



Child & Family Services of NE Michigan, Inc

Winter 2008



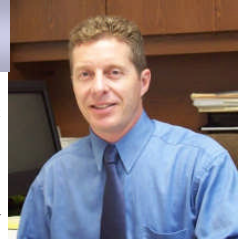
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Director's Message — Lyle Dorr



This past year has been very tumultuous for private agencies. Challenges from the budget crisis in Lansing (October of 2007) to the recent Children's Rights lawsuit settlement against the State (www.childrensrights.org/news-events/press/michigan-settles-reform-lawsuit/) have been persistent. Despite many major challenges a bright ray of hope has been the change over of top administrative officials in the Department of Human Services (DHS). The new DHS administration has worked hard to cultivate mutual trust and respect between DHS and private agencies to correct the short-falls in Michigan's child welfare system.

Based on the settlement agreement over the Children's Rights Lawsuit, these changes will take place over the next five years and are intended to ensure the safety of children in out of home care, reduce the amount of time children remain out of home and/or more quickly find stable placements with relative or other licensed care providers. Two other key components of the changes will be smaller more manageable case loads for workers and supervisors, along with extensive training protocols and credentialing for both.

So what does this mean for Child and Family Services of Northeast Michigan? The new case load ratios are in line with what we already maintain due to the large 12 county geographic area we cover.

Along with lower case loads will have to come an increase in per diem rates, which will allow us to better pay front line staff and better ensure their longevity with us. Seasoned staff is essential to maintaining a strong child welfare program. The increased funds will help us provide them a living wage so they will not have to look elsewhere to better support their own family. This stability then means better ongoing support for the children and foster parents we service.

As difficult as the lawsuit has been on the State, it clearly will improve the child welfare system in Michigan. Children's Rights has successfully sued several other states, resulting in improvements. At a recent leadership meeting where all the parties involved in the law suit and implementation of the reforms met, monitors of the implementation indicated that they have never seen such a spirit of determination and cooperation to make things right for children. This joint effort will lead to Michigan becoming a national model for child welfare reform.

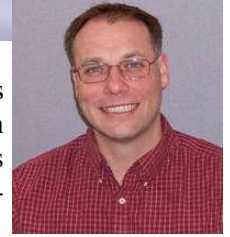
When we work together, we win! This means the vulnerable children we serve win!

Lyle

Check us out online at:
www.cfsnemi.org

www.ne-4C.org

Child Welfare – James Juchartz



As many of you are aware, the State of Michigan was engaged in a lawsuit brought upon by Children's Rights, Inc., a national advocacy group working to reform America's failing child welfare systems on behalf of the abused & neglected children who depend on them for protection along with several attorney's in Michigan and throughout the country. The state was charged with violating the constitutional rights of the approximately 19,000 children in its custody by failing to protect their safety and well-being and find them permanent homes. Sadly, there were several deaths of children while in foster care in recent years (*these children were not in any CFS foster care homes*). Recently, a Proposed Settlement Agreement was reached which outlined multiple areas within state policies requiring improvements and set a five year time table to achieve these modifications. Some of the areas that the entire child welfare system throughout the state will see are new education requirements for all frontline supervisors, enhanced mandated state training requirements for all child welfare professionals, caseload reductions, new requirements in recruiting foster care and adoptive families, children's placement with relatives, and child protective services. Although there will be a wide impact upon both state and private agencies providing child welfare services, the CFS child welfare program had already been actively practicing some of the proposed requirements prior to the agreement. If you would like to review the approximate 80 page agreement, it is available on the Michigan DHS website at <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs>. If a computer is not available to you, a copy of the Settlement Agreement may be obtained by contacting Plaintiff's counsel through Aaron Sussman or Mae Ackerman-Brimberg at Children's Rights toll free at (888) 283-2210. Also, if you would like to learn about one boy's tragedy, please research the name Ricky Holland.

As you recall, most of all adoption cases handled by the Department of Human Services were shifted to private agencies for services. Currently, we have approximately thirty active cases, which is a tremendous increase from six cases in 2007. Although adoption cases can provide a substantial financial benefit to the agency if completed quickly, we look at the appropriateness of the interested parties and complete thorough assessments to ensure the overall well being and stability of the home. Nobody wants to see the adoption fall apart, displacing the child. Another responsibility that is being transferred to private agencies is the licensing of relatives with whom children are placed. Although this service provides for financial gain to the agency, there are currently many barriers to overcome and both DHS and all private agencies across the state are currently working together to ensure that this process does not create an overload to resource availability. Presently, we have one full time licensing specialist for the child welfare program and one for the new Specialized Treatment Foster Care Program.

Since May, recruitment of foster homes has been a strong focus. The staff created bookmarks describing both foster care and adoption and in May, Perch's IGA, located in Alpena, and Neiman's Grocery Store in East Tawas were approached and they happily agreed to distribute them in each grocery bag. A big thank you to the both of them! Other recruitment efforts include radio spots, public service announcements, newspaper advertising, and a recent request for funding from the Iosco County United Fund. If you would like or know of an organization that would help distribute book marks, please contact us and we will be happy to provide you with as many as you can carry!

On behalf of all the child welfare staff, we would like to extend a warm welcome to Tiffany Eddinger, who assumed a position as a Foster Care Caseworker replacing Darcie Scheller who left the agency in late July. Although born in Michigan, Tiffany resided in Illinois for fifteen years and her experiences include working in child welfare and with foster parents. She has a Bachelor in Social Work and is scheduled to attend the Child Welfare Institute Foster Care Caseworker-New Hire Training in September. She recently relocated back to Michigan to be with her family who reside in Lincoln. She has been a tremendous help since coming aboard and has adjusted quite nicely. Again, welcome aboard!

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

Interested in becoming a

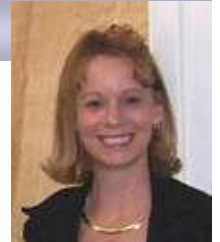
Foster Parent?

Interested in adopting a child?



Contact Child And Family
Services Of Northeast Michigan
Locally at 989-356-4048 or
1-800-779-0396

4C News -Robin Benson-Clark



4C has had a busy year! Although the total number of child care referrals are down, our child care provider training numbers are up! So far this fiscal year, we have completed 851 child care referrals and have trained 221 child care providers. Additionally, 4C On-Site Coordinators have helped to facilitate CPR/First Aid training for 102 child care providers. Now that child care providers are required to gain 10 hours in training each year, we see many more of them! We've had some new projects this year that we have been really excited about.

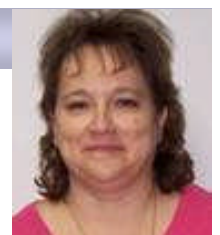
First, we were able through some additional funding to assist a few child care providers and centers to begin accreditation. Accredited child care providers or centers are the "gold standard" in child care. All child care providers are required to meet minimal licensing requirements. However, through accreditation, child care providers are required to meet higher standards of quality in all areas including staff, health and safety, curriculum and others. We are currently working with three centers who wish to become accredited. The extra funding allows us to work with them one-on-one.

We also have been able to be a part of a pilot training project called Basic II Coaching Model. This training model took us to the child care environment to work with providers in one of three areas: supporting positive guidance and discipline, activities and interactions to support children's learning, and management of early child care programs. Being in the child care environment allowed the training to be unique for each provider as it was tailored to suit their individual needs.

Recently we were able, through funding from the Human Services Collaborative Council, to offer a parent/child workshop in Alpena about when it is appropriate and safe to leave your children home alone. So often we hear from parents and child care providers that many parents are choosing to leave their children home alone after school or other times when a parent is working, due to financial difficulties or other reasons. Many times the child is not fully prepared for this transition and the parents have not considered many areas of risk in doing this. We held our first workshop in September of 2008 to a limited number of parents and children. The response was overwhelming. During this workshop, parents and children worked through a booklet entitled, "At Home Alone," and discussed many issues that needed to be part of this important decision in a family. First aid, rules, safety, stranger dangers and how the child feels about the process were all included in the discussions. We also conducted some role play scenarios that helped children think about how to respond in certain situations such as when a stranger comes to the door, when friends stop by, smelling smoke in the house and possible injuries. We hope to be able to offer this type of parent/child workshop in all counties in our service area.

4C has had a challenging year with new staff, a new database system, a contract extension and other changes! I am proud of how our staff has handled everything – they are a great bunch of talented women with which to work!

Hope House - Peggy Krajniak



Hope House sure has had a busy summer. We have been at capacity for the majority of the time. The girls were able to go on their annual summer trip. This year they saw a Detroit Tigers baseball game, the Detroit Zoo, Zhender's Splash Village and Bronner's Christmas Store. The second part of the trip they went camping at Silver Lake. While there they went to Michigan Adventure Amusement Park, climbed the sand dunes and generally had a relaxing time. Unfortunately Mother Nature did not cooperate so they were unable to go canoeing as planned. Maybe next year.

The girls made their own money by picking strawberries for AJ's Strawberry Farm. We even crowned a Strawberry Queen. The girl who is the top money earner is crowned the queen and gets to sign the strawberry cape when she graduates from the program. The girls think that this is a real hoot. They surely enjoy counting all their money when the picking is done.

The girls have also helped out at Centurion Farms by weeding and harvesting vegetables. Centurion Farms donates fresh vegetables to hope House each week, which the girls enjoy.

We have also welcomed new staff to the Hope House team. Katie Witkowski, Rachel Wertherhult and Jennifer Alsop have all joined our treatment team. Jackie Mousseau is our secretary and Kym Ray is our new cook. Please welcome them if you see them. The Hope House Team has continued to go above and beyond to help the girls in our care. It is truly a great team to work with and I appreciate the way in which they care about the girls in Hope House.

Staff Spotlight – Randy Boboltz



Randy Boboltz is our Chief Financial Officer at Child & Family Services. He has been employed with us since 2004. As CFO, he and his great staff handle accounting, payroll, planning, financial reporting, employee benefits, insurance, finance and grounds and maintenance.

Randy has been married to Jamie for 31 years and has three daughters – Ashley, 27 (soon to be a mom with their first grandchild), Amanda, 26 and Alisa, 23. Grace Kelly the beagle is almost like a fourth daughter.

Reading, caring for hunting property and growing crops for wildlife are current interests that occupy much of his “free” time. Favorite topics for reading are ancient history, especially first century of the current era, history of science and mathematics and current events.

Randy has an Associates in Science from Alpena Community College, a Bachelor of Arts in history and sociology from Western Michigan University and a Master of Science in

Accounting from Central Michigan University. His current significant community affiliations are City of Alpena Planning Commission, Besser Credit Union Supervisory Committee and the Alpena Lions Club.

Randy says “What was most enticing about joining Child & Family Services was the challenge of changing focus from a for profit manufacturing and distribution environment with lots of facilities and equipment to a nonprofit human service environment whose biggest asset is employees.”

Randy also commented, “The biggest challenge here is dealing with programs for which our funding sources are at best barely adequate while keeping the company financially healthy. The most rewarding aspect of my job is associating with such a wonderful group of caring people throughout the agency and the dedicated, diligent administrative staff who support me.”

Accomplishments: treating all coworkers with respect, improving efficiencies of administrative tasks and controlling escalating costs of business insurances and employee medical insurance costs without cutting benefit levels. Randy likes to tell others about the wonderful group of people he gets to work with directly but, more importantly, about the workers in the programs who help so many people. That is what we are all about.



Specialized Foster Care – Ken Skwir

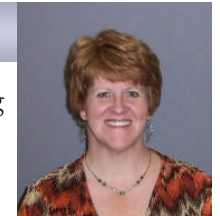
The Specialized Treatment Foster Care Program continues to grow, not as fast as we had hoped, but it is growing.

We have four foster families up and running and two more families are beginning the training to be licensed by the State of Michigan. We have two children placed in our homes and we hope to have two more placed in the next month.

Changes are in the wings for the program as well. Our Program Supervisor has moved on and we have named Linda Eberline as the new supervisor. Linda comes to us from the Families First Program and we are excited for her to get started. Linda will attend training in Oregon during October and take over supervisor responsibilities in November.

I will serve as the interim supervisor.

Families First -Lynne Walter



It is with great sadness that I share that CFSNE MI will no longer be doing the Families First program. Due to the economy and the capped budget of this program it is no longer financially feasible to continue. We have provided this service to northeast Michigan for about 18 years. Prior to becoming the Executive Director, Lyle Dorr was the Families First Supervisor and I have taken it over for the last three years. I had worked in Families First for three years prior to becoming the Supervisor here and I feel so strongly that it is an amazing service to families in need.

The service will continue with another agency and we

wish them much success! As the saying goes....When one door is closed, another is opened and Child & Family Services is actively exploring other options to continue to assist families in need.

One of the hardest things about closing down a program is saying good-bye to all the amazing people I have worked with – my staff, all the other professionals and the families that have worked so hard to better themselves. It never ceases to amaze me at how life has a way of making our paths cross again just when we least expect it.

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A big thank you to Jerry & Gailynn Reed of JJ's Awesome Acres!

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