

Monthly Director's Report to

Board of Social Services



January 2018

Submitted by:
Jerrie McFalls, Director

2017 was a busy year for the administration and staff of Henderson County Department of Social Services. Below are some of the highlights of the year:

- ~ We have worked on several initiatives this year in child welfare. We have continued to provide Family Centered Treatment (FCT) to families through a contract with SPARC. Due to the success of FCT and a need to support families with substance abuse issues we presented a proposal to the Duke Endowment to support Family Centered Recovery. We met with a Duke Endowment representative several times to perfect the proposal and clarify the process. The grant was approved by the Trustees of The Duke Endowment on December 5, 2017 in the amount \$415,961.
- ~ We have worked on a training initiative for child welfare employees and social work students with the Directors from some other western counties and Western Carolina University.
- ~ During this year we have contracted training for our social work staff in the area of motivational interviewing, documentation in child welfare and writing effective service agreements. This has allowed our staff to train together and to participate in training timely.
- ~ Job descriptions for child protective services social workers have been updated. We are finalizing the rewritten descriptions for foster care and foster care support staff.
- ~ Job descriptions for all adult service staff have been rewritten, approved, signed and distributed.
- ~ Cross training of both child welfare and adult services program managers this year has helped prepare for future unexpected absences and is intended to support succession planning.
- ~ Approval was obtained from the County and OSHR for the creation of a CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) position in social work. The position is now filled and work has begun to develop and implement tools for monitoring. I believe this position will help prepare us for transition into NC Fast for child welfare and adult services.
- ~ Although we have had periodic lapses in deputy back up for our on-call workers this year we currently have an agreement with the Sheriff's Department. Deputies assigned to patrol Jackson Park accompany our social workers who are on-call. This plan increased deputy coverage in the park and provides needed support for on-call. We now have back-up six days per week without waiting for patrol to assist us.
- ~ I met with line staff and supervisors of each economic service unit to discuss their thoughts and ideas about important issues that I need to be aware of. This offered an opportunity for relationship building. Each meeting was different but all meetings offered a good exchange of information and positive discussion.

~ I worked with economic services supervisors to process and develop a plan for sustainable reorganization in economic services. Through this process I was able to assess some of the strengths and needs of their section. A plan was developed and presented to the DSS Board. Supporting documents were approved by county management and have been sent to OSHR for approval. I believe the reorganization will support succession planning.

~ Job descriptions for economic services staff have been updated and staff have signed their current job description. Additionally, job descriptions are being processed for each new hire as a part of the orientation process.

~ Agency Supervisors have participated in trainings offered by OSHR including Employee Relations and Leadership Foundation training. They also have participated in Franklin Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and Conflict Resolution training offered at Blue Ridge Community College. These trainings are the first formal training offered to several supervisors in leadership.

~ We established "DSS News and Notes", an email to all staff on the first Monday of each payroll to let them know of any new staff members joining us, of retirements, resignations and other agency news.

~ We worked with County IT and the Health Department to develop a Nixle System which provides emergency and important notification to employees of the Human Services building about any situation that could impact their safety. Notification will be through text message and email alerts.

~ Each month this year I had lunch with agency employees celebrating their birthday. This opened the door for staff to meet co-workers they didn't know, develop contacts in other sections and have casual interaction with me.

~ We obtained approval to have awnings installed above each of the employee entrances to the building. This has been a much appreciated addition that was a long term request.

~ The vending machines were moved to a central location making more room for staff to have lunch in the kitchens.

~ After several years of staff requests we purchased polo shirts with the county emblem embroidered on them for employees.

Our work would not be possible without the support of you, our DSS Board. Thank you on behalf of our staff and clients for your commitment to our mission and for helping make Henderson County a better place to live.

Employees of the Month: The January Employees of the Month list is enclosed.