



Child & Family Services

Of Northeast Michigan, Inc.

Child & Family Services of NE Michigan, Inc Child & Family Services Newsletter



President's Message Karen Werth



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We say good bye to our agency's director of 20 years, Alan Brown and welcome our new director who has also been with the agency for 17 years, Lyle Dorr. The agency flourished under Alan Brown's directorship, more than doubling in size and scope to help the children and families of Northeast Michigan. We appreciate very much Alan's dedication to the agency and his skillful leadership and wish him well in his new endeavors. At the same time we enthusiastically welcome Lyle. With his experience working for the agency, we should have a nearly seamless transition and yet see some changes take place as Lyle works on new ideas he has for the agency. We're eager to work with Lyle and the staff as we continue to try to meet the needs of the families of Northeast Michigan. Funding is always a challenge in the human service field and especially in the State of Michigan where budgets are very tight. We continue to work toward meeting greater needs within the

limits we are given. One of the Board's concerns is that our Northeast Michigan Community be fully aware of the services we do provide. We would like those who have need of our programs to full access them and for those who would like to help us, to know how they can do that. This newsletter continues to be one of the ways we can help the community become more aware of our programs and a way for you to help us provide these services. With the fine example that Alan Brown established with this agency and the new leadership of Lyle Dorr along with help from people like you in our communities, we look forward to a strong new year. A year of growth and challenges as we try to meet the needs of the children and families of Northeast Michigan

Emeritus Members

- Nathan Blury
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Director's Message Lyle Dorr



On October 17, 2005 two significant things occurred. Alan Brown our former Executive Director began his new adventure at a sister agency (Family and Children's Services) in Kalamazoo. It is three to four times our size and should afford Alan a great way to end his Social Work career. His wife, Sheryl, is also able to be near her mother. Secondly, I began my new adventure replacing Alan as Executive Director of Child & Family Services of NE MI, Inc. I have received a tremendous amount of support from staff inside the agency and others outside. I am glad to report that the transition has gone very well for us at the agency. My thanks to the staff and Board who have helped me through all of my firsts in this new role.

Western Michigan University on my path to receiving a Masters in Counseling and Personnel. Married my wife Renee (from Grand Rapids) some twenty years ago. Renee will be graduating from the RN program at ACC this May – I married a smart one. We have three boys ranging in age from 13 – 16. (That's right, when my oldest is a senior, all three will be in high school.) I have 25 years of clinical and supervisory experience. Thirteen years in residential services and 12 in intensive in-home counseling services. I have been with Child & Family for 17 years and have found it to be a great place to work. I look forward to serving the agency in this new capacity.

Who am I and how did I get here or as the colloquialism from Posen/Rogers City goes, "Who am I from home?" I was born and raised in Alpena – parents, Wes and Gerry Dorr. Went to ACC, Ferris and

The agency has received a fair amount of good news in recent weeks and we are looking to the future with optimism. *(continued next page)*

(Director's Message *continued*)

One bright spot is the addition of much sought after funds (7 years) to provide counseling services to children in our intensive foster care program. Beginning in 2006, this will become a reality. We are also getting much closer to pursuing the Hope House building project. This past year we discovered a grant that will provide \$300 – 450 thousand dollars (half the project cost), if we have property donated to us. We already have \$250K committed to the project through various sources. So if any of you have or if you know of someone with property (2 – 5 acres) near Alpena that could use a write off, reference them our way. It is definitely worth it for us to find this property. **Thanks to all of you who support our work and provide encouragement throughout the year.**

Have a great holiday season! Lyle



Staff Spotlight – Jessica Gillard

It was a difficult transition for Jessica when she left her Kindergarten students in Detroit to take the position of 4C Director for our agency almost 5 years ago. She loved her kids and loved the city of Detroit (and still does!), but the thought of buying a house and settling down in her hometown of Alpena made the decision a little easier. Luckily for her, Jessica had come across an old online posting for the 4C Director position, telephoned the 4C Office, and talked to a really sweet person named Genny Domke. She later talked to a very serious Alan Brown, who scared her at first, but who decided to take a chance on this “young lady” and gave her the opportunity that changed her life.

Jessica credits Alan Brown and the wonderful 4C staff with everything that she has learned and all that has happened since she came to the agency. With Alan’s mentoring and the unbelievable support from her co-workers, Jessica was able to strengthen the services 4C offered through the child care resource/referral and child care provider training programs. Over the years, Jessica has also written successful grant applications that brought various programming to 4C such as a child care provider professionalism and marketing grant, a grant that encouraged local employers to develop work/family solutions for their employees, a “HAPPY” child care expulsion prevention program, and an early literacy program for child care providers known as “Raising Readers”. Jessica is particularly proud of her work to create our Northeast Michigan Even Start Family Literacy Program. As the program is now in it’s fourth year of existence, Jessica is truly amazed at what the program has morphed into with the direction of Farrah Wallen, Even Start Coordinator, and the hard work of the Even Start staff. Unfortunately, with budget cuts looming and increased competition for all state and federal funds, 4C and its programs are not as secure Jessica would like them to be. “The people who work at this agency and in the 4C programs deserve so much more in terms of job security, compensation, etc. Not having the means to reward people with what they have truly earned has been the most difficult part of my job as Director.”

When Alan left the agency a few months ago, Jessica was on maternity leave after giving birth to her second child. According to Jessica, it was during those crazy months of transition and while tearfully saying goodbye to Alan that she truly realized what she enjoyed most about working at Child and Family: the “amazing collection of really, really good people.” After 5 great years at 4C, her second new house, 3 years of marriage to Matt, and two babies (Gracie and Joel), Jessica laughs when remembering her apprehension about taking a significant cut in pay in order to accept her job with the agency. “No amount of money can buy what this job has taught me, or the friendships that I’ve made, or the opportunity to start a family. I’ve really enjoyed the last five years here.”

*Have you ever
thought of
sharing your
love and home with a
child in need?*

Interested in becoming a

Foster Parent?

Interested in adopting a child?

**Contact Child And Family
Services Of Northeast
Michigan**

**Locally at 989-356-4567 or
1-800-779-0396**

Child Welfare -Renee Diener

Child Welfare has been busy with some internal staff changes in order to assist in the recruitment and licensing of new foster homes. Kelli Sumerix, who has had a split caseload of adoption and foster home licensing, will now be doing foster home licensing full-time. Debra Smith, who works part time, will focus mainly on foster home recruitment and retention, as well as assist in developing training modules for foster parents.

Both Child Welfare staff and foster parents have been participating in training that is focused on the Family to Family model of Foster Care. This has been a collaborative training effort, between this agency, our student intern, Carlene Przykucki, and the Michigan Department of Human Services. This new model of providing foster care has been rolling out across the state of Michigan, and as an agency we are trying to be proactive in insuring that our staff and foster parents are ready and prepared for participating in this new model before it is rolled out in our geographic area.

Recently, we were pleased to hear that the legislature voted to equalize specialized foster care contracts, thus increasing our specialized per diem from approximately 24 dollars per day to 34 dollars per day. This increase will enable us to take a look at our services to our children and families, and how we can enhance our programming to meet these needs.

4C News -Robin Benson

*This month Michigan 4C Futures (Provider Training) staff is busy with fall and early winter trainings. There has been a high volume of interest in the Basic Training being offered. Other trainings being offered are a mini-training dealing with literacy experiences and myofacia techniques in Alpena in December and a mini-training in Cheboygan for make-it-take-it activities. With licensing rule changes occurring in the near future, providers will be required additional training each year.

*We are continuing to offer child care referrals and now have real time online referrals available to the public.

Visit www.4c-ne.com.

*4C is currently going through accreditation with NACCRRRA's Quality Assurance Program. The Quality Assurance Program is a national, voluntary certification system designed to ensure that families across the country have access to consistent, high-quality consumer education and referral services.

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies seeking Quality Assurance are required to meet a set of Criteria for Best Practices that define measurable outcomes for consumer education and referral service delivery. Participating CCR&Rs receive technical assistance during a self-assessment and improvement phase, then submit a comprehensive portfolio to NACCRRRA for validation, and if accepted, approval and certification.

*We are also waiting to hear if we will receive funding of a grant that will help cover the cost of training for providers about safe sleeping basics for babies. The grant will fund education of providers as to the safest way for babies to sleep, SIDS facts and research, and will provide 15 providers with safety approved cribs for their child care homes or centers.



Have a Blessed
Holiday Season!



Families First -Lynne Walter

The Families First Program has gone through a lot of changes recently. First, the state realigned the contract areas this fall. Child and Family Services of NE Michigan used to have two contracts with the state. In order to cut overhead cost the State put out bids for larger coverage areas. We now have one contract that covers eight counties; Alpena, Alcona, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Presque Isle and Roscommon counties as well as Iosco Courts.

In addition to the changes on the state level the changes within our agency greatly affected the Families First program. With Alan Brown leaving and Lyle Dorr taking on the Executive Director position, the management of the Families First team changed also. Lyle Dorr is now the Program Manager for Families First and he recruited me to take on the Supervisor position. I was a former Families First Worker under Lyle's supervision in the past and had left the agency to take another Families First Supervisor position. During the State's restructuring that program was absorbed into a larger one and I was very happy to return to CFS as the new Supervisor. Our West Branch Families First office closed with the restructuring, but

we were very fortunate to retain our three Families First Workers, Barb Wilson, Linda Eberline and Anne Walrath. We also hired another experienced worker, Susan Hall. She had recently moved to Alpena when her husband was transferred here with the company he works for. I am pleased to say that all these workers are highly skilled and very enthusiastic about the Families First model. We still have one more worker position to fill and that person will likely start in January. The biggest challenge we face is serving such a large area. While the workers carry a small but intensive caseload it is important to be sure that the cases are not located too far apart from each other in order to be able to spend the time necessary with the clients. We cover from just north of Roger City to just south of West Branch! I have to commend the Team for their positive attitude during all these many changes! Referrals are coming in on a steady basis and we are continuing to help families stay together safely.

Hope House - Peggy Krajniak

New Director at Hope House: My name is Peggy Krajniak. I have worked for the last seventeen years at Northeast Michigan Community Services Agency in the adolescent services division. I have a MA in Community Agency and School Counseling from Western Michigan University. I am really excited about working at Hope House with its many challenges. We as a staff are also looking forward to building a new facility, to house the girls that are placed in our care. This will be an exciting time for all employees and residents at Hope House. We have many ideas about what will work best for the program in a new facility and eagerly anticipate breaking ground. As Hope House nears its capacity of residents, our 13 beds

will be full in early December, we see the need more each day to have additional space available. We continue to work on getting this project off the ground. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome additions to our staff. Cathy Buczkowski has been hired as a part time treatment specialist and we have Jamie Campbell as our Americorp member to work on a mentoring program for our residents. The holidays are always a busy time and the girls are busy with volunteer work. They will be participating in the Operation Cheer along with other volunteer efforts. The girls really seem to enjoy their volunteer time.

Even Start - Farrah Wallen

Northeast MI Even Start is a family literacy program serving Alpena, Alcona, and Montmorency counties. This program targets families who have an adult who hasn't completed their GED or high school diploma and a child birth through 7 years old. This program not only helps parents to achieve their educational goals, but helps them to see their most important role of teacher in their child's education. This is a home based program. Facilitators schedule weekly or biweekly visits and take in a children's book with planned learning activities. Families are also supported by monthly family nights and invitations to numerous community events.

If you have someone who might be interested in receiving Even Start services, have them call the main agency and ask for Farrah Wallen ext. 3304 or go to our website at www.nemievenstart.org.

*"Children are
made readers in
the laps of their
parents."*

ELARY - Marilyn Wallen

The Greatest Gift for the Holiday Season-Economic Literacy

About a year ago, Child and Family Services received a wonderful gift....an American Express Foundation Grant for the creation of a financial literacy program for at risk youth. The six week series called "Dollars and Sense", has been a real learning experience for our teens, our foster families, and for me. One of our biggest challenges has been scheduling six consecutive classes around the busy lives of teens, their families, and their transportation issues.

The results have been very interesting. After learning the REAL STORY about credit card fees and interest rates, the majority of the class swore they would NEVER use a credit card. They all agreed the rates were unbelievable, and were shocked by the number of years needed to repay a \$1000

bill if they only paid the minimum payment (over 7 years at 15% interest). I wish I could record their comments and hit the "play" button in a few years. Hopefully they will put the valuable information we've armed them with to good use.

Goals for year two of our program include extending our classes to the Tawas/Hale area, equipping our foster parents with some tools to use at home with their teens, and increasing public awareness.

For more information about this exciting program, contact Marilyn Wallen-Program Coordinator at 989-356-4567.

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