parents for adoption or may be freed for adoption through a Family court decision to terminate parental rights due to failure of the parents to provide a safe return home for their child in

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### Children in Sexual Abuse Allegations by Age

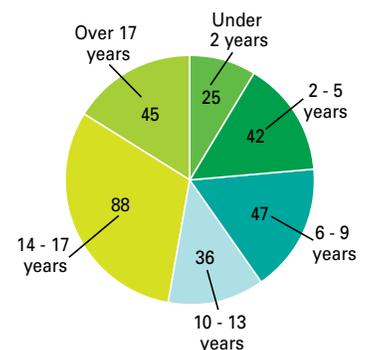


### Children in Foster Care by Ethnicity\*



\* From CCRS Monthly Summary Characteristics Report for 12/31/08

### Children in Foster Care by Age\*



\* From CCRS Monthly Summary Characteristics Report for 12/31/08



## Children's Services

...Continued from page 20

foster care. A child may be surrendered for adoption at any age prior to 14 if it is in the child's best interests to be adopted. Most children available for adoption have been in foster care and are eligible for an adoption subsidy, this is, a monthly check similar in amount to foster care board checks.

- Foster parents are encouraged to adopt children in their homes and many foster parents become adoptive parents. Others provide temporary care until children are discharged to more permanent living situations.
- Children are placed in foster care either by Child Protective Services, Family Court or by caretakers unwilling or unable to care for them. Some children are placed with relatives as foster parents.
- There are currently 84 certified foster homes available for Dutchess County children. There is a

great need for more foster and adoptive homes and we continually recruit and train applicants. We also utilize group homes and foster care institutions with which we contract.

In addition, the Therapeutic Foster Home Programs with Abbott House and Astor Home for Children enable us to keep emotionally disturbed and conduct disordered children from placement in institutions.

This unit:

- Recruits, conducts home studies, provides training and certifies both foster and adoptive home applicants.
- Certifies and trains relative foster home applicants.
- Maintains foster home records and completes annual recertification process for all active foster parents.
- Supervises adoptive placements until the adoption is

final and counsels children and adoptive parents.

- Completes private adoption home studies.

### Secure and Non-Secure Detention

The Family Court remands boys and girls ages 7 to 16 in detention settings to await hearings in Family Court or foster care placement on petitions of Juvenile Delinquency (JD) or Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS). Often the children are placed on emergency basis directly from court.

- Supervises non-secure detention placements, transports children to court hearings and monitors non-

secure detention centers and ensures that children's medical and mental health needs are met.

- Contracts with the City of Poughkeepsie for secure detention and with Astor Home for Children and Berkshire Farm for non-secure detention beds.
- Contracts with Astor Home for Children for secure detention coordination services.

Continued on page 22...



### CPS CASE SUMMARY

	2007	2008
Reports of Abuse and Neglect made to State Central Register .....	2,611	2,654
Abuse Petitions Filed in Family Court .....	52	62
Neglect Petitions .....	659	703
Termination of Parental Rights .....	38	81
Surrender Petitions Filed in Family Court.....	7	37
Foster Care Review – Permanency Hearings .....	429	411
Sex Abuse Investigations .....	130	*295
Substantiated .....	22	*76
Unfounded .....	111	*176
Pending.....		*43

\* Statistics from the CAC database.

### CHILDREN IN CARE - TYPES OF PLACEMENT

	2007	2008
Foster Homes.....	120	116
Institutions.....	122	117
Group Homes.....	18	21
Group Residence.....	0	2
Agency Operated Boarding Homes .....	9	4
Adoptive Homes .....	18	13
Approved Relative Foster Homes .....	21	7
Other .....	2	3
Total .....	310	283

\* From CCRS Monthly Summary Characteristics Report for 12/31/08.

## Children's Services Accomplishments for 2008



- Children's Services staff members continue to offer the Strengthening Families Program. This is a group experience for parents and children to improve communication and family dynamics, and teach teens and preteens to make good choices. Sessions were offered in spring and fall of 2008, and have been well received by attendees. A total of 36 children and parents participated in the program in 2008.
- In collaboration with the Department of Mental Hygiene and Astor High Risk Services program, five home based crisis intervention waiver slots continue to be available to Dutchess County children. This program offers intensive home based services to children with psychiatric problems to prevent the need for psychiatric hospitalization and residential care.
- The family visitation program for infants in foster care continued in 2008. This program offers an opportunity for additional visitation for families.
- The fourth Heart Gallery was successfully implemented in October 2008. This collaborative effort between Dutchess County Children's Services, the Departments of Social Services in surrounding counties, and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services Yonkers Regional Office, is a gallery exhibit showing photographs of children available for adoption. Ten Dutchess County children

participated in this exhibit. In total there were 31 children from the six counties featured in the 2008 Heart Gallery of the Mid-Hudson, and Dutchess County children represented a third of the total children featured.

- Dutchess County adoption staff members completed 34 adoptions in 2008. This unit also completed 13 private adoption home studies.
- Dutchess County received a monetary allocation from OCFS to implement programs to prevent the need for non-secure detention. This money is used to fund collaborative efforts between Children's Services and the Department of Probation for services to meet the needs of PINS and pre PINS youth in Dutchess County. In 2008, 106 youth were placed in non-secure detention.
- Children's Services staff members are participating in a higher education program leading to a Master's in Social Work Degree at Adelphi University. Five staff members are currently enrolled in this program and eight staff members have already graduated from the program.
- The statewide Connections Computer System, a computerized case recording system for all Children's Services cases, continues to be utilized and expanded.
- Child Protective Services has investigated 2,654 reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment during 2008. There were

318 children in foster care and 25 were receiving after-care services.

- The annual foster parent recognition day awards went to foster families who worked closely with birth families towards reunification. Our annual foster parent picnic was held in August and was a success, with a variety of activities and foods offered. In November, we celebrated National Adoption month by having a dinner to honor this year's adoptive families, which was attended by adoptive parents, children, social services and family court staff members.
- During the year 2008, Children's Services continued work on collaborative projects with a number of public and private agencies in the community including the Dutchess County Family Court, District Attorney's office, Department of Probation, Youth Bureau, The Center for Child Abuse Prevention, Astor, Abbott House, Dutchess County Community Action Partnership, Inc., Grace Smith House Domestic Violence Shelter, and the Hudson River Housing Riverhaven Shelter. Children's Services staff members continue to participate in a number of work groups in the community which address the needs of Dutchess County children and families including the Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (CCSI), Children's Provider's Committee, the Child Advocacy Center's Multi-Disciplinary Team, Family Court Advisory Committee, Children's Services Council, Child Care Council and the Early Childhood Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (ECCSI).
- Two Children's Services case managers continue to be part of the Dutchess County Family Treatment Court team, presided over by Judge Forman, which provides intensive support and supervision to families in which substance abuse has led to neglect of children. The Family Treatment Court graduated five individuals and their families in 2008.
- A Children's Services Case Manager is part of the Youth Treatment Court, presided over by Judge Forman, which provides inten-

*Continued on page 23...*

## 2008 CHILDREN'S SERVICES

### Letter of Recognition



**Mykki Millott started working for DSS as a Social Welfare Worker in the Temporary**

**Assistance Division in May 2007, and was promoted to a Case Manager II in CPS in April 2008.**

Dear Ms. Millott:

First let I and my girls say Happy Valentines Day and thank you all for everything you do for me. Cause if it were not for the help you give, I know that I would not make it at all. Plus if it was not for M. Millott, what for me buggin' her every once and a while Ha! I mean all the time, to talk to her about life problems or questions, she will talk to me even if she is completely bogged down with work. She is a wonderful person and a great worker by the way. Because my one little girl is disabled, and sometimes things can get overpowering, but just to talk to someone does make it easier. And every one of you should be given a big hug and an even bigger pat on the back, to let y'all know that not everyone looks past the things that you do. Even the small things are very appreciated.

Thank you very, very much for everything that you are doing and have done for my family. JR

## Children's Services Accomplishments

...Continued from page 22



sive oversight to Dutchess County youth who have become involved with family court due to substance abuse issues.

- A domestic violence liaison jointly supervised by Child Protective Services and Grace Smith House continues to be located in Children's Services. The liaison receives referrals from child protective, foster care and preventive caseworkers, attends case conferences and provides direct services, training and consultation regarding domestic violence issues.
- Funding continues for both mandated preventive and community optional preventive services provided by the Probation Department and Youth Bureau. A respite services contract with the Riverhaven shelter continues to be utilized for youth involved with the Departments of Probation or Social Services.
- There continues to be an emphasis on staff and foster parent development and training in 2008, with numerous training opportunities being offered by the Department of Social Services. A sampling of the sessions provided includes in-house training for case managers, training regarding community services available, car seat training, and computer training.
- The provision of preventive services for families, designed to prevent the need for children coming into foster care due to neglect and abuse, continues to be a crucial service offered. These services are provided by Children's Services caseworkers, and are also contracted for with community agencies including Astor, Abbott House, and Dutchess County Community Action Partnership, Inc.
- As always, recruitment efforts continue to locate, train and certify qualified foster parents for Dutchess County children. Foster home-finding case managers have attended many community functions to advocate for foster parenting. Foster parent and relative foster parent certification training sessions have been completed to train eleven new foster parents and six new relative foster parents.
- CASACs have been co-located in Children's Services to assist in CPS investigations of and provision of services to families that are impacted by substance abuse issues. This program is a joint effort between Dutchess County's Departments of Social Services and Mental Hygiene and Lexington Center for Recovery and is being funded by NYS OASAS and OCFS.
- In 2008, one of the Foster Care workers conducted two Independent Living Workshops, which were Job Skills & Career Planning. In the Job Skills Workshop, they reviewed interviewing skills and writing resumes. In the Career Planning Workshop, they took the Independent Living Aptitude Test, which gave them insight into job fields that might be of interest to them.
- In the fall of 2008, one foster care worker and one adoption worker facilitated a support group for teenage girls in foster care. The focus of the group related to issues unique to children in foster care. A safe environment was provided and a life book was utilized to assist the children in openly discussing their feelings with others who share their same experience.
- In 2008, one foster care worker volunteered to be a Field Supervisor for a BSW intern from Marist College. This is a year long internship where the student receives education about foster care and the Child Welfare Division. The student works two days a week at DSS in the Foster Care Unit and the Foster Care worker meets with the professor once a month and completes two evaluations a year on the student.

# Empowerment Through Employment

**CWEP?** This isn't just another confusing acronym. It is a doorway to self-sufficiency and independence. It stands for Community Work Experience Program and it all began in July of 1982. At that time, the Department of Social and Health Services initiated the program as a pilot project. The program went statewide in 1988 and today, **CWEP** can be found nationwide. In **CWEP**, "participants are assigned to public or non-profit agencies that provide opportunities to develop, demonstrate or maintain basic work habits while performing useful tasks" (91-INF-13). Approximately 40,000 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients are enrolled in work experience across the United States in any given month. According to the Brookings Institution, only four states, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey and New York, account for two-thirds of this total number. The expectation is that 50 percent of participants will be engaged in work activities for 30 hours each week and those with children under age six will work 20 hours per week.

For some, basic skills are learned so that jobs may be obtained and maintained. For others, it is an opportunity to re-gain confidence and self-esteem and get back on track in the work community after illness or other setbacks in life. Many success stories have been born of this valuable program.

Here at Dutchess DSS, there are currently 40 participants in **CWEP** and 16 **CWEP** job sites. Among these job sites are: Dutchess County Central Services, Dutchess Outreach (Lunch Box), Dutchess Works, Family Services (Beacon), Human Rights Commission, Nubian Directions and the Salvation Army. But, we don't just refer our participants out to other agencies. Rather, we are so dedicated to this mission that we take individuals under our own wing as well. Not all DSS partnering agencies do this and not all county departments will agree to be a **CWEP** job site. For us, it is due to the leadership of our Commissioner, Robert B. Allers, that we

are our own **CWEP** site. Under the guidance of Director, Cathy Connis and Supervisor, Lance Bixby, we placed individuals right here in our own DSS community for real work experience. In fact, based on our success stories, we set the example for all our **CWEP** job sites with regards to reaching out and helping individuals toward independence and self-sufficiency by mentoring them in our own workplace. Under Commissioner Allers, we took our commitment to the **CWEP** participants one step further and as he says "put our money where our mouth is". By utilizing DSS temporary positions, we are able to provide paid employment for up to six months to **CWEP** workers transitioning from unpaid **CWEP** participation to paid employment. The paid temporary employment has helped participants increase their income by earning as much as seven times their Temporary Assistance grant. (See Chart on pg. 25)

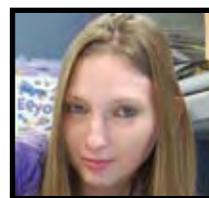
This paid work experience is important, as it gives the individual information which can be put on a resumé as current and relevant job experience. Participants often have a desire to remain here as part of the DSS team and spurs them on to take Civil Service exams so they may obtain permanent paid employment with us. Some do move on and acquire jobs elsewhere in the community but there are some who are hired here after passing exams and happily come to work each day wearing the DSS badge.

Four of our former **CWEP** workers, who have transitioned to employment at Dutchess County Department of Social Services, shared their thoughts on **CWEP**. Michele Quashie was requested by Supervisor Jacky Cooper to work alongside her in Temporary Assistance. Jacky often would share with others how good Michele was on the job and how she hoped that one day we could hire her. Michele said that Jacky pushed her to be a really good worker. Michele later worked



**Michele**

with Supervisor Pat Donovan in Temporary Assistance answering phones in the Clerical Unit. She felt that this further helped her confidence and found it easy to get along with Pat. During the course of her placement, Michele went for her GED and missed obtaining a passing grade by one question. This did not stop her. She took the exam again and passed. By now Michele had demonstrated her work ethic. Due to an exhausted Civil Service list, DSS had the opportunity to offer her a position as Office Assistant in Temporary Assistance. She filled this position for over a year. Since then, she has worked in both the File Room and Reception. She states that she likes the fast pace of the Reception area. Michele is currently a temporary employee who has two goals: to go back to school and to become a permanent employee here at DSS, perhaps in the Temporary Assistance Unit. She feels that the Work Experience Program is an excellent program but that it will only be what you put into it. She adds, "Of course, with **CWEP** you are not getting a paycheck but if you come to work everyday, take it seriously and do what you need to, you can hope to get a job here." She believes the right equation for success is "attendance, a positive attitude and of course doing the job."



**Amanda**

Amanda Schallenkamp tells of coming to DSS as a stay-at-home Mom caring for her one and half year old child. She believes that if it wasn't for **CWEP** at DSS she might not have gotten her GED. She credits her employment worker, Karen DeMarco, her File Room Supervisor, Pat Daby, and herself for her success. It took a year to be ready for the test.

## CWEP CHART

	TA Monthly/ Yearly Amount	Paid Transitional Temporary Clerical Experience	Current Job Pay
Person A	\$353/\$4,236	\$25,643	\$35,803
Person B	\$353/\$4,236	\$25,643	\$27,695
Person C	\$529/\$6,349	\$25,643	\$29,737

Above are three examples of actual CWEP participants showing the amounts when they were on TA, on paid Transitional Temporary Clerical Experience and their current Civil Service salary.



At the time, she felt she was in work relief for so long she was discouraged and didn't think she would pass the test but felt it was worth a try. Amanda says that when she received the score, "I thought it wasn't mine. I did pretty good and felt good. I called everyone. I called Pat Daby first. Pat was happy for me. So were my Mom, sister and family. I appreciate everyone at Social Services because everyone has helped a lot. Everyone knew I could do it, except me." Amanda remembers that when she started CWEP "it was rough at first because it was a lot to learn and it was a lot of stress for me. Now I'm used to it."

In March 2008, Amanda was transitioned into a Temporary Clerical appointment in the DSS File Room. On June 24, 2008 she was placed in a Provisional Office Assistant opening in the Medicaid Clerical Unit. Working with a BOCES Intensive Case Manager and VESID (Vocational and Education Services for Individuals with Disabilities) Amanda's appointment was converted to a Permanent Probationary appointment effective October 28, 2008. On April 27, 2009 Amanda completed her probationary term and was granted permanent status.

Amanda looks forward to coming to work. The day goes by pretty quickly because it's busy. She likes working here and helping people because as she states, "I've been there." Amanda wants to go back to school and move up in her career. Motivators for her are her children and the desire to ensure they have a good life. Amanda wants to thank everyone who has helped her as she says her success was a combination of everyone here who has worked with her.

After six months of receiving Services, Jamie Miller became a CWEP participant. She met with Director Cathy Connis and was offered



**Jamie**

a clerical position in Temporary Assistance. Jamie remembers that she liked her position as she says, "it put me back to a place where I was comfortable... a working environment. Everyone was nice and helped me learn what I needed." Despite this, she worried. She says that she felt unsure and wondered what she was going to do and how would she be able to find a job when her placement was over. Clerical workers in her unit told her that if she did what she was supposed to do in her placement everything would work out and maybe she would even get a job here. Jamie says that at this point, she realized it was something she could do. She states "CWEP gave me the confidence I lost during a rough time in my life. It reinforced for me my self-worth. After three months, she was offered a temporary transitional clerical appointment in the File Room. She worked there for three months and successfully took the Social Welfare Worker exam which placed her on the County Civil Service list and made her eligible for a permanent position as a Social Welfare Worker. All her hard work came to fruition when in November of 2007; she was hired as a Medicaid worker in the Nursing Home Intake Unit. She recalls fondly how when she was a stranger, Kim Blauvelt (Computer Information Services) reached out to her, was always glad to see her and asked if she could help. She made her want to come back. In addition, Shari Francis, Medicaid Supervisor, was constantly telling her she was an asset to DSS. Jamie states that the program gave her hope that she could make things right again. She says, "Before, I didn't know it was possible to turn it into a job. Once I started, I realized it's not just something I like to do. I think it's a great program for someone who wants to improve their

circumstances." Jamie hopes to become a Specialist.

About the same time Jamie was hired into a permanent position, Suzanne Howell walked through our doors. She started CWEP in November 2007 in the Temporary Assistance Unit. In the beginning, she was intimidated by the phone and the busy atmosphere. She didn't know what to do and it was overwhelming. Suzanne says, "Other Office Assistants made all the difference in the world because they were non-judgmental. They verified that I really knew the answer and answered me as many times as I asked



**Suzanne**

the same questions." She says that the anxiety began to dissipate as she found she was learning and picking up what she needed to know to do the work. Suzanne describes her motivation as her desire to get herself out of the place she was before coming to DSS. Her co-workers helped teach her and her employment worker, Christian Jones, was behind her. With immense gratitude, Suzanne talks of Christian saying, "From the first day I met her, she believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. Anytime I questioned or doubted myself, she would always reinforce her belief in me. She was always available to talk with me. I didn't want to let her down. She made such a difference. She looked at me and spoke with me. Her intuition was right on." Suzanne explains that when "you are not thinking too highly of yourself, you think only of obstacles. Christian Jones made me feel hopeful. I wanted to share the positive with her. All these doors started to open the day I met her. To me all these opportunities have her face on them." Suzanne took the Office Assistant exam a few months later and having successfully passed, she was hired June 30, 2008 into a permanent position. When you ask Suzanne what would she say to someone who comes to DSS and is offered CWEP she

*Continued on page 35...*

## 2008 CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT UNIT

The New York State Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) within the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance is the agency responsible for administering the child support program through all the local social services districts.



**Legislation provides automatic cost of living increases in child support orders to keep pace with inflation**

**and allow families to stay off welfare. The legislation also allows administrative liens on property of debtors; increased access to records of financial institutions, government agencies and private entities such as utilities; and suspension of driver's, recreational and professional licenses for failure to pay child support.**

This unit provides the following services free of charge to custodial parents and minors under 21 who request our services:

- Location of absent parents through a variety of computer matches available within state and federal systems.
  - Establishment of paternity by filing petitions on behalf of children receiving Family or Safety Net Assistance, foster care, residential care and in division for youth facilities. Medicaid recipients/applicants are also required to cooperate with child support to establish paternity and obtain medical support.
  - Support establishment for child and or child support combined with espousal support.
  - Upward modification for change in circumstances, and cost of living adjustment of court orders which are payable through the Support Collection Unit.
  - Support collection and monitoring of payments. Once support orders are established, the collection and
- disbursement of monies associated with that order, becomes the responsibility of the New York State Central Collection Agency.
  - Enforcement of a court order.
  - Income execution when there is an employer, aided by New York State's Expedited New Hire Reporting program, which locates current employers of child support payers, keeping income executions in place and enabling new executions to begin.
  - Collection of arrears from federal and state tax refunds, OTB and lottery winnings and bank accounts.
  - Referral to the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance's program for collection and seizure of assets, which targets individuals over four months in arrears in their child support payments.
  - Medical benefits execution to require enrollment of dependents in third party health insurance.
  - Suspension or denial of a New York State driver's or professional license.
  - Initiating violation proceedings in Family Court which may result in a jail term of up to six months for willful non-payment of child support.
  - Taking liens against property and motor vehicles.
  - Conducting financial investigations.
- CSEU arranges professional legal services through contracted private attorneys who charge \$90 per hour. Family, medical and safety net minor recipients are not charged fees for legal representation.



## Child Support Enforcement Unit Accomplishments for 2008



- Dutchess County Child Support Enforcement Unit (CSEU) collected \$31,420,299 in child support in 2008. This amount is an increase of 5.56 percent. Of this amount collected, \$30,626,028 was for the benefit of families who were not in receipt of Temporary Assistance.
- CSEU processed 7,337 Family Court Petitions in 2008.
- Dutchess County is number one in “cases with health insurance ordered” in same size counties.
- We continue a contract with a second genetic testing company that collects the DNA samples on site at Family Court. In 2008, 23 families were tested.
- CSEU continues to have collaboration with the Fathers’ Rights Association of New York State. We conduct an informational session quarterly with



the local group. We continue to refer non-custodial parents to the group for help. The Fathers’ Rights Association educates and redirects the non-custodial parents’ frustrations for the betterment of their relationships with their children.

- CSEU has provided several presenta-

tions to outside agencies to further educate the public on child support rules and procedures. A Dutchess County CSEU representative was on the Fathers’ Day Parade Committee. This was the sixth official Fathers’ Day Parade. It is the only documented Fathers’ Day Parade in New York State.



- A Dutchess County CSEU representative is serving on the Astor Head Start Health Advisory Council. Two CSEU workers are participating on the ASSETS Key User Group Committee in Albany at the state level.

**2008  
CHILD SUPPORT  
ENFORCEMENT  
UNIT**

*Letter of  
Recognition*



**Sharon Burt**  
started working  
at DSS as a Social  
Welfare Worker

**in the Child Support Division  
in January 2003.**

Dear Ms. Allers:

I feel compelled to write this letter regarding your enforcement worker, Ms. Sharon Burt. Due to naiveté, I became a non-custodial parent of two children, both of whom are over 21 now. Ms. Burt helped to make a very difficult situation that much easier to deal with. She was always available to answer any questions with an expeditious and courteous reply.

Most of all Ms. Burt treated me with kindness and respect. She was non-judgmental and always acted in a very professional manner. Ms. Sharon Burt is a truly an asset to the Dutchess County Support Collection Unit. It has been a pleasure to deal with her over the years. Thank you.

TH

**CHILD SUPPORT COLLECTIONS**

Year	Amount Collected
1997.....	\$14,902,565
1998.....	\$16,687,297
1999.....	\$18,687,207
2000.....	\$21,442,928
2001.....	\$22,789,005
2002.....	\$24,237,743
2003.....	\$25,187,954
2004.....	\$26,537,960
2005.....	\$27,636,371
2006.....	\$28,816,452
2007.....	\$29,764,573
2008.....	\$31,420,299

**CHILD SUPPORT ACTIVITY\***

As of the End of the Year	2007	2008
Child Support Cases Open.....	10,887	10,632
Children Open in Support Cases.....	11,703	11,549
Children Open Born Out of Wedlock .....	6,298	6,309
Children Open with Paternity Established .....	5,776	5,806
Percentage of Children Open with Paternity Resolved .....	95.5%	95.6%
Children Needing Paternity Determination .....	441	403
Cases with Collections During Year.....	6,038	6,093
Interstate Cases with Collections During Year.....	320	326
Cases Open Where Medical Support is Ordered .....	7,896	7,717
Cases with Arrears Due During Year .....	7,821	7,835
Cases with Arrears Due Paying during Year .....	3,292	3,656

\*From NYS OCSE DSS-157 Report

## News Release



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
22 Market Street • Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Phone: 845/486-2000 • Fax: 845/486-2021 • e-mail: [countyexec@co.dutchess.ny.us](mailto:countyexec@co.dutchess.ny.us)

Date: June 13, 2008

For Further Information Contact:  
William R. Steinhaus, County Executive  
845/486-2000

### **Dutchess Breaks Monthly Record With Over \$3 Million in Child Support Collections**

Poughkeepsie... Dutchess County Executive William R. Steinhaus and Department of Social Services Commissioner Robert Allers have announced the Child Support Division has reached a record breaking milestone with the collection and distribution of more than \$3.1 million dollars in May 2008, the County's highest monthly total ever.

"We have made it a priority for Dutchess County to be a state leader for administering programs and services," said County Executive Steinhaus. "It is the dedication and perseverance of our exemplary county employees who work day after day to protect the rights of children in our community and we are grateful for their efforts."

Commissioner of the Dutchess County Department of Social Services Robert Allers said, "The Child Support Division has become involved with non-traditional avenues to reach out to both custodial and non-custodial parents with involvement in activities such as the Father's Day Parade and the Father's Rights Group. By working closely with parents, we can help ensure the court/support process works as smoothly as possible. This allows families to focus on their children instead of their child support.

Thanks to the continued focus and commitment to put needed money into the hands of deserving children, child support collections have risen from just over \$11.7 million collected in 1995 to more than \$29.7 million collected and dispersed in 2007. This money was collected to help support over 8,400 families.

# 2008 FINANCIAL AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Under the Division of Financial and Supportive Services are the offices of Transitional Benefits, Integrated Services and Temporary Assistance/ Employment Services.



**Transitional Benefits is the home to Community Medicaid (under care, recertifications, changes, etc.),**

**Nursing Home Intake and Under Care, Managed Care, Pre-natal Care Assistance Program (PCAP), Food Stamps, HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) and clerical support units.**

The overall purpose of the programs under Transitional Benefits is to assist low income households as they meet their goals in becoming self-sufficient. This is evolving to a critical area with the current rising cost of fuel, food and employment related expenses.

### Food Stamps

The program's purpose is to help low-income households purchase food needed for good nutrition and health. Clients who are eligible for Food Stamps, access benefits electronically by using a benefit card and a PIN at authorized grocery stores. Benefits may be used for food

products or seeds to grow food that a household can eat.

- Determines eligibility for and provides Food Stamp benefits to individuals and families, households containing a mix of Temporary Assistance (TA) and non-Temporary Assistance recipients, the elderly, the disabled, Certified Group Home and Alcohol/Drug Facility residents. Pure TA households receive food stamps through the TA case.
- Oversees the contract for and works in conjunction with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County to run the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program known as Eat Smart New York (ESNY). Project activities are conducted for the benefit of the Food Stamp eligible population and address food security, food safety, and dietary quality.

### FOOD STAMP CASES AS OF JAN. 1, 2008

1990.....	1,521
1995.....	3,044
2000.....	2,651
2005.....	4,607
2006.....	4,749
2007.....	5,111
2008.....	5,229



## Food Stamp Accomplishments for 2008

In 2008 Dutchess County Department of Social Services piloted the My Benefits Electronic Food Stamp application. This process, along with community partners Catholic Charities, Dutchess Community Action Partnership, Inc. and the Hunger Action Network, allows persons to electronically apply for Food Stamp benefits.

- Attended the Victim's Day Ceremony at the Wallace Center as presenters.
- Presented at the Wallace Center on National Aids Day.
- Dutchess County applied for and received a Federal Food Stamp Bonus Award in 2008. The bonus award funds of \$44,354 were reinvested in the Food Stamp Program.
- The Eat Smart New York program continued in 2008 to have nutrition improvement education staff available during Food Stamp recertification interviews at Dutchess County Department of Social Services. Project activities addressed food security, food safety and dietary quality. The program is provided through a contract with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County.
- Continued the New York State SSI Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP), which provides simplified program access for the SSI population of elderly and disabled individuals living alone in the community. The standardized benefits better ensure adequate nutrition for this vulnerable population.
- Continued the Food Stamp Benefits for Group Home Program (FSGHP), which simplified the budgeting for group home residents.
- Provided Food Stamp Benefits valued at \$16,328,894 to over 7,200 households. This represents a 22 percent increase over 2007.
- Eliminated the need for after-hour recertification. Phone interviews may be done instead of the employed person taking time off from work to come into the office.
- Obtained another waiver from the Federal time limit of three months of receipt of Food Stamps for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD's) who resided in the City of Poughkeepsie.
- Continued the Transitional Food Stamp Benefit Alternative. As the focus moves from welfare to work, the Food Stamp



Program has become increasingly important to clients as they leave TA. Transitional Benefit Alternative (TBA) allows qualified TA recipients to continue to receive Food Stamp benefits remain unchanged for an established period when the TA case closes. The cases are opened by the TA under-care/Family Assistance Unit through the Separate Determination process and maintained by the Food Stamp Unit.

- In 2008, the Working Families Food Stamp Initiative was implemented.



### FOOD STAMP ASSISTANCE CASE ACTIVITY

	2007	2008
Applications Registered.....	4,188	5,313
Cases Opened/Reactivated/ Open-Closed.....	4,900	6,097
Withdrawn.....	262	403
Denied.....	903	1,065
Cases Closed.....	4,401	4,991
Recertifications.....	3,986	4,901
Changes to Activate/ Closed Cases.....	10,067	11,327
<b>Totals – All Case Activity.....</b>	<b>24,519**</b>	<b>28,784</b>

\*From WMS WST002 \*\*corrected

# 2008 FOOD STAMPS

## Letter of Recognition



Stacey Lembesis started at DSS in March 1990 as a Data Entry Operator. She has worked in Child Support, Medicaid and is currently a Social Welfare Specialist in Food Stamps.

*(This is an excerpt from a letter to Joanne Sinagra.)*

The receptionist not only gave me her name but connected me to her. What a blessing!! That was my first experience with Ms. Lembesis. She was so kind, patient, and courteous and even took the time to listen to me. She did not make me feel inferior or nervous. I could tell by the tone in her voice that "I was not annoying her." She took all my information and said she would review the case, call me back the following day. She did call back and said she had reviewed my son's case, told me what was needed and what I needed to do.

So, I got all the paperwork together and called Ms. Lembesis to tell her I was on my way. When I arrived at Medicaid, I could not find a parking space and kept driving around the block. I called Ms. Lembesis again and told her that I could not find a parking space and I asked her if I could just pull up front and park. She said that it was fine she would come out to the car to get the paperwork. I could not believe it, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER have I dealt with anyone who has so much compassion and understanding. She is such an asset to New York State Medicaid; she has wonderful people skills and is willing to take that extra step for the people. A lot of the workers that I have dealt with could surely learn a lot from her. I'm sure that you are aware of her skills otherwise she probably would not be a Supervisor however; I felt that I had to make you aware she really left her mark on someone. She truly is a dedicated worker and I want to say thank you for having her be on your staff."

LM

## HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program)

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) assists individuals with the cost of heat and energy-related expenses. Eligibility is based on income received by the household during the month in which they apply. Regular benefits assist eligible households with the cost of heat. The emergency component of HEAP meets emergency heating needs for eligible applicants as well as providing for furnace repair or replacement for client-owned homes.

### HEAP ASSISTANCE CASE ACTIVITY\*

	2007	2008
Applications Registered.....	983	1,820
Cases Opened/Reactivated/ Open-Closed.....	540	1,113
Withdrawn.....	51	88
Denied.....	272	610
Cases Closed.....	776	661
Changes to Active/ Closed Cases.....	1,291	1,909
Totals – All Case Activity.....	2,930	4,381

\*From WMS WST002

## HEAP Accomplishments for 2008

- Through a contract with the Community Action Partnership of Dutchess County, continued to fund a full time HEAP Packager. The Packager helps identify and work with low-income, energy vulnerable families who would benefit from weatherization, other energy related services, a heating equipment crisis program and a system of emergency fuel depots throughout Dutchess County.
- Approved HEAP benefits valued at \$4,253,076 to Dutchess County resident households during the 2008–2009 season.
- Repaired or replaced furnaces at a cost of \$118,584.
- Participated in Early Outreach.

## Medical Assistance (Medicaid)

The Medicaid program provides services to the medically indigent making payments directly to providers of medical care, such as hospitals, doctors, pharmacists, etc. It is funded through federal, state, and county appropriations with a local cost of approximately 18 cents for each dollar spent. To qualify for the Medicaid program, applicants must meet prescribed income and resource requirements. Medicaid also has several specialized programs, including:

- The Family Planning Benefit Program – an expansion of the family planning benefits for both men and women of child-bearing age with income at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level;
- The Breast and Cervical Cancer Program provides full Medicaid coverage to individuals who have been screened by Healthy Women’s Partnership and who are in need of treatment for breast or cervical cancer and whose income is under 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level;
- Family Health Plus (FHP) offers Medicaid for those individuals aged 19 to 64. It offers HMO benefits more in line with commercial plans, but with no co-pays. It only offers prospective coverage and therefore cannot go back and pay prior bills. The income eligibility level is higher than the Medicaid income eligibility level for individuals with children. The current level is 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. For adults with no children, it remains at 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. In order to be eligible, individuals cannot be covered by other health insurance, including Medicare
- Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities provides Medicaid for working individuals who have disability that meets the medical criteria for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) established by the Social Security Administration (SSA) but have too much income to qualify for SSI, be between the ages of 16 and 64, have less than \$10,000 in assets and have a net income below 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

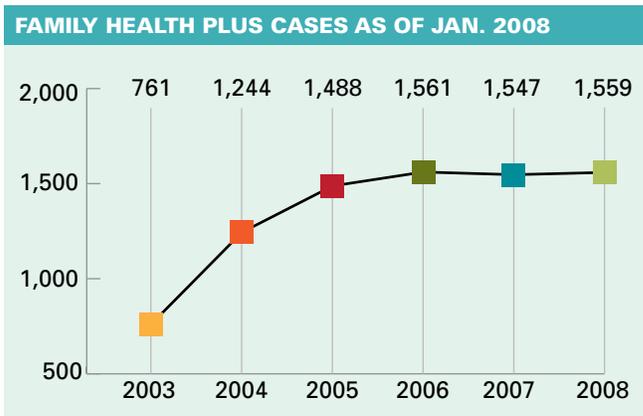
### Medicaid Managed Care/Family Health Plus

- Medicaid Managed Care offers Dutchess County residents an opportunity to choose a Medicaid health plan.
- Coordinates the enrollment and disenrollment of clients in receipt of Medicaid into the Managed Care Programs.



- Acts as a liaison with the Medicaid provider community, as well as a managed care advocate for clients.
- Currently maintains the Pre-natal Care Assistance Program (PCAP) cases for Dutchess County.
- Educate the community and local health care providers about managed care criteria.
- Approve and monitor all marketing events that take place in the county.
- Focus on preventive health care.
- There are five plans to choose from in Dutchess County. They are MVP, Fidelis, GHI, Hudson Health Plan, and WellCare.
- In response to a state mandate, Dutchess County began enrolling all Medicaid eligible participants into a managed

*Continued on page 34...*



## Medical Assistance (Medicaid)

...Continued from page 33

care program. Family Health Plus (FHP) eligible cases are also required to join a managed care plan

- Some segments of the population are excluded from enrollment. Examples: institutionalized individuals; individuals covered by a commercial plan, and individuals covered by Medicare.

### MEDICAL ASSISTANCE CASE ACTIVITY\*

	2007	2008
Applications Registered.....	7,431	8,151
Cases Opened/Reactivated/ Open-Closed.....	7,235	8,379
Withdrawn.....	339	467
Denied.....	2,108	2,668
Cases Closed.....	6,810	7,126
Recertifications.....	5,373	6,379
Changes to Active/Closed Cases.....	33,094	35,968
Totals – All Case Activity.....	54,959	60,987

\* From WMS WST002

### MEDICAID CASES AS OF JANUARY 2008

1990.....	2,751
1995.....	4,146
2000.....	5,192
2005.....	7,422
2006.....	7,865
2007.....	7,624
2008.....	7,572



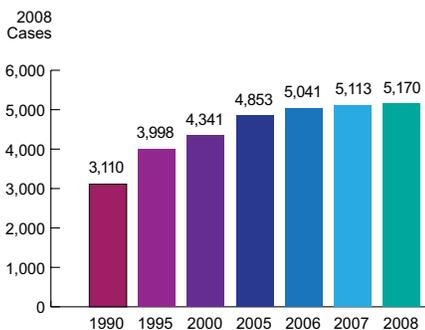
### MEDICAL EXPENDITURE BY PROVIDER\*

Provider Type.....	2007	2008	Change
Hospital Inpatient Services .....	\$38,213,934	\$33,286,048	-12.9
Hospital Outpatient Services.....	\$5,395,742	\$4,849,019	-10.1
Skilled Nursing Facilities .....	\$80,090,838	\$85,441,376	6.7
Intermediate Care Facility Service....	\$7,823,753	\$8,309,168	6.2
Clinics .....	\$17,361,935	\$19,048,972	9.7
Hospice.....	\$1,457,781	\$1,637,955	12.4
Physicians Services .....	\$2,715,667	\$2,283,697	-15.9
Dental Services .....	\$1,782,755	\$1,459,793	-18.1
Other Practitioners Services.....	\$2,991,576	\$3,643,455	21.8
Child Care Institutional Medical Per Diem .....	\$1,372,268	\$1,808,339	31.8
Personal Care Services.....	\$9,253,874	\$10,555,963	14.1
Home Health Services.....	\$1,730,772	\$2,021,961	16.8
Assisted Living Services.....	\$2,587,620	\$2,247,487	-13.1
Long Term Home Health Care Waived Services .....	\$369,113	\$499,851	35.4
Home & Community Based Waived Services .....	\$44,504,171	\$49,930,488	12.2
Rehabilitation & Therapy .....	\$706,802	\$678,759	-4
Office of Mental Hygiene Restorative Rehabilitation.....	\$4,906,212	\$7,118,052	45.1
Drugs & Supplies.....	\$21,940,424	\$22,850,089	4.1
Eye Appliances & Durable Medical Equipment .....	\$900,438	\$849,180	-5.7
Prepaid Care .....	\$29,770,244	\$37,596,519	26.3
Case Management .....	\$5,432,061	\$6,317,443	16.3
Prepaid Mental Health.....	\$359,066	\$4,941	-98.6
Medical Transportation.....	\$826,854	\$867,092	4.9
Lab & X-Ray Services .....	\$1,117,207	\$1,012,263	-9.4
Other .....	\$500,077	\$748,951	49.8
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$284,111,184</b>	<b>\$305,066,861</b>	<b>7.4</b>

## Medical Assistance Accomplishments For 2008

- Paid Medical Assistance Benefits for Dutchess County residents equal to \$10.11 per second, \$606 a minute and \$873,817 a day, amounting to a gross cost of \$311,078,884 and a net cost of \$38,302,316 to Dutchess County..
- Net Medicaid costs to the County increased only three percent in 2008, which is the percent increase New York State has limited local county cost increases to. Without this Medicaid cap, our costs would have been higher. In individual areas of expenditures, there were significant percentage increases in payments for long-term home health care waived services, child care institutional medical per diems, OMH Restorative Rehabilitation, and managed care plan premiums.
- Processed 126 disability reviews. This was a decrease from the prior year as we had no audit request.
- Using Wellcare, Hudson Health Plan, OMH Restorative Rehabilitation, GHI, MVP and Fidelis as providers, 7,571 individuals were enrolled in managed care.
- Processed 1,068 Pre-Natal Care and Assistance Program (PCAP) applications.
- Processed 207 family planning applications.

### MA/SSI CASES AS OF JAN. 2008



# Empowerment Through Employment



...Continued from page 25

says, "Personal and or financial reasons brought you to this point in your life and the benefits that are available to you through the CWEP Program will bring you to a place of self sufficiency if YOU choose to do so. Many start the Program with the idea that you're working for free. I always thought that I was earning my benefits. I had the need for the benefits and this was my first step to 'taking care of me'.

Being in the CWEP Program gives you the opportunity to learn not only business skills but also the time to investigate, on a day to day basis, the areas in your life that you need to improve and make changes in. This is done in an environment that has a multitude of resources available to make those changes.

Your work ethic, your attitude and your desire to make advances in your life will determine the amount of investment made on your behalf. Being a CWEP worker at Social Services will be the best opportunity you will have in your immediate future."

As you can imagine, Suzanne loves her job and the people with whom she works. She states that her unit "collectively provides for ourselves and families while serving our clients' needs." She believes that she can make a difference even answering the phone because in her words, "You know what it's like to

be scared and hungry. It feels good to help someone stop crying. There is a purpose. I am so proud to put the badge on and come to work. This is who I am and what I do."

Susan C. West,  
President  
of Family  
Services sent  
this letter to  
Commissioner  
Allers about  
their positive  
experiences  
with the CWEP  
program.



29 North Hamilton Street  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601  
t | 845.452.1110  
f | 845.452.1119

Ulster County Office  
85 Grand Street  
Kingston, NY 12401  
t | 845.331.5641  
f | 845.331.0594

Robert Allers, Commissioner  
Dutchess County Department of Social Services  
60 Market Street  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Dear Commissioner Allers-

With all the life and death challenges you and your staff grapple with on a daily basis, I thought you might enjoy hearing about some successes through your Community Work Experience Program (CWEP).

Family Services has recently deepened its commitment to employment on various fronts. In one initiative, we identified certain positions in the agency which could be restructured to provide the appropriate support for individuals who are attempting to enter the workforce. In addition to intensive mentoring, we provide one-on-one computer training through a volunteer from the computer industry to help ensure employability.

Last fall, we accepted our first CWEP intern, JM, who worked for us for about three months as a Program Assistant. She was on time daily, professional in appearance and manner, funny (aka worked well with the team), and a quick learner. JM was able to use her experience with us as a reference; her only professional reference. As a result of this experience, she landed a job as a receptionist in a medical office.

Another CWEP intern, AS, also worked for Family Services for several months as a Program Assistant. She was able to use her experience with us to secure a job with your agency, the Dutchess County Department of Social Services, in the Medicaid unit.

The CWEP program is a "win-win-win" proposition. The employer gets much needed staffing help, the intern gets a chance to enter the workforce and support themselves and their family, and our community gets a contributing citizen.

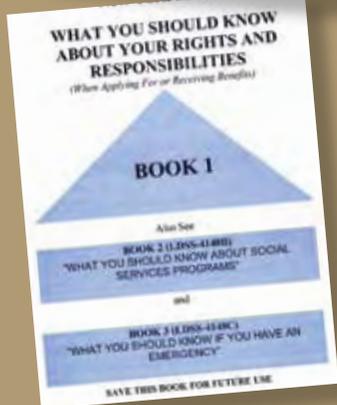
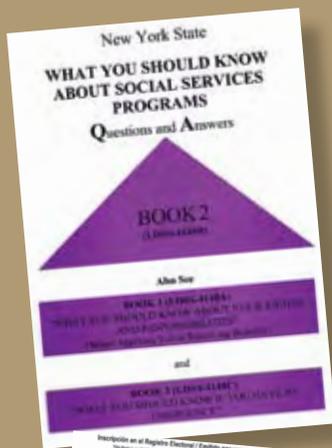
Thank you for making this possible.

Best,

Susan C. West  
President

# 2008 INTEGRATED SERVICES DIVISION

The Integrated Services division handles three major programs: Family Assistance/Safety Net Assistance, and Medicaid.



The Integrated Services Division was established in July of 2007 as a result of the Center for Governmental Research Study (CGR) and

includes two units, Medicaid and Temporary Assistance. Together they work to promote self-sufficiency, personal responsibility and “work first” (the expectation that adult applicants and recipients will consider work their first priority and will view work as their primary goal, regardless of how many barriers the individual or family may have to overcome). The division handles three major programs: Family Assistance, Safety Net Assistance and Medicaid.

In 2008 we made a change in the Integrated Services screening process. Staff is now located in the reception area, meeting applicants and reviewing applications with them and informing applicants who are not eligible for our services of other services available to them in the community. This process enables staff to get applicants to the correct program area as some are not sure what they should apply for or where they should go.

### Family Assistance

Family Assistance (FA) is provided to a family that includes a minor child living



with a caretaker relative, or to a pregnant woman. Adults and minor heads of households receiving assistance are subject to a lifetime limit of 60 months after which the individual becomes ineligible for cash assistance unless he or she meets very strict exemption criteria.

The Family Assistance program fosters recipient self-sufficiency. Recipients undergo an assessment of their employability skills training needs, and unless exempted, must participate in assigned work activities. Employed recipients are now able to have 50 percent of their gross earnings disregarded when determining their need for assistance and level of benefit.

### Safety Net Assistance

Safety Net Assistance (SNA) is a Temporary Assistance program that is funded jointly by New York State and counties. Individuals and families, who are ineligible for Family Assistance or other federally reimbursed Temporary Assistance programs, receive SNA. Most SNA recipients are single individuals or childless couples. They must engage in assigned work activities to receive assistance, unless exempted by a physical or mental disability.

SNA consists of two components—cash and non-cash. In the non-cash component; food, shelter, fuel and utility allowances are issued directly to the vendor leaving the recipient with only a small, if any, personal needs allowance. SNA is provided as cash unless the household falls into one of the four categories, which must receive non-cash. These categories are:

Households with an adult who has reached the 24-month lifetime limit on cash assistance;

Households with an adult or head of household who has refused to participate in drug/alcohol screening, assessment, or treatment;

Families that have reached the five-year limit on Family Assistance.

*Continued on page 37...*

## Integrated Services Division

...Continued from page 36

Cash SNA recipients are limited to a 24-month lifetime limit of cash assistance, with months counted since the August 1997 start of the SNA program. After the 24<sup>th</sup> month, assistance must be provided as non-cash SNA, unless the adult head of the household is exempt due to disability or an HIV positive status.

### Temporary Assistance Intake

This unit:

Determines eligibility for the various programs. Screens all applicants for domestic violence, drug and/or alcohol abuse, and any other physical or psychological barriers to employment and refers individuals to the Domestic Violence Liaison, Certified Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor, or Family Development worker from Dutchess County Community Action Partnership. All except the Family Development worker are located on site.

Refers potentially employable individuals to the Employment Unit for an assessment.

Refers individuals to the Child Support Unit to assist in establishing paternity and/or obtaining support.

Authorizes payments including recurring assistance, one-time payments, either emergency payment to prevent eviction or utility shut-off or supportive services such as car insurance, car repairs, clothing allowance, or fees for licenses, etc.

Opens Food Stamp cases and does separate determinations for Medicaid, for those not eligible for cash assistance. Makes referrals for child care and for other programs available in the community as appropriate.

### Medical Assistance (Medicaid) Intake

This unit:

Determines eligibility for various programs. These programs include the

Medicare Savings Program, Breast and Cervical Cancer Program, Family Planning Benefits Program, Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus, COBRA, AIDS Health Insurance, Short Term Home Health Care Programs and Short Term Nursing Home Care.

Screens all applicants for domestic violence, drug and/or alcohol abuse and disabilities.

Refers individuals to the Domestic Violence Liaison, Certified Drug and Alcohol Abuse Counselor, Managed Care Enrollers, Community Resources Programs and the Social Security Administration.

Refers individuals to the Child Support Unit to assist in establishing paternity, support or health insurance coverage.



# 2008 SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

The Special Investigations Unit handles referrals on welfare fraud and abuse in Social Services financial programs.



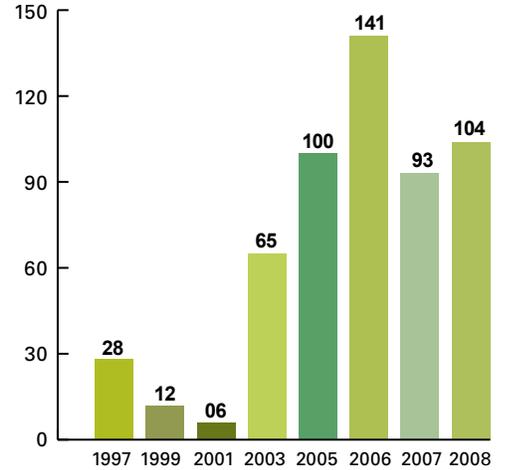
**Front End Detection is a federally mandated process that relies on “indicators” (such as working off**

**the books) to target applicants for Temporary Assistance, Medicaid and day care for an intensive review during the eligibility determination process before a case is opened and benefits are provided.**

The unit:

- Researches, secures and recovers appropriate assets from assistance recipients, including taking mortgages on real estate, placing liens on lawsuits, and filing claims against estates.
- Processes retroactive Supplemental Security Income benefits received, determining what can be retained as repayment of assistance.
- Arranges and pays for indigent burials.
- Determines and recovers overpayments from assistance recipients.
- Makes collateral contacts, performs computer reporting systems checks and makes field visits to assist workers in determining eligibility.
- Conducts fraud investigations on all cases referred by staff, and reports from

## CASES CLOSED DUE TO FRAUD



the public, of recipients fraudulently receiving benefits. The investigation may include field visits, obtaining collateral verification, reviewing computerized records, and interviews to determine if fraud was committed.

- Investigates any instance of fraud identified through the Automated Finger Imaging System (AFIS), which utilizes the latest technology to establish positive identification on adults seeking assistance. The system captures demographic data, client photo, and electronic finger images of the left and right index fingers. It is the largest and most sophisticated of any social services finger imaging system in the nation and serves as a model for other states.

Refers appropriate cases to the District Attorney or for prosecution or disqualification.

- Reviews the results of computer file matches done by New York State including:
  - Interstate matches. This report indicates clients who access their benefits out of state for three consecutive months.
  - Child care match on informal providers who receive income for providing child care. This information may or may not have been reported by the wage earner.
  - PARIS matches which indicate case may

*Continued on page 39...*



# Special Investigations Unit

...Continued from page 38

be active in two different states/districts.

- SSI matches to identify cases that may no longer reside in New York State as well as the United States.
- Monthly matches with the Department of Correctional Services and the Division of Criminal Justice to identify incarcerated individuals who are in receipt of assistance.
- Matches with Criminal Justice Services to disclose Temporary Assistance clients who are fugitive felons, parole violators or probation violators. Such individuals are not eligible for assistance, if arresting agency will verify they are fleeing prosecution.

FUNDS RECOVERED BY TYPE		
	2007	2008
Affidavits & Article 13 .....	\$26,777	\$6,197
Proceeds & Mortgages .....	\$165,022	\$68,045
Claims Against Estates .....	\$166,030	\$87,084
Lawsuit Settlements .....	\$905,427	\$677,909
Mortgages .....	\$18,524	\$20,337
SSI Repay & Volunteer .....	\$413,608	\$571,015
Medicaid Reimbursement .....	\$129,591	\$17,408
Personal Accounts & Others .....	\$66,228	\$73,578
Income Executions .....	\$84,861	\$60,919
<b>TOTALS</b> .....	<b>\$1,976,068</b>	<b>\$1,582,492</b>

FRONT END DETECTION (FEDS)	
Completed FEDS Interviews .....	2,119
Cases Denied/Withdrawn .....	1,473
Cases Opened .....	646

COST AVOIDANCE	
Temporary Assistance .....	\$4,482,215
Medicaid .....	\$7,556,634
Food Stamps .....	\$1,579,752

NUMBER OF BURIALS						
2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
123	117	109	110	106	103	120



COLLECTION ACTIVITY		
	2007	2008
Lottery Intercepts .....	\$26,307	\$23,069
Tax Intercepts .....	\$52,701	\$38,059
Fees (parking, guardian, adoption, home study, phone, postage, Confessions of Judgment, copies, subpoenas) .....	\$57,419	\$39,195
Cash collections (TANF, SN, MA, Services, FS, SN-SSI Repayments) .....	\$3,524,770	\$3,610,294
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>\$3,661,197</b>	<b>\$3,710,617</b>

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT ACTIVITY		
	2007	2008
Completed Investigations .....	342	518
Confessions of Judgment .....	105	132
Number of Repayment Agreements Signed .....	11	2
Value of Repayment Agreements Signed .....	\$12,927	\$9,632
Food Stamp Disqualifications .....	5	9
Value of Food Stamp Disqualifications .....	\$3,132	\$1,269
Temporary Assistance Disqualifications .....	4	12
Value of Temporary Assistance Disqualifications .....	\$0	\$7,686
Medicaid Fraud .....	\$108,402	\$126,264
Fraud Cases Referred for Prosecution .....	6	2
Convictions Obtained .....	2	1

# 2008 TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE & EMPLOYMENT UNITS

The Temporary Assistance and Employment Units consist of Employables, Individuals with Barriers, Child only cases. Child Care and Employment are supported. Together they work to promote self-sufficiency, personal responsibility and "work first."



We expect adult applicants and recipients to make

"employment" their first priority and to make their primary goal, finding a job regardless of any barriers that must be overcome.

This division handles four major programs. They are: Family Assistance, Safety Net Assistance, Employment and Training, and Day Care.

### Family Assistance

This is provided to a family that includes a minor child living with a caretaker relative, or to a pregnant woman. Adults and minor heads of households receiving assistance are subject to a life-time limit of 60 months after which the individual becomes ineligible for cash assistance unless he or she meets very strict exemption criteria.

The Family Assistance program fosters recipient self-sufficiency. Recipients undergo an assessment of their employability skills, training needs, and unless exempted, must participate in assigned work activities. Employed recipients are now able to

have 52 percent of their gross earnings disregarded when determining their need for assistance and level of benefit.

### FAMILY ASSISTANCE CASES

1990	1995	2000	2005	2007	2008
1,519	2,387	1,001	683	581	629

### SAFETY NET (AS OF 12/31/08)

1990	1995	2000	2005	2007	2008
649	968	361	519	553	585

### Safety Net Assistance

Safety Net Assistance (SNA) is a temporary assistance program that is funded jointly by New York State and counties. Individuals and families, who are ineligible for Family Assistance or other federally reimbursed Temporary Assistance programs, receive Safety Net Assistance (SNA). Most SNA recipients are single individuals or childless couples. They must engage in assigned work activities to receive assistance, unless exempted by a physical or mental disability.

Safety Net Assistance consists of two components: cash and non-cash. In the non-cash component, shelter, fuel and utility allowances are issued directly to the vendor leaving the recipient with only a small, if any, personal needs allowance. SNA is provided as cash unless the household falls into one of the four categories, which must receive non-cash. These categories are:

- Households with an adult who has reached the 24-month lifetime limit on cash assistance.
- Households with an adult head of household who is unable to work because of substance abuse.
- Households with an adult or head of household who has refused to participate in drug/alcohol screening, assessment, or treatment.
- Families that have reached

the five-year (60 months) limit on Family Assistance.

- Cash SNA recipients are limited to a 24 month lifetime limit of cash assistance, with months counted since the August 1997 start of the SNA program. After the 24th month, assistance must be provided as non-cash SNA, unless the adult head of the household is exempt due to disability or an HIV positive status.

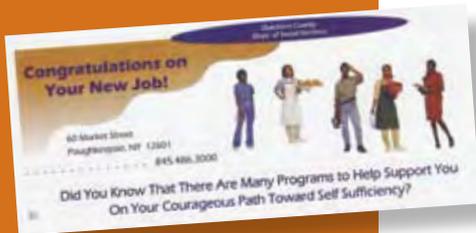
### Temporary Assistance

This unit:

Determines eligibility for the various programs. Screens all applicants for domestic violence, drug and/or alcohol abuse, and any other physical or psychological barriers to employment and refers individuals to the Domestic Violence Liaison, Certified Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor, or Family Development worker from Community Action Partnership. All except the Family Development worker are located on site.

- Refers potentially employable individuals to the Employment Unit for an assessment.
- Refers individuals to the Child Support Unit to assist in establishing paternity and/or obtaining support.
- Authorizes payments including recurring assistance, one-time

*Continued on page 41...*



### FUNDS RECOVERED BY TYPE

	2007	2008
Applications Registered .....	7,317	7,859
Cases Opened/Reactivated/ Open-Closed .....	3,127	3,128
Withdrawn.....	213	209
Denied .....	4,208	5,067
Cases Closed .....	2,108	2,121
Recertifications .....	1,220	1,267
Changes to Active/ Closed Cases .....	9,943	9,182
Totals – Case Activity .....	**20,819	20,974

\*From WMS WST002 (\*\* Corrected)

## Temporary Assistance & Employment Units

...Continued from page 40



payments, either emergency payment to prevent eviction or utility shut-off or supportive services such as car insurance, car repairs, clothing allowance, or fees for licenses, etc.

- Opens Food Stamp cases and does separate determinations for Medicaid, for those not eligible for cash assistance. Makes referrals for child care and for other programs available in the community as appropriate.
- Maintains the active Family Assistance and Safety Net cases that include individuals/families that need more than a one-time payment to reach self-sufficiency.

### Employment

This unit:

- Assists able-bodied clients to attain self-sufficiency and helps those who are temporarily or permanently incapacitated to obtain necessary treatment and rehabilitation services.
- Conducts, in conjunction with BOCES, employment assessments, helping clients to identify skills, interests and talents.
- Develops employment

plans and makes recommendations for and referrals to various DSS or community operated employment and training programs. Programs include:

- Supervised Job Search – A State mandated program for employable Safety Net and TANF applicants and recipients. Clients must contact 20 potential employers a week. Staff supervises this activity.
- Work Experience – A program for clients that evaluates their skills and interests and assigns them to appropriate employers. We have developed over 107 work experience positions in 37 different public or not-for-profit agencies.
- Authorizes payment for supportive services such as transportation, licenses, and work clothing each client needs in order to obtain a job or participate in programs.
- Together with Temporary Assistance Eligibility staff, conducts an orientation regarding Temporary Assistance, Medicaid and Food Stamp benefits, employment requirements

and transitional benefits two times daily to applicants for Temporary Assistance. Orientation consists of a video, questions and answers and each applicant has access to written materials on all programs mentioned.

- Contracts with several local agencies:
- Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce and Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce – Mentoring Programs employ mentors to work with individuals to assist them in transitioning to work by helping them to find solutions for employment issues and teach them how to manage personal and family issues related to working.

This program continues to thrive. There were 106 active participants. The goal is to assist individuals in retaining jobs. However, the mentors have been instrumental in assisting individuals in obtaining employment and advancing in their careers.

- Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce – Responsible Parent Program mentor who works with individuals who are sanctioned or about to be sanctioned for failing to comply with employment activities. This program had 17 cases.
- Dutchess County BOCES – provides vocational educational training for those who have no marketable skills. Fifty-two TANF eligible individuals completed training. The Action for Personal Choice Program

was reinstated late in the year and tailored to the needs of our current population. Eight graduated from this program. Services provided include:

- Diagnostic vocational evaluation.
- Assessments/TABE testing.
- Academic training for individuals requiring English as a Second Language and/or remediation and further development of reading, writing, computational and related communication skills.
- Job readiness training to enhance actual job-related skills or increase clients' employability by building good work habits (showing up when scheduled, being on time, displaying business-like attitude, dressing appropriately, grooming).
- Workshops – a pre-employment curriculum for hard-to-serve clients, designed to help them become aware, understand, accept and ultimately change unproductive behaviors.
- Intensive Case Management Services – provide individualized plans to individuals who are sanctioned and/or have significant barriers to employment. The Case Manager acts as an advocate for the client.
- Continued provision of Information Dissemination projects that include the design and publication of our Annual Report and other brochures and tools for use in the community and with welfare to work clients.

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## Temporary Assistance & Employment Units

Continued from page 41

### Day Care

Day Care program is designed to help low-income families meet their child care needs. Low Income Day Care is granted to anyone who applies and provides all requested documentation and has gross income below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty level. No interview is currently required and there is no waiting list. There is, however, a parent fee that must be paid based on the parent's income. The minimum fee is \$1 per month.

For calendar year 2008, 850 families and 1,463 children were subsidized by the Low-Income Day Care Program.

This unit:

- Processes applications for day care subsidies for teen parents, low-income working parents and transitional day care services for those individuals whose Temporary Assistance cases are closing.
- Monitors the number of children that each provider cares for as this is limited for

exempt providers.

- Contracts with the Child Care Council of Dutchess, Inc. to provide recruitment, registration and inspection of child care providers and assist clients in locating child care providers for their children. The Child Care Council also monitors legally exempt providers, reviewing all enrollment forms to ensure that the provider and the home meet all health and safety requirements and that there are no reported criminal convictions.
- Meets with the Child Care Council to review the DSS process and to answer any questions that providers may have in order to assist all providers in the billing process.
- Works with the Child Care Council to provide information and supplies to providers.
- Provided services to 2,643 families and 4,275 children.
- We are still operating without a waiting list.

### EMPLOYMENT UNIT ACTIVITY

	2007	2008
Clients Assessed .....	700	814
Employment Development Plans Developed .....	730	923
Referrals to Employment .....	1,208	1,716
Clients Who Entered Training .....	229	395
Current TA Clients Who Completed Training .....	35	97
200% Clients Who Completed Training .....	85	45
TANF Clients Assigned to Work Experience .....	356	464
TANF Clients Completed Work Experience .....	175	191
SN Assigned to Work Experience .....	375	485
SN Completed Work Experience .....	181	260
Number of TANF Sanctions Commenced .....	136	95
Number of SN Sanctions Commenced .....	264	370

## TA/ Employment Accomplishments for 2008

TA/Employment Accomplishments for 2008

- Provided \$13,825,133 in temporary assistance payments to or on behalf of clients.
- Provided \$5,116,772 in day care assistance on behalf of Dutchess County residents.
- Provided \$1,015 in Grants of Assistance for guide dogs.
- Purchased \$1,004,207 in case management and employment-related services from Dutchess County BOCES and Community Action Partnership of Dutchess County.
- Purchased \$398,536 in employment-related and mentoring services for clients from the Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber and the Dutchess County Regional Chamber.
- Graduated the following employees from the Family Development Credentialing program: **Debbie Fox, Deborah Powell, Maureen Stephens, Patricia Lambert, Elizabeth Platel, Barbara Milera and Alicia Cotton.**
- Intensive Case Manager has assisted five hard-to-serve individuals obtain employment and one extremely hard-to-serve individual enroll in VESID. This case manager makes home visits and site visits to employers and/or WEP sites as needed. This one-on-one intensive case management is exactly what is needed to move our remaining clients to self-sufficiency.
- YES Program continued in 2008. This program includes mentoring and tutoring for individuals between 14 and 20 attending school as well as educational workshops and field trips. Internships and jobs are still an important part of this program along with the on-going mentoring. This year there were approximately 26 active participants.
- At the One Stop Center, the Employment Unit no longer has a presence there. We currently have the JOB's person from OTDA stationed in our office. She is currently working closely with our Employment Unit to assist individuals in their job search prior to receipt of Temporary Assistance.
- For much of 2008 we had two Certified Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselors (CASAC's) on site at DSS for our Drug/Alcohol Programs. They completed 1,549 assessments. Of this number, 677 were mandated into treatment. These numbers include Medicaid individuals.
- We continue to contract with Industrial Medicine Associates (IMA) for second opinions and for initial employment assessments if an applicant/recipient does not have a doctor.
- We budgeted for two temporary file room positions for our Medicaid division. We will pay salaries for up to six months training for TANF clients, which will help us meet our employment rates and will acclimate and train these individuals for a non-assistance life.

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# TA/ Employment Accomplishments for 2008

...Continued from page 42

- In 2008 we purchased six vehicles for individuals who were TANF certified or Temporary Assistance recipients through the Community Solutions for Transportation program in con-

junction with Dutchess County BOCES.

- Organized a computer training weekend for 24 children ages 12 to 17.
- Continued to offer after-hours recertifications on

the second Thursday of each month.

- A court settlement (Doe vs. Doar) resulted in retro-active reimbursement to 154 households containing an SSI individual.

We issued approximately \$530,413. After reviewing closed cases for possible reimbursement, we reimbursed \$180,000.



## 2008 LEGAL UNIT

The legal unit represents DSS in Children's Services, Child Support and Adult Protective Cases.



The legal unit consists of one Bureau Chief and five Senior Assistant County Attorneys. Three

secretarial staff gives clerical support to the attorneys.

This unit:

Provides legal advice to the various divisions and represents DSS in Family Court cases and in related matters in other court and legal forums.

Handles cases involving adult protection, child abuse and/or neglect, foster care and severance of parental rights.

Prosecutes support collection cases.

## Legal Unit Accomplishments for 2008

- Participated in the Dutchess County Child Abuse Center
- Continued team membership in the Family Treatment Court
- Continued participation in the NYS Office of Children and Family Services Termination of Parental Rights Workgroup
- Participated in Family Court Advisory meetings
- Attended Sharing Success program
- Participated in weekly CPS case reviews
- Participated in biweekly sex abuse case reviews and foster care permanency reviews
- Assisted in formulation of joint protocol for Domestic Violence and CPS service providers
- Participated in Adoption Now Case Review

### LEGAL DISPOSITIONS

	2007	2008
Child Abuse Petitions.....	52.....	52
Child Neglect Petitions .....	659.....	639
Termination of Parental Rights.....	38.....	79
IVD Paternity.....	575.....	382
IVD Support .....	4,070.....	5,281
IVD Interstate Support (UIFSA) .....	163.....	126
Permanency Hearings.....	429.....	411*
Special Calendars .....	76.....	6
Expungements .....	57.....	51
Collection and Resource Cases .....	73.....	61
Adult Protective Cases .....	28.....	24

\* (Figure based on combined court numbers for this court part.)

Child Protective Reports .....	2,654
Support Filings .....	7,337
Private Support Referrals .....	153



## Important Internet Website Addresses

Child Care Council of Dutchess  
<http://www.childcaredutchess.org/index.htm>

Dutchess County  
<http://www.dutchessny.gov>

Dutchess County Department  
of Social Services  
<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/SocialServices/SSIndex.htm>

Dutchess County Community  
Action Partnership  
<http://www.dutchesscap.org/>

Dutchess Outreach, Inc.  
<http://dutchessoutreach.org>

Grace Smith House  
<http://gracesmithhouse.org>

New York State  
<http://www.state.ny.us>

New York State Adoption Service  
<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/adopt>

New York State Office of Children & Family Services  
<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us>

New York State Office of Temporary &  
Disability Assistance  
<http://www.otda.state.ny.us>

New York State Kids' Well-Being Indicator  
Clearinghouse  
<http://www.nyskwic.org>



## In memory of Irene Patricia Albert Magalski

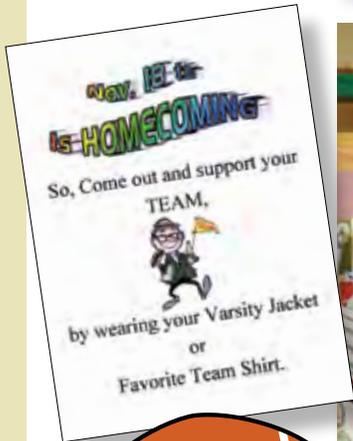
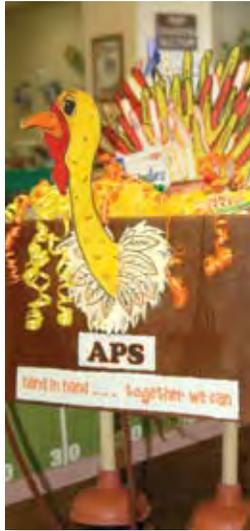
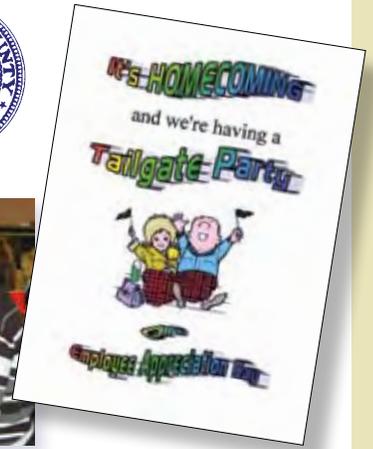


**T**he Dutchess County Department of Social Services was saddened to learn of the passing of our former Deputy Commissioner, on May 27, 2008. Irene had served as our Deputy Commissioner from 1997 until her retirement on December 28, 2007.

*Irene's public life was dedicated to the protection of the children with whom she came in contact during her careers at Putnam County Department of Social Services, the New York State Council on Children and Families and the Dutchess County Department of Social Services.*

*Irene's passion, to help New York State's children in need, and her love for her family were evident to anyone with whom she came in contact. Irene would be proud to know, that in reflection, they are the traits we most fondly remember.*

# Employee Appreciation Day 2008 November 18, 2008



## DSS Alumni



DSS



Dutchess County Department of Social Services  
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Poughkeepsie, NY 12601  
845.486.3000