

# ***Commissioner's Award Book***



## ***16<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect***

***Protecting Children, Promoting Healthy  
Families, and Preserving Communities***

April 16 – 21, 2007  
Oregon Convention Center  
Portland, Oregon



## MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

With great pleasure, I welcome you to the 2007 Commissioner's Award Ceremony. This evening we salute an indispensable group of individuals with a well-deserved Commissioner's Award. The award recognizes those who, through their hard work and dedication, have made outstanding contributions toward the prevention, intervention, and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

Both professionals and volunteers, these individuals represent many of the numerous disciplines involved in the collaborative and critical task of preventing and responding to child maltreatment: social work and policy, health and mental health, the judiciary, law enforcement, education, as well as community organizations. Notably, each demonstrates a strong personal commitment to protecting and serving children and families who suffer the dangers and indignities of abuse and neglect.

The honorees featured in this publication inspire, energizing us to renew our commitment to *Protecting Children, Promoting Healthy Families, and Preserving Communities*—the theme of our 16<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect. Advocates, protectors, healers all—each in her/his unique way serve to remind us that one person can make a difference in the lives of our nation's children.

On behalf of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, I extend my appreciation and warmest congratulations to these our unsung heroes, commending each for their unwavering devotion to ensuring the safety and well-being of America's children.

Joan E. Ohl  
Commissioner  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families



# Introduction

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Now an established tradition and a highlight of our 16th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, the Commissioner's Award Ceremony provides the opportunity to pause and reflect upon the achievements of an extraordinary group of individuals from across the United States who have made outstanding contributions to *Protecting Children, Promoting Healthy Families, and Preserving Communities*. With their courage and tenacity, they inspire. With their actions, they enable local communities and entire states to realize significant progress toward ensuring the safety and well-being of our nation's children.

All honorees, but one, were nominated by the governors, or the mayor, of their respective states and territories. The notable exception this year is the nomination of the Governor of Indiana, Mitchell E. Daniels, by the Director of the Indiana Department of Child Services. We pay tribute to 25 women, 17 men, an emergency shelter for youth, and a women's coalition together with its co-directors. These 44 honorees represent 38 states, the District of Columbia, and 5 territories. Professionals and volunteers, typically our honorees work in both capacities. Some serve on the front line as child protective and social workers, as supervisors and administrators. We also honor a Governor, a member of a State House of Representatives, a police officer, pediatricians, therapists, foster parents, a chief medical examiner, judges, lawyers, and policymakers.

Bold, compassionate, innovative, tireless, skillful, dedicated—a small sample of the adjectives repeatedly used to describe this unique group of honorees. All emerge as advocates and leaders in their field. Some strive for change in policy and legislation. Others innovate, creating new programs and changing the service delivery systems in their communities. Many excel in the direct services and support they provide to children and families in need. Our honorees reflect the complexity of the field and the spirit of interdisciplinary collaboration.



## **Marian Loftin, BS, MA**

Director

State of Alabama Department  
of Child Abuse and Neglect  
Prevention

PO Box 4251

Montgomery, AL 36103

Marian Loftin, a tireless advocate devoted to preventing child abuse and neglect, holds the position of Executive Director of the State of Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, which oversees the Children's Trust Fund of Alabama. Long active in child and family advocacy, she served on the founding boards of the Alfred Saliba Family Service Center of Dothan, the Southeast Alabama Child Advocacy Center, and as a member of Governor Bob Riley's Task Force for Strengthening Alabama Families. Ms. Loftin, a strong and skillful leader with a gentle touch and loving heart, has contributed years of community service and notably at the forefront of proponents of family safety.

Ms. Loftin's professional background includes 17 years as an elementary school teacher, as a worker in government relations for the University of Alabama, and as Director of the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce. Additional board memberships include VOICES for Alabama's Children, the Alabama Partnership for Children; the A+ Education Foundation; the Children First Foundation; the Houston County Juvenile Court Services; and the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds. The first woman inducted into the Dothan-Houston County Rotary Club and a Paul Harris Fellow, Ms. Loftin also has been involved in her State and community as Chair of the Wiregrass United Way and the Alabama affiliate of the American Heart Association and as a member of the Alabama Citizens for Constitution Reform Board and the Alabama Civil Justice Foundation Board. In honor of her civic involvement, Marian Loftin was named Olympic Torchbearer in 1996 and selected for Leadership Alabama in 2002.



**Bernard W. Gatewood**  
Superintendent  
Fairbanks Youth Facility  
1502 Wilbur Street  
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Bernard W. Gatewood exemplifies the commitment and dedication essential to improving the lives of children and families. Well-known and highly respected both in the Fairbanks community and statewide, Mr. Gatewood without fail proves a prominent presence when the concern is children—whether it be children's health, delinquency, child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, or service availability.

In addition to his responsibilities as Superintendent of the Fairbanks Youth Facility, Mr. Gatewood devotes his time to numerous boards, committees, and councils. He focuses on both issues surrounding youth in the juvenile justice system and those that impact children and families in child welfare and relate to the general well-being of the entire community. Mr. Gatewood serves as a member of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Health and Social Services Commission, which is responsible for identifying the health and social service needs of the community and coordinating the use of services to meet these needs, and as Vice President of the Compass Community Coalitions, which addresses substance abuse problems.

Mr. Gatewood has worked extensively with the Fairbanks School System to divert youth from custody and provide supportive services to those in the system. He also is a member of the Board of Directors for the Resource Center for Parents and Children, which strives to provide education and services aimed at reducing the prevalence of child abuse and neglect.

A contribution of particular note is in the area of disproportionality. Mr. Gatewood's region proved the first to develop a team to address disproportionality by combining the work of juvenile justice and child welfare. He actively collaborates to share monetary and staff resources in an effort to achieve mutual goals.

These represent only a few of Bernard Gatewood's countless contributions. Without question, his contributions improve the lives of abused and neglected children and their families. Truly an advocate for the disenfranchised and the vulnerable, Mr. Gatewood acts as spokesperson and as a role model for activism and action.

# American Samoa

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## **Hon. John L. Ward II**

District and Family Court Judge  
District Court  
PO Box 427  
Pago Pago, AS 96799

The work of the Honorable John L. Ward II, District Court Judge under the High Court of American Samoa, clearly extends beyond the courtroom. For the past several years, Judge Ward has become increasingly vocal in the effort to prevent social problems among the youth and families of American Samoa. Often a speaker at gatherings targeting the prevention of child abuse, teen pregnancy, and domestic violence, he emphasizes the importance of providing a safe environment for American Samoa's children and encourages the involvement and essential contribution on the part of parents, families, and the community.

Judge Ward has lived in the U.S. Territory of American Samoa for 25 years, serving as a judge for 14. Prior to his appointment, he practiced law locally in private firms and for a few government executive boards. Currently, he also serves as presiding Justice of the Family Drug and Alcohol Court, which he was instrumental in establishing.

Known for his straightforward delivery regarding the extent and end result of social problems and crime among youth, Judge Ward strives to portray the problem accurately, thus enabling the community to realize the importance of both treatment and prevention. He consistently demonstrates compassion in his actions, persisting with writing letters to government and community leaders to enlist their support for stricter laws and law enforcement or to specify the need for government agencies to become equipped with the resources necessary to improve the delivery of services to prevent and treat child abuse. An active and involved member of his community, Judge Ward fights to realize a safe environment for all of American Samoa.



## **Kathryn Wells, MD**

Medical Director

Denver Family Crisis Center

2929 W. 10th Avenue

Denver, CO 80204-3363

Instrumental in developing the Colorado Systems Integration Model for Infants, Dr. Kathryn Wells was selected as one of three national recipients of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act demonstration grant designated to address substance-exposed infants. Subsequently, she was chosen from among a large group of nominees from across the United States to receive the 2007 National Collaborative Leadership Award. Dr. Wells has been unwavering in her determination to improve the child welfare system, her willingness to devote nights and weekends to working on the Colorado Systems Integration Model for Infants project, and her commitment to reaching out and teaching the model to a broad range of concerned professionals and citizens in the Rocky Mountain Region. Further, she is involved actively in spearheading a national effort to compile data to track methamphetamine-affected children for potential long-term effects.

For five years, Dr. Wells practiced general pediatrics at the Family Medical Clinic in Caldwell, Idaho. Developing a strong interest and passion in the area of child abuse and neglect, she founded the Idaho Society for the Protection of At-Risk Children, a nonprofit organization with the mission of reducing the number of infants born exposed to drugs or alcohol and promoting the education, prevention, and treatment of families affected by substance abuse to resolve safety and permanency issues. In her current position as Medical Director of the Denver Family Crisis Center, Dr. Wells serves as the child abuse and neglect consultant for the Denver Health and Hospital Authority, the Denver Department of Human Services, the Denver Police Department, and the Denver District Attorney's Office. Additionally, she is an attending physician with the Kempe Child Protection Team at the Children's Hospital in Denver. An Assistant Professor in Pediatrics at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, she teaches extensively in the area of drug endangered children, maternal substance abuse, and child maltreatment.

Working closely with Lt. Moriarty and the North Metro Task Force to address the difficult issue of child protection as it relates to clandestine methamphetamine laboratories, Dr. Wells helped to form the Colorado Alliance for Drug Endangered Children, where she currently serves as an advisor to the Executive Committee. She also contributes as a member of the Medical and Research Subcommittee of the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children.



# Connecticut

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## **Gloria Campos**

Investigation Social Worker  
Department of Children and  
Families

149 Water Street  
Norwalk, CT 06854

Gloria Campos works predominantly in the Investigations Unit of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families as first responder to new reports of child abuse and neglect. Well-known and respected in the community for her professional and calm demeanor as well as her thoughtful approaches to providing services to families, she emerges as a leader in the Department.

The outstanding performance of Ms. Campos during the case of a child fatality calls for special recognition. Four-month-old Maximiliano, Baby Max, lived with his young mother in the local community at the time of his death, cared for by relatives and periodically by his mother's new boyfriend while the mother worked. The local hospital notified the Department of Children and Families after Max presented to emergency responders in a life threatening condition consistent with Shaken Baby Syndrome. Assigned the investigation, Ms. Campos worked in collaboration with the local police department to determine the cause of his injuries and to protect Baby Max from further harm. Throughout the investigation, Ms. Campos handled well the extremely difficult positions she experienced: as she interviewed the family and other individuals on her own and also acted as a translator between the family and the police department and as interpreter between the family and the hospital staff. She was present when the family made the decision to take Baby Max off life support and at the time of his death.

Ms. Campos took the initiative in proposing to the Department that it assist the family in arranging and paying for Baby Max's funeral. In response to the family's request, she also attended the services. Other Department of Children and Families staff also present during the funeral observed that the family highly respected Ms. Campos, appreciated her work, and valued her as an individual truly committed to helping their family.

All that Ms. Campos represents to the family of Baby Max demonstrates her values and the ongoing commitment and compassion she extends to the families with whom she works on a daily basis. The State of Connecticut foresees a long and productive career in child protective services for Ms. Campos.

# Delaware

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## **Michele Warch**

Family Crisis Therapist  
Supervisor

Division of Family Services  
324 N. Bedford Street  
Georgetown, DE 19947

A true asset to the Division of Family Services, Michele Warch serves as a Family Crisis Therapist Supervisor with the Office of Children's Services in Sussex County. The accolades she garners from team members and numerous others in the community testify to the knowledge, skill, and dedication she has exhibited during her over four years with the Division of Family Services.

Ms. Warch jumps in with both feet to support families in need of services by persistently searching for new resources and working to build a system of care. She assists her team by visiting clients, entering data into the FACTS database, attending court and foster care reviews, and serving as a member of several committees. During the holiday season, Ms. Warch kicks her activities up a notch, rallying the troops to ensure that all clients receive the clothing, food, and gifts they need to celebrate the holidays. Recently, the Division of Family Services honored Ms. Warch with its Employee of the Year Award.

In addition to helping Division of Family Services clients, Ms. Warch supports her community. When she and her children witnessed a violent robbery, Ms. Warch assisted the victim despite threats to her and her children by the perpetrators. Subsequently, she participated in the process to ensure that the perpetrators were brought to justice.

Ms. Warch's dedication to the children, foster parents, and clients the Children's Department serves cannot be overstated. In all her efforts, Ms. Warch embodies commitment to the Children's Department vision to "Think of the Child First."

# District of Columbia

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## **Michele Booth Cole, JD, MA**

Executive Director  
Safe Shores  
The D.C. Children's Advocacy  
Center  
300 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001

In her role as Executive Director of Safe Shores, the District of Columbia's only Child Advocacy Center, Michele Booth Cole has been a strong partner with the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency. She demonstrates incredible vision and a focused approach to supporting the partnership to ensure improved outcomes for children.

Safe Shores supports a multidisciplinary approach to the assessment and treatment of child sexual abuse and severe cases of child physical abuse. These cases are investigated jointly by Child and Family Services investigators and detectives from the Metropolitan Police Department and supported by physicians and other clinicians from Children's Hospital and Safe Shores. Ms. Cole is committed to valuing all members of the partnership, ensuring each member of the partnership is held fully accountable to the expectations specified in the Memorandum of Understanding. Fully supportive of the Child and Family Services Agency, she used her funds to purchase digital cameras for investigators and, additionally, offers training to enhance skills in forensic interviewing and in building increased capacity at Safe Shores.

Prior to her current position with Safe Shores, Ms. Cole served as Executive Director, Government Relations and Director of Education Policy Analysis for The College Board; as Executive Director of Teach for America-DC; as Executive Director of Mentors Inc.; as Special Assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs; as Director of Policy and Federal Affairs, Advocates for Youth; and as Legislative Director/Subcommittee Staff Director for the Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton, U.S. House of Representatives.

A true team player, Michele Booth Cole contributes as an invaluable member of the child protection community in the District of Columbia. Notable is her passion and commitment to enhancing the life opportunities and experiences of children and youth.



## **Don Winstead**

Deputy Secretary  
Department of Children and  
Families

1317 Winewood Boulevard  
Building 1  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700

Don Winstead, Deputy Secretary for the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), emerges as the one person in Florida making an exceptional contribution to the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. His most recent and significant accomplishment is the application for, approval of, and implementation of the Title IV-E Foster Care Waiver, approved on March 31, 2006 and implemented the following October 1st.

Mr. Winstead brings numerous talents and skills to his senior leadership role at the Florida Department of Children and Families, including: extensive knowledge of State and Federal policy and practice regarding child welfare and public assistance Federal funding, youth development, welfare reform, public policy development, data analysis, outcome evaluation, and evidence-based practice. In addition to these individual strengths, he collaborated with community-based agency leaders in Florida to bring about the first statewide waiver for flexible use of foster care funds in the country. The combined efforts of public and private child welfare stakeholders resulted in an extremely strong proposal to the Federal government and a landmark Federal approval of this waiver, which allows Federal IV-E foster care funds to be used for any child welfare purpose. This demonstration waiver puts incentives in line with program goals and good practice. Florida also takes this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of the additional members of the IV-E Waiver Senior Implementation Team as these leaders share in this significant accomplishment: Steven Murphy, President and Chief Executive Officer, Partnership for Strong Families; Melissa Jaacks, Assistant Secretary for Administration, DCF; Ron Zychowski, President, Community-Based Care of Volusia and Flagler Counties; David Fairbanks, Director, Provider Relations, DCF; and Glen Casel, Executive Director, Community-Based Care of Seminole Inc.

Don Winstead has served Florida and the United States well throughout his tenure as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services and as a former Deputy Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. His is a true success story: a talented and dedicated leader who advanced through the ranks from frontline caseworker to numerous top administrative positions over his past thirty plus years of service.



**Sarah M. Thomas-Nededog**

Executive Director  
Sanctuary, Incorporated  
Emergency Shelter for Youth  
PO Box 21030  
GMF Barrigada, GU 96921

Sanctuary, Incorporated opened its doors—and the first emergency shelter for youth—in November 1971. Now, some 35 years and 25,000 clients later, Sanctuary continues to assure quality youth services to this island community, providing shelter, services, and support to adolescents—Guam’s most difficult age group to place.

In collaboration with Child Protective Services, Sanctuary provides the home away from home for abused and neglected youth. Additionally, it offers a Transitional Living Program, a service for those youth who, for various reasons, do not have the option of returning home or who are aging out of the foster care system. All too often, these young people move between several foster and relative homes until they have exhausted all possible alternative placements. Many of these youth are unprepared for independence and the responsibility accompanying adulthood. Sanctuary teaches life skills to these youth to assist toward independent living. Other available services include anger management and self-esteem workshops and drug and alcohol abuse support groups.

Working with Child Protective Services, Sanctuary contributes to the case management of these youth by participating in case planning, transporting, and the provision of services required, as well as by attending court proceedings. The existence of Sanctuary contributes significantly to improving the quality of life of Guam’s vulnerable adolescents whose history records a background of abuse and neglect.

As Executive Director of Sanctuary since 2003, Sarah M. Thomas-Nededog has increased the organization’s receipt of local government contracts, direct Federal funding, and private donations from \$300,000 to \$500,000. Additional significant accomplishments include developing the first and only residential substance abuse treatment program for adolescents and reorganizing the Micronesian Youth Service Network.



**Lillian B. Koller, Esq.**

Director

Hawaii Department of Human  
Services

1390 Miller Street

Room 209

Honolulu, HI 96813

The inspired leadership of Lillian B. Koller, Esq., Director of Hawaii's Department of Human Services for the last four years, has enabled the Department to complete successfully its Program Improvement Plan, while instituting numerous best practices. These include significantly enhancing outcomes for families and children, improving the skills and qualifications of staff and resource families, drastically reducing the number of children removed from their homes, building community capacity, fostering collaboration among child advocates and child and family serving agencies, and creating numerous partnerships with the University of Hawaii's Schools of Medicine, Social Work, Nursing, and Law.

Through the creative use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Title IV-E, i.e., the Federally-funded adoption assistance program, and Medicaid monies previously untapped by the State, Ms. Koller has more than doubled the dollars allocated to community-based services. The intent is to strengthen and support vulnerable families and their children, while instituting a differential response system with community partners that encourages families to voluntarily engage in services to resolve their issues without formal involvement of Child Welfare Services (CWS) or the court. This has achieved a 30 percent reduction in the number of children removed from their homes.

Ms. Koller has led an aggressive outreach effort to the Native Hawaiian community to identify, nurture, and support Native Hawaiian resource families. She emphasizes particularly early identification of suitable kin who may serve as a resource or adoptive families and the development of neighborhood-based support networks to sustain these families.

Since assuming the helm of the Hawaii Department of Human Services, Ms. Koller has championed the adoption of evidence-based practices, a quality assurance program for CWS, and ongoing training for staff and community-based agencies; upgraded data collection systems to monitor the implementation of these initiatives; reinforced management accountability for results; and reformed the agency's culture to focus on improved outcomes for children and families. Her unwavering dedication to collaboration and community capacity building assures her status as national role model for the effective enactment of system reform.





**Michael L. Scholl, MSW,  
LCSW**

Director

Casey Family Programs

Boise Field Office

6441 W. Emerald Street

Boise, ID 83704

Michael L. Scholl has devoted 26 years of his life and career to ensuring that children enjoy the safety, permanency, and well-being they deserve. He has worked tirelessly toward these goals in positions ranging from a frontline child protection worker to his current position as Director of Casey Family Programs in the Boise Field Office.

Mr. Scholl uses his impressive interpersonal, organizational, and leadership skills effectively to manage change processes, provide clarity, and motivate others. Initially as a social worker with the Casey Family Programs and now as its Boise Field Office Director, he has been instrumental in forging working partnerships between Casey, local universities, and the Department of Health and Welfare to support social work education, education and training of State agency personnel, and opportunities for foster parents to come together to strengthen themselves individually and as a group. A particularly warm, open, and personable individual, collaboration and appreciation for diversity seem second nature to Mr. Scholl. It is rare to attend a meeting of decision makers regarding child abuse and neglect issues with no Mr. Scholl at the table, persisting in his efforts to achieve successful outcomes for children and youth.

The tremendous foresight of Mr. Scholl serves both the Casey Family Programs and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. For example, Mr. Scholl enabled Casey Family Programs to re-examine its goal of providing long-term foster care in order to move on to more permanent options for youth. He also helped to create and sustain Idaho's Foster Youth Initiative, a group of foster youth and foster alumni who use their experience and wisdom to propose recommendations for improving the State's child welfare system. Mr. Scholl additionally promotes Casey's Technical Assistance Program, which supports foster parents and grants foster children the opportunity of a more typical growing up experience by allowing them to participate in such extra-curricular activities as music lessons.

Finally, Mr. Scholl has proven instrumental in blending and integrating philosophies, leveraging and pooling funding resources, and sharing research and data to improve services between Casey Family Programs and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and to expand and enhance their services to children, youth, and families. He emerges as the embodiment of the impact of advanced social work skills on the child welfare system, effectively facilitating its realization of positive outcomes for the children and families the system serves.



**Deanna M. St. Germain, DO**

Medical Director

Children's Medical Resource  
Network

PO Box 179

107 McKinley Street

Anna, IL 62906

Since 1987, Dr. Deanna M. St. Germain has worked with abused and neglected children, providing specialized examinations and treatment for victims of sexual abuse, medical neglect, and physical abuse—advocating on their behalf with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the courts. In the past six years, Dr. St. Germain has become a mentor and teacher to other physicians and advanced practice nurses, establishing a network of identified medical professionals who provide expert medical assistance to child abuse victims throughout 34 counties in southern Illinois. She serves as the Medical Director of the Children's Medical Resource Network located in rural Anna, Illinois; as Medical Director and Physician Supervisor of the Union County Hospital Outpatient Health Center; and as Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics for Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

When the number of child abuse cases involving parental methamphetamine abuse reached epidemic proportions in 2003, Dr. St. Germain attended several trainings and conducted over 150 hours of research to help address the problem in southern Illinois, a geographic area with more than 70 percent of all reported Illinois methamphetamine labs. She participated with Illinois State Police and with DCFS to prepare a Methamphetamine Protocol for Coordinated Investigation and Medical Evaluation. During 2004 and 2005, Dr. St. Germain presented workshops at two major methamphetamine conferences in Illinois, and, over the past three years, she has presented 45 additional trainings for community-based groups and organizations. In 2005, she joined the national initiative for Drug Endangered Children as a medical expert.

As her greatest interest is meeting the needs of each individual child, Dr. St. Germain devotes the vast majority of her time to direct medical services and consultations. She has distinguished herself as both a dedicated professional and volunteer in the field of child protection and child welfare throughout her 20-year career as a physician in southern Illinois. Without question, her work has impacted positively the lives of thousands of children.





## **Hon. Mitchell E. Daniels**

Governor  
State of Indiana  
State House  
Room 206  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

The Honorable Mitchell E. Daniels, Governor of the State of Indiana, ran for office pledging children and children's issues to be an important component of his campaign and administration. He has honored this commitment with extraordinary results. In a few short years, the Governor's list of accomplishments has transformed Indiana's child protection system, establishing a foundation and framework to qualify it as one of the best programs in the nation.

A few of the Governor's myriad accomplishments include: the creation of the Department of Child Services as a separate, cabinet-level position; the authority to hire 400 new case managers from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2007; the expansion of training into a public partnership with the premier social work program in Indiana through the Indiana University School of Social Work; reorganization of the Department to realize more coordination and systemic oversight and management; approval of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) for the first time in 32 years; reform of practice into a model of family and child engagement at the earliest moment; a technology upgrade to assure the implementation of standards designated as necessary to achieve the best service to children and families; and a strengthening of the child support establishment along with enforcement as an essential part of the effort to strengthen families for permanency. Further, more accomplishments are in process, such as the hiring of an additional 400 new case managers from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008.

The accomplishments cited and those too numerous to list have been possible solely because of the vision and ongoing commitment of Governor Daniels, a Chief State Executive Officer who understands and appreciates the need to protect children and strengthen families and willingly supports any and all measures to realize such a mission. For all of our communities and each of our 50 states, the Honorable Mitchell E. Daniels demonstrates a model of leadership for protecting children and strengthening families.



**Lisa Durbin, MSW**

Manager  
Child Safety Branch  
Department for Community  
Based Services  
275 E. Main Street  
3E-B  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Lisa Durbin has dedicated her professional life to the prevention of child maltreatment and the protection of Kentucky's children. A tireless advocate, she strives to realize the best interests of children and does so with humor and grace. Committed to the children of Kentucky and to the ethical standards of social work practice, Ms. Durbin currently leads the Child Safety Branch in the Division of Protection and Permanency, the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services. Each day she addresses a myriad of crises with dedication, intellectual curiosity, and a caring spirit.

Ms. Durbin assumes the lead on the Department's Kinship Care Initiative, working to educate staff and community partners on the complex issues involved. Additionally, she is involved directly in Kentucky's quality assurance efforts through her case review and Program Improvement Plan (PIP) related activities. As Child Safety Branch Manager, Ms. Durbin supervises 12 staff members in a variety of program areas, including: Child Protective Services (CPS) program specialists who provide technical assistance to social work staff across the State on investigations and in-home cases, nurses who provide medical information to field staff on abuse/neglect issues and who manage the Medically Fragile Program, overseer staff who provide program oversight to Family Preservation and Reunification Programs statewide, and staff who handle Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CB-CAP) monies and programs that promote prevention of child abuse and neglect across Kentucky.

Currently, Ms. Durbin serves as a board member of the Kentucky Multidisciplinary Commission on Child Sexual Abuse, which assists local teams on the investigation and prosecution of Child Sexual Abuse cases. She continues to work on Kinship Care issues, PIP/Child and Family Services Review issues, and in the development of an improved worker information system and assessment tool. She served as a member of the Child Victims Trust Fund Board for three years to assist in child sexual abuse prevention in Kentucky, as well as participated actively in Kentucky's Child and Family Services Review process.



**Geoffrey Nagle, PhD, MPH,  
MSW, LCSW**

Director

Tulane Institute of Infant and  
Early Childhood  
Mental Health

Tulane University School of  
Medicine

Department of Psychiatry and  
Neurology

1440 Canal Street, TB-52  
New Orleans, LA 70112

Once a literary agent representing screenwriters and film directors with a goal of impacting social change via the mass media, Dr. Geoffrey Nagle dramatically altered his course when he chose to pursue a career directly serving children. Toward this end, he earned a master's degree in social work at Tulane University in 1996 and a second master's degree in public health in 1997. Dr. Nagle then devoted five years to working for the Louisiana Office of Public Health, where he oversaw the implementation of the Nurse Family Partnership—a child abuse prevention program serving first-time mothers and their infants. He completed his doctoral studies in mental health policy research in 2002.

Currently, Dr. Nagle serves as Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Tulane University School of Medicine and as the Director of the Tulane Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. He contributes to numerous advisory groups in Louisiana, including: the Governor's Children's Cabinet; the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board, which he chairs; the Child Care Development Fund Advisory Group; the Solutions to Poverty Steering Committee; the Human Services Task Force of the Governor's Louisiana Recovery Authority; and the Board of the Louisiana Partnership for Childhood and Families and the Louisiana Children's Museum. Dr. Nagle also holds the position of State Coordinator of BrightStart, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant initiative designed to develop a strategic approach to bridging multiple funding streams and forging collaborative partnerships for cross-service system integration in support of young children, families, and communities.

Dr. Nagle presents around the country, addressing the topics of building an early childhood system, designing a state early childhood budget, recognizing the economic impact of child care, and identifying the need to develop quality rating systems for child care. His research interests include the economic benefits of prevention and the influence of the results of early childhood research on public policy decisions.



## **Kim Miller, CWAPA**

Assistant Child Welfare Program Administrator  
Maine Department of Health  
and Human Services  
98 North Avenue  
Skowhegan, ME 04841

Kim Miller, Assistant Child Welfare Program Administrator for Maine's Office of Child and Family Services, the Skowhegan Office, has made an outstanding contribution to improving the lives of abused and neglected children and their families with her extraordinary commitment to the safety and well-being of children in Somerset County. Under her direction, the Skowhegan Protective, Children's Services, Adoption, and Licensing caseworkers freely act on their belief that all children deserve a healthy and safe family life in a community that cares and respects them. Ms. Miller supported her staff in a concerted effort to increase the number of child protective assessments, resulting in 100 percent assignment for caseworker intervention of all reports of abuse and neglect since July 2006.

Ms. Miller encourages her staff with the belief that well-being can be achieved best when children remain with their family. In those instances of removal of children from their birth family, every effort is made to place the child with relatives whenever safely possible to ensure the child's ability to maintain family, community, school, and friendship ties. The Skowhegan office began the 2006 year of its Program Improvement Plan with 69 percent of children placed either with kin or in close proximity to their communities, and, by year's end, 79.3 percent experienced such placements—a clear demonstration of Ms. Miller's capacity to lead her staff with a commitment to achieving family connections for all children.

Ultimately, Ms. Miller clearly appreciates each child to be a unique individual with a right to all the basic needs of family connection, safety, and a greater community that supports them. In addition to engaging her staff, she involves the entire community in the effort to prevent abuse and neglect and to develop strategies to address the needs of children and families.

# *Mariana Islands*

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**Elizabeth Anne Seither  
Nepaial**

PO Box 7683  
Saipan, MP 96950

A compassionate advocate with a quick smile, Elizabeth Anne Seither Nepaial has distinguished herself in her response to child abuse and neglect by serving as a foster parent and as a Mariana Islands leader in the areas of school, community, and church. She retired from teaching in December 2006 but continues as a foster parent to live by example her philosophy of "love teaching, teach lovingly."

When first asked to become a foster parent, Ms. Nepaial quickly agreed to open her home to a four-year-old boy with multiple difficulties. She has been a foster parent to three children and frequently welcomes more needy children into her home. Ms. Nepaial strives to form a special bond with each child, learning early on that a loving home is not always sufficient magic to heal an abused child.

Ms. Nepaial participated in Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month for several years and served as a coordinator for the annual Penny Drive at school. In the role of national Junior Honor Society Advisor and Mother Read volunteer, she has enabled children to perform to their potential. Additionally, she volunteers with the children in her church, teaching a vacation bible class and Sunday school.



**David A. Betz, Sergeant**

Program Manager  
Harford County Child  
Advocacy Center  
23 N. Main Street  
Bel Air, MD 21014

Sergeant David A. Betz, a 19-year veteran of the Harford County Sheriff's Office, has been involved in the investigation of child abuse cases since 1998. For six of the past seven years, he served as Program Manager for the Harford County Child Advocacy Center (CAC), managing resources and personnel from the State's Attorney's Office, local law enforcement, the Departments of Social Services and Family and Children's Services, and a private mental health agency. Under Sergeant Betz's leadership, the CAC became the Family Justice Center in May 2006. At this time, resources were consolidated physically into one office, and the domestic violence unit from the Harford County's Sheriff's Office and the Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center—the domestic violence intervention and treatment program in the county—were added to the service continuum.

An outstanding advocate for children and families, Sergeant Betz played an integral role in the CAC becoming nationally accredited. He has proven instrumental in organizing two Cherish the Child Symposiums, held in Harford County in April 2005 and 2006—the Child Abuse and Prevention Month. As a past President, Vice President, and current Treasurer for the Maryland Children's Alliance, Sergeant Betz assumes a pivotal role in the Mid-Atlantic Conference of Child Abuse each October in Ocean City, Maryland. His knowledge of the field of child abuse and his extensive network of colleagues enables Sergeant Betz to obtain nationally recognized speakers and coordinate a workshop agenda that continually brings best practice models of intervention to child abuse professionals in the county, the State of Maryland, and the mid-Atlantic region.





## **Ray Pillidge**

Area Director  
Lawrence Area Office  
Department of Social Services  
Everett Mills  
15 Union Street  
Second Floor  
Lawrence, MA 01840

Ray Pillidge, Area Director, faced a challenge when he assumed responsibility for the Lawrence Area Office of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services two years ago. The 18th poorest city in the United States, Lawrence is an old industrial city, which lost its industrial base, and home to an exceedingly poor and largely Latino population. Historically, the poor populations of Lawrence have viewed the Department of Social Services as adversarial to its interests and threatening to its families.

To develop the Area Office's relationships with its community and play a role that the community perceived as supportive to the welfare of its children, Mr. Pillidge focused on two initiatives: increasing significantly the bilingual/bicultural representation of Lawrence Area Office staff and developing a strategic planning process to engage important leaders in the Lawrence community. In the two years he has been in the Lawrence Office, Mr. Pillidge significantly increased the bilingual/bicultural staff to 80 percent or 30 of 37 new hires. At the same time, the strategic planning process began to evolve a new concept of the DSS role in the Lawrence community, i.e., DSS would work to become an ally in the Lawrence community's development efforts.

In pursuit of the role of ally, the Lawrence Department of Social Services, with the support of the Department's Planning and Program Development Division, is developing a Planned Approach to Community Health (PATCH) site in Lawrence. The Office has partnered with a church in one of Lawrence's poorest neighborhoods to locate DSS staff and nonprofit agencies in the church's space. The neighborhood was selected on the basis of the activism of a neighborhood parent group in regard to the educational needs of their children rather than solely on the basis of the poverty level in the community. The PATCH office intends to work to ally with the neighborhood regarding its concern for the welfare of its children and to embed its child welfare work in the fabric of the community.

Mr. Pillidge assumes a leading and pivotal role in Lawrence's exciting process of redefining the relationship of child welfare to the community. The State of Massachusetts looks to Lawrence as an important learning opportunity in the State's effort to create a new model of child welfare practice.



## **David Thompson**

Child Safety Manager  
Child Safety and Permanency  
Minnesota Department of  
Human Services  
444 Lafayette Road North  
St. Paul, MN 55155

David Thompson demonstrates commitment and dedication to achieving positive change within the child protection system, always striving to improve child safety and family stability. Throughout his distinguished management career in Minnesota's State and county human services, Mr. Thompson has remained focused on improving the child welfare system and related interventions to generate the greatest positive impact on children and their parents.

Most notably, Mr. Thompson led the Minnesota Alternative Response Demonstration Project, which realized the impressive outcomes of improved child safety, greater family stability, and cost-effectiveness, as well as resulted in a statewide differential response child protection system. As a consequence of his efforts, Minnesota has a continuum of responses available, allowing for interventions that respond proportionately to the severity of the child safety concern, flexibility to meet family and child needs, as well as ensuring that child safety and family stability are built on the strengths and protective capacities of families.

The establishment of a statewide differential response system changed statutory mandates, revised policy, and, most significantly, improved direct practice between social workers and families around child safety concerns. Mr. Thompson accomplished this through private foundation and public sector partnership; county, tribal, and community provider collaboration; and maximization of shared learning. He exhibits an exceptional capacity to direct and guide system improvement via effective delivery of technical assistance; promotion of policy and practice improvements; coordination of training, evaluation, funding supports; and meaningful collaboration with county, tribal, and community stakeholders using a parallel process that reflects Minnesota's practice principles with families.

Mr. Thompson's deep respect for families and awareness of the challenging work of county and tribal social service agencies provide the foundation of his ongoing efforts to pursue reforms that respond early and effectively to families and children in need. He continues to guide Minnesota in efforts toward early provision of services and enhancement of the State's child protection response interventions, supports, and services to ultimately achieve positive outcomes of child safety and well-being and family stability. Thanks to Mr. Thompson, Minnesota's children and families live a better life.





## **Holly O'Toole**

Community Social Work  
Supervisor  
Child and Family Services  
Division  
Richland County  
221 5th Street SW  
Sidney, MT 59270

For over 26 years, Holly O'Toole has applied a strength-based approach in her work on behalf of Montana's children and families. At the time she began her career with the Child and Family Services Division as a child protection social worker in a rural community, it was the responsibility of rural social workers to "do it all," i.e., recruit, train, and license foster families; investigate reports of child abuse and neglect; provide reunification services; and facilitate adoptions. Once promoted to the position of Family Resource Special Supervisor, Ms. O'Toole oversaw licensing and adoption services for 17 counties in eastern Montana.

Currently, as Community Social Work Supervisor, Ms. O'Toole supervises staff in seven counties—a staff who respects her knowledge and understanding, welcomes her support and encouragement, and feels motivated by her "can do" attitude. She also has trained many new social workers in their initial phase of training.

Due to the positive support she provides, Ms. O'Toole often is asked to assume additional responsibilities, including the role of acting Regional Administrator. On one occasion, without hesitation and with the grace and a cultural awareness seldom seen, Ms. O'Toole agreed to supervise Child Protection Services on an Indian reservation for several months. Another time, in recognition of her depth of understanding, she was asked to make a presentation on grief and loss, which was videotaped for the purpose of training foster and adoptive parents.

Ms. O'Toole has advanced Child Protection Services statewide with her active participation on numerous teams and committees. At this time, she serves as a member of a Program Improvement Committee, charged with addressing the areas identified as in need of improvement in the Federal Child and Family Services Review.

Holly O'Toole truly extends above and beyond in all her efforts to implement Montana's core values and mission to keep children safe and families strong. For all Montanans, her sense of humor and amazing laugh add the icing to the cake!



**Retired Chief Justice  
John V. Hendry**

7224 Carmen Drive  
Lincoln, NE 68517

During the eight years he served as Nebraska's Chief Justice, the Honorable John V. Hendry proved himself to be a vocal leader in rallying the judiciary behind several important reforms, including the formation of Child Advocacy Centers in the State of Nebraska. He cast the spotlight on the need for greater consistency and cooperation throughout Nebraska's child welfare system, bringing together the many partners in this large and complex system to ensure better coordination of services provided to children.

In January 2005, Chief Justice Hendry announced the formation of the Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts. Beginning with a study of appropriate steps for the judicial system to undertake to ensure the responsiveness of the court system to children, the Commission continues to explore specialized family courts, ways in which welfare agencies and volunteers can work together, and the effectiveness of drug courts. Commission reforms include requiring guardians ad litem to participate in specialized training, allowing parental rights terminations to be more quickly affirmed on appeal if the parent is not participating, and adopting rules to expedite court proceedings for children.

In September 2006, Chief Justice Hendry organized a Nebraska Children's Summit to address the needs of abused and neglected children and to adopt national best practice standards for handling juvenile court cases. He required all 46 judges responsible for juvenile court proceedings to attend, joined by the children's attorneys, child advocates, social workers, and prosecutors who chose to participate. Subsequently, Chief Justice Hendry appointed Judge Lawrence Gendler to lead the initiative to implement the many reform efforts proposed at the Summit.

In his years at the helm of Nebraska's court system, Chief Justice Hendry became one of the most welcoming and accessible public figures Nebraska's judicial branch ever has seen. He accomplished much on behalf of Nebraska's children and their families. Assuming the seat vacated by Chief Justice Hendry, Chief Justice Michael Heavican wrote: "During his tenure, Chief Justice John Hendry made children his first priority and encouraged other Nebraskans to do the same. His vision was that every child in foster care in Nebraska would find permanency in a safe and timely manner without lingering in the court system."



**Hon. Charles M. McGee**

555 S. Center Street  
Reno, NV 89501

The Honorable Charles M. McGee, now retired from his third term in the Washoe County District Court, is a recognized community leader for his innovative ideas and outstanding commitment to children and families throughout the State of Nevada. Judge McGee founded the first family Drug Court in the United States in 1994 and continues to preside over that Court, which has become a successful and replicated model throughout the nation. Nevada's Drug Court has adjudicated hundreds of cases involving drug addiction, domestic violence, and related child abuse or neglect complaints, serving more than 800 children in the State and reporting a 75 percent success rate, i.e., no further reports to the child protection and law enforcement agencies.

Significantly, Judge McGee also is founding Director of the Children's Cabinet, which serves abused and neglected children; co-founder and champion of the Charles M. McGee Center for Adolescent Programs; and co-founder of the Washoe County Court Appointed Special Advocate Program. Without question, he has provided outstanding leadership at both the local and national levels.

# New Hampshire

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## **Karen H. Carpenter, MA, JD**

Executive Director  
New Hampshire Children's  
Trust Fund  
95 N. State Street  
Concord, NH 03301

Karen H. Carpenter, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund, embraces the challenge of addressing the difficult topic of child abuse and neglect prevention, constantly striving to shift the conversation from a deficit-based dialogue to one that promotes strengthening and supporting families. With passion, integrity, and a tireless commitment, Ms. Carpenter unites likely and unlikely partners to spread the message that communities prosper when children are safe and families strong. Skilled at drawing connections between primary prevention and family health and well-being, she advocates the cause to be universal family support, helping all communities prosper, and a greater social good rather than solely the prevention of child maltreatment.

As the Executive Director for New Hampshire's State lead agency for child abuse and neglect prevention, Ms. Carpenter persists on local, state, and national levels to enhance the public's knowledge regarding their ability and responsibility to achieve positive change in the lives of children and families. With strategic positioning, she leverages funding and support for prevention programs from both traditional and non-traditional resources. She also acts on the recognition that a key component to preventing child abuse and neglect is collaboration with community and State of New Hampshire agencies, especially the Division for Children, Youth and Families, in order to strengthen an integrated statewide system of support for families.

Ms. Carpenter's history includes over 30 years of experience leading both profit and nonprofit organizations. Her extensive knowledge of marketing, program management, and resource development confirm her as an asset to the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund and the field of primary prevention.



## **Kevin Ryan, LLM, JD**

Commissioner  
New Jersey Department of  
Children and Families  
PO Box 700  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Kevin Ryan, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, has been a tireless advocate on behalf of children and families throughout his career. He worked hand-in-hand with Governor Jon Corzine to create the new Department of Children and Families in 2006—a Department of 6,600 employees fully devoted to serving and safeguarding the most vulnerable children and families in the State, striving to fulfill the Governor's commitment to turn around New Jersey's child welfare system with an aggressive and focused reform plan. Under Commissioner Ryan's leadership, the revitalized Department of Children and Families has realized incredible progress in improving services, reducing caseloads, increasing adoption rates, and creating a forward thinking plan for ongoing progress.

Commissioner Ryan also served as New Jersey's first Child Advocate, charged to oversee the creation and management of the independent Office of the Child Advocate, established by statute. The task of the Office is to monitor public agencies that serve children at risk of abuse and neglect and to use various strategies to advance the health, safety, and well-being of children, such as practice and policy innovation, investigation, public hearings, and litigation. His background also includes serving as Deputy Chief of Management and Operations, Office of the Governor of New Jersey; Chief of Staff, New Jersey Department of Human Services; General Counsel and Associate Executive Director, Covenant House, New Jersey; General Counsel, Garden State Coalition for Youth and Family Concerns Inc.; Adjunct Professor of Law, Fordham School of Law and Seton Hall School of Law; and Staff Attorney, Covenant House New York. Recent honors include: Lawyer of the Year, New Jersey State Bar Association, Young Lawyers Division, June 2001; Wasserstein Fellow, Harvard University Law School, September 2000, for legal contributions in the public interest; and Youth Advocate of the Year, National Network for Youth, Washington, D.C., January 2000.



**Andrew Gomm, MSW, BSW**

Program Manager  
Family Infant and Toddler  
Program

Department of Health  
Harold Runnels Building LTSD  
1190 St. Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, NM 87502

Andrew Gomm currently serves as Manager of the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program of the New Mexico Department of Health, which provides early intervention statewide to infants and toddlers with and at risk for developmental delays and disabilities and their families. He also is the past President of the Infant Toddler Coordinators Association, a group advocating for the needs of infants and toddlers at a national level and helping to support states and territories in their effort to implement effective early intervention systems.

Mr. Gomm has worked with children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families for over 20 years. Graduating with a master's degree in social work from the University of East London, he has been active in the disability field both in England and the United States. His efforts include coordinating disability and family support services on the Navajo Nation and Hopi Pueblo in Northern Arizona before moving to New Mexico.

In the management of New Mexico's Family Infant and Toddler Program, Mr. Gomm strives to implement an expanded eligibility for early intervention services to include those infants and toddlers at environmental risk. Most recently, he championed to forge a relationship between the State's early intervention provider and the child welfare system, thereby ensuring that the most at-risk infants and toddlers in New Mexico realized access to assessment and early intervention services. He has worked diligently to bridge service gaps through awareness education, training, technical assistance, and, at times, sheer persistence.





## **Marion White**

Executive Director  
Child Abuse Prevention  
Program, Inc.  
5 Hanover Square  
Fifteenth Floor  
New York, NY 10005

A longstanding advocate for children, Marion Dwyer White is a founder and Executive Director of the Child Abuse Prevention Program (CAPP), a nonprofit agency established in 1986 to provide protection for children. Under her direction, the fledgling program expanded on the use of life-size puppets as an educational tool. The overwhelming response of children proved these instincts to be right, and the Child Abuse Prevention Program was on its way.

For over 25 years, Ms. White has built a broad range of knowledge relating to children faced with enormous life challenges: developmental delays, physical disabilities, and physical or sexual abuse. A highly effective communicator, she has held positions as an assistant professor for graduate level courses in health sciences at Long Island University and as a public education specialist responsible for implementing programs to increase awareness and acceptance of persons with mental retardation and developmental disabilities for the State of New York.

Ms. White, a recognized expert in the area of child abuse, has lectured throughout the United States to law enforcement groups, legislative bodies, and to other organizations working to prevent child abuse. She has been interviewed by *The New York Times*, *Daily News*, and *New York Post*, and CAPP has been featured in local and national radio and television broadcasts, including a WABC-TV special *Protect Our Children: Speak Up!* with correspondent Diana Williams.

Ms. White works tirelessly on behalf of New York's children and in CAPP's 20th anniversary year introduced a new initiative intended to increase awareness of abuse prevention efforts and expand CAPP's invaluable work to more children. Through the Adopt-A-Boro initiative, CAPP will hire and train a third team of prevention specialists to bring the program to children, thereby reaching an unprecedented 30,000 plus New York City elementary school children in one year.

Former New York State Governor Pataki appointed Ms. White to the New York Citizen's Review Panel for Child Protective Services. She has received special recognition from both the Special Victims Unit of the New York Police Department and the American Probation and Parole Association. Under Ms. White's leadership, CAPP has developed vital partnerships to protect children with the New York City Department of Education, District Attorney offices, and Safe Horizon Child Advocacy Centers.

# North Carolina

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## **The Honorable Rick Glazier**

North Carolina House of  
Representatives  
2642 Old Colony Place  
Fayetteville, NC 28303

The Honorable Rick Glazier, a member of the North Carolina House of Representatives, has been instrumental in the support of critical child welfare legislation in the State. He sponsored the Expunction Process to place North Carolina in compliance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and to ensure the safety of children from individuals who have abused or seriously neglected children. To successfully move this difficult bill through the legislative process to passage required solid knowledge of the State's child welfare system.

Representative Glazier's focus always is on the best interests of the State's children, while simultaneously respecting the rights of parents and caretakers. He has worked with other members of the House of Representatives, agencies, and advocates to achieve consensus regarding the numerous bills involving child safety. A strong advocate for children and a supporter of the work of child welfare, Representative Glazier consistently and persistently challenges the State's social service system to move forward in protecting and assuring the well-being of North Carolina's children.



# North Dakota

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## **Alonna Knorr Norberg, MD**

Red River Children's  
Advocacy Center  
Professional Building  
100 S. Fourth Street  
Fargo, ND 58103

Dr. Alonna Knorr Norberg, a pediatrician with specialized training in child maltreatment, child sexual abuse, and pediatric emergency medicine, returned to her native North Dakota in 2002 in response to what she identifies as "divine intervention." Divinity certainly seemed to be looking over North Dakota's shoulder that day, as Dr. Norberg almost immediately became a driving force via her affiliation with MeritCare to revitalize a multidisciplinary effort to create a Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) in the State. Working with 18 public and private community groups, across professional and state lines with jurisdictions in neighboring Minnesota, she enabled the Red River Children's Advocacy Center to become a reality in 2004.

Further, Dr. Norberg spearheaded a successful effort to secure State funding for both of North Dakota's Children's Advocacy Centers. Again, working across disciplines, she met with policymakers, lobbyists, and other interested parties, as well as provided legislative testimony of her experiences examining traumatized children, in the effort to build necessary public support for funding. She now serves as the Medical Director of the Red River Children's Advocacy Center, performing examinations of traumatized children, providing medical expertise statewide by consulting with physicians and prosecutors, and offering expert court testimony on behalf of traumatized children.

In her work, Dr. Norberg reassures frightened children with her soft voice and gentle manner. A champion of children, her heart of gold and backbone of steel assure a powerful advocate on their behalf.



## **Gayle Channing Tenenbaum**

Legislative Director  
Public Children Services  
Association of Ohio  
510 E. Mound Street  
Suite 200  
Columbus, OH 43215

Gayle Channing Tenenbaum, Legislative Director for the Public Children's Services Association of Ohio, has dedicated her life to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, public policy and services to strengthen and empower families to safely and lovingly raise their own children, and effective strategies to support the healthy development of children who have been abused or neglected. Recently, Ms. Tenenbaum's leadership contributed to a significant and phenomenal effort in Ohio, the Access to Better Care (ABC) Initiative.

The ABC Initiative focuses on improving the accessibility, coordination, and effectiveness of mental health and substance abuse services for children, youth, and their families. To achieve Access to Better Care, Ms. Tenenbaum convened all State-level cabinet directors charged with serving children and families to unite them in a common vision to address the issue of behavioral health services. Further, she engaged hundreds of child and family serving professionals across the State, demanding as well the presence of "real" family members at each table. Ultimately, a collaborative set of recommendations evolved, addressing the need for improved behavioral health services, evidence-based and promising practices, and shared funding strategies. To embrace the ABC recommendations, Ms. Tenenbaum organized an intense public awareness effort, as well as professionals and advocates to work collaboratively.

The results are impressive. Access to Better Care brought together professionals, policymakers and families; public and private entities; child welfare, mental health, substance abuse, juvenile justice, health, and education communities. In 2005, a time of flat State funding, \$12 million new State dollars were allocated in the State's biennial budget, and many more State and Federal funds were "reorganized."

Gayle Channing Tenenbaum brings to mind the words of Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world ..." Ms. Tenenbaum grabbed hold of a goal to improve the behavioral health prevention and intervention services for Ohio's children and their families, changing the world for families across the State with her innovative, tenacious, and skillful leadership.



## **Deborah Shropshire, MD**

Children's Hospital  
940 N.E. 13th  
Room 1B 1306  
Oklahoma City, OK 73104

Dr. Deborah Shropshire believes strongly that child abuse and neglect can be prevented with the right supports for children and services for their families. Upon graduation from the University of Oklahoma School of Medicine, Dr. Shropshire intended to be an emergency room pediatrician until she attended a class focusing on child abuse and neglect and developed a commitment to child abuse and neglect prevention.

Currently, Dr. Shropshire serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics, University of Oklahoma, and as the Medical Director for the Children and Family Services Division of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. As Medical Director and pediatrician for the children placed in the Department's emergency shelter, she examines and provides medical care for the children who, in addition to being in a crisis situation, frequently have had little regular medical care. Dr. Shropshire also acts as a readily available resource for staff and foster parents in addressing medical concerns for children in the Department's custody.

In 2006, Dr. Shropshire proved instrumental in establishing and now continues in the capacity of staff member of the Fostering Hope Clinic, a medical home for children in foster care in Oklahoma County and a model of coordinated medical services for children in the child welfare system. Often a presenter, she speaks enthusiastically and passionately about the child welfare system and its staff, emphasizing the importance of coordinated medical services for children.

At this time, Dr. Shropshire is completing a master's degree in health administration and policy. A member of the Oklahoma Child and Family Services Statewide Assessment Committee, she also will serve as a reviewer during the Oklahoma Child and Family Services Review in August.



## **Don Darland**

President

Oregon State Foster Parent  
Association

38183 Highway 226  
Scio, OR 97374

Don Darland inspires with his efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect, with his significant volunteer activities in the community to address the problems of child maltreatment, and with his outstanding contributions to improving the lives of abused or neglected children. For 12 years, Mr. Darland has been a foster parent to over 50 children, ranging in age from birth through adolescence. The close connection he maintains with many of his family of foster children once they leave home testifies to his belief in the importance of relationships.

Mr. Darland works with birth parents to enable them to maintain the bond with their children while in placement. For one birth mother, he provided the opportunity for her to spend up to six hours daily in his home to care for her infant at risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Perceived as humble and gracious, one who always focuses on the good in others, Mr. Darland strives to help people realize the best in themselves. He advocates for the needs of children through his involvement with numerous boards and committees, as: President and former Vice President, Oregon Foster Parent Association; Past President of the Linn County Foster Parent Association; member, Linn County Commission on Children and Families; Chair, Children's Justice Act Task Force; and member, Children, Adults, and Families Advisory Board. In addition, he manages somehow to work for Portland State University, providing consultation and training services for foster parents.

Mr. Darland advocates on behalf of abused and neglected children and foster parents with the Oregon legislature and the Office of the Governor. With his boundless positive outlook, the inspirational Mr. Darland has contributed much of his life and significantly to helping others.



**Brenda Mirabal Rodriguez,  
MD**

Recinto de Ciencias Médicas  
Edificio Dr. Antonio Ortiz  
PO Box 5067  
San Juan, PR 00936-8183

Dr. Brenda Mirabal Rodriguez, a pediatrician, founded and currently directs the Bio-Psychosocial Program for the multidisciplinary evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of child victims of intra-family violence—the first program established in Puerto Rico to provide these services. Her expertise in the area of child abuse and neglect has been recognized in Puerto Rico, the United States, and Spain. One of her major accomplishments has been the development of the Integrated Center for Girls and Boys, sponsored by the Department of the Family, the Administration for Families and Children. Located in the Carolina region, the project incorporates the Child Advocacy Center concept, providing all the needed interagency and interdisciplinary services to children victims of sexual abuse in the same place.

Throughout her professional career, Dr. Rodriguez has participated in various committees and commissions, including: the Commission for the Citizen's Security, Children's Justice Act Task Force, and the Board of Directors of the Puerto Rico Forensic Sciences Institute. She also is the founder and Director of the Violence Prevention Center for Hispanic Youth. Dr. Mirabal, a Professor in the School of Medicine of the University of Puerto Rico, completed medical school at the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine; her residency in pediatrics at Wayne State University in Detroit; a fellowship in the area of ambulatory pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas; and a master's degree in public health at the University of Texas School of Public Health. She has written over 12 professional articles addressing violence and child maltreatment.

A pioneer, Dr. Mirabal has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the eradication of child abuse and neglect in Puerto Rico. Her devoted practice and expertise together with her innovative leadership earn her the well-deserved reputation of Puerto Rico's most knowledgeable and prominent authority in the field of child maltreatment and, specifically, the treatment of child sexual abuse.

# Rhode Island

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## **Dorothy Hultine**

Implementation Director for  
Policy and Programs  
Department of Children, Youth  
and Families  
101 Friendship Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Dorothy Hultine, Implementation Director for Policy and Programs of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, has worked for over 25 years in the field of children and family services. As Director for Policy and Programs, she assumes responsibility for working with the Department's executive, administrative, and line staff, as well as community partners, to address the policy and practice issues relating to the Child and Family Services Review and the ensuing Program Improvement Plan. She uses her position to broaden her advocacy role for children and families, implementing numerous family-centered policies and practices throughout the Department, as well as to shepherd necessary supporting legislation through the State legislature. An integral part of the Department of Children, Youth and Families leadership team, Ms. Hultine proves a moving force in promoting family-centered practice and other best practices both throughout the Department and in the broader community.

Ms. Hultine began her career as a clinician at a community health center, providing case management services for acutely and chronically mentally ill individuals. She then became a social caseworker for the Department of Children, Youth and Families, providing services to dependent, neglected, and abused children both at home and in placement with the utmost sensitivity and compassion. Subsequently, Ms. Hultine moved on to policy development for the Department, soon managing this division as well as coordinating the Department's legislative agenda.

All who know Ms. Hultine are touched and impressed by her sensitivity, compassion, and respect for every individual she encounters. This, in turn, earns her the well-deserved respect and admiration of the staff, community providers, and families served by the Department.



# South Carolina

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## **M. Elizabeth Ralston, PhD**

Executive Director  
Dee Norton Lowcountry  
Children's Center  
1061 King Street  
Charleston, SC 29403

For over 30 years, Dr. M. Elizabeth Ralston has taken action in regard to child abuse and neglect, typically an issue that few want even to discuss. Devoting her life to our nation's youngest victims, she directs her considerable energies to ensuring the safety of children, as well as to providing the mental health services they need to overcome the trauma of abuse. In the process, Dr. Ralston has changed the way this issue is addressed in Charleston, in South Carolina, and across the nation.

A leading advocate for a coordinated community response in child abuse cases, Dr. Ralston developed and serves as Director of the Dee Norton Lowcountry Children's Center, South Carolina's first Children's Advocacy Center. Since 1989, the Center, which focuses on reducing the incidence of child abuse and its impact on the child, family, and community, has served over 13,000 children. Additionally, Dr. Ralston proved instrumental in establishing 16 additional Children's Advocacy Centers throughout South Carolina.

Dr. Ralston has provided training, consultation, expert testimony, and technical assistance regarding child maltreatment at the state, national, and international level. Additionally, she has served as a member of the Board of Directors of Voices for South Carolina's Children, as a founding Board member and President of the South Carolina Chapter of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, as President of the South Carolina Network of Child Advocacy Centers, and as Chair of the South Carolina Justice Ad Hoc Task Force. Currently, she is a member of both the Board of the National Children's Alliance and the Lowcountry Citizens Review Panel.

Respected in her community and throughout the State of South Carolina, Dr. Ralston holds people accountable in a non-threatening and effective manner. Her dedication to children and families coupled with her vision and notable leadership has achieved a significant impact on the prevention and treatment of child abuse.



## **Phyllis Webb**

Child Protective Services Team  
Coordinator

Department of Children's  
Services

8600 Highway 22  
Dresden, TN 38255

Phyllis Webb has dedicated her career to aiding, protecting, and advocating on behalf of the children of northwest Tennessee. For more than 20 years, she has been sharing her knowledge and expertise in a supervisory capacity in addition to acting as a role model and advocate. Beginning her career as a day care and Child Protective Services (CPS) worker, Ms. Webb soon moved on to a Team Leader position and to assuming a broad range of supervisory tasks—ranging from Child Protective Services to foster care and adoptions.

Ms. Webb's dedication persisted in her promotion to Team Leader for Child Protective Services in Dyer and Crockett Counties and, subsequently, into her position as regional Child Protective Services Team Coordinator in April 2006. The latter position added duties and responsibilities in a supervisory capacity in nine northwest counties, where she soon became a role model for the six Team Leaders she supervised within that region. Recently, Ms. Webb contributed to piloting a multiple response system in the Dyer County area, as well as filled the role of internal consultant for the State.

Additionally, Ms. Webb has served as a member of several Department of Children's Services community boards: Chair of the Dyer County Schools Truancy Board since 1998; member, Dyer Board of Education Disciplinary Hearing Authority 2002 to present; and Chair, Child Fatality Review Board since inception. She has been a regional pro-choice advocate since 1998 and a member of the CPS Team Excellence since January 2005.





**Joyce James, LMSW-AP**

Assistant Commissioner  
Child Protective Services  
PO Box 149030  
Austin, TX 78714-9030

For more than 27 years, Joyce James has provided dedicated services to children and families suffering the effects of child abuse and neglect. Currently, she leads the Texas child welfare system in the capacity of Assistant Commissioner for Child Protective Services. With Ms. James as Assistant Commissioner, Texas has renewed its commitment to families and children, as evident in the tremendous increase in adoptions, the strengthening of kinship caregiver support, and the inclusion of the youth and parent voice. Her leadership inspires and provides the backbone for the CPS mission statement—"Children First: Protected and Connected."

Ms. James also has served on multiple oversight committees and boards of directors of organizations in the fields of child welfare, adoption, and advocacy. She is the founder of Project HOPE, Helping Our People Excel—a community initiative bringing multiple human service agencies together to focus on the over-representation of African American children in foster care and juvenile probation within Jefferson County. Now replicated in five additional sites, Ms. James works to promote this effective and collaborative model statewide.

To build on a shared vision and commitment to examine disproportionality and cultural insensitivity in the Texas child welfare system, Ms. James advocated for the creation of a close working relationship between Casey Family Programs and Child Protective Services. She has addressed the Texas legislature regarding her concern about the disproportionality of African American children in the Child Protective Services system, advocating for the agency to take a close look at policies, practices, and procedures that may contribute to disparity. Her advocacy contributed to mandated provisions in Senate Bill 6 by the 79th Texas legislature requiring system improvements specific to addressing disproportionality. Ms. James provides the strong and innovative leadership necessary to confront institutional racism and improve outcomes for all children. She has been honored nationally for her leadership in the area of disproportionality with the Villeria Bullard Black Administrator of the Year Award in 2006 and the Director's Award of the Family Preservation Institute of New Mexico State University, Las Cruces.

A lifelong advocate on behalf of children and families, Joyce James embodies the vision and values of Child Protective Services.



## **Patti VanWagoner**

Deputy Director  
Utah's Division of Child and  
Family Services  
120 N. 200 West  
Salt Lake City, UT 84103

Patti VanWagoner, Deputy Director of Utah's Division of Child and Family Services, is known in the State's human services programs as the person who most lives by the lofty principles of their profession and best demonstrates the effective skills needed to provide and implement quality services and administrative practices to benefit children and families. She has held many significant positions in the field of child welfare, mostly in direct service to children, youth, and families. Recently, the Executive Director asked her to take on the task of building ethnic minority community partnerships.

Wherever she goes, Ms. VanWagoner earns compliments as the consummate professional and the finest example of human services expertise. Her effort to develop policies, rules, and guidelines that are practical and motivate those required to follow them has proven a mainstay in the development of child welfare practice in the State of Utah. She works diligently to facilitate understanding of what is needed to make kinship placements more successful, improving practices to achieve better results for kin families.

In her current position as Deputy Director, Ms. VanWagoner directs the State's program administrators. Her management of the program component for the Division of Child and Family Services has been innovative and exceptional. The consistency and quality of practice guidelines has been enhanced significantly thanks to her leadership and supervision. Ms. VanWagoner has worked effectively with partners, exhibiting a knowledgeable and professional model of Division of Child and Family Services leadership. She encourages and supports program managers to create a cohesive program approach, while continuing to be innovative within program areas; she provides support to the Utah Foster Care Foundation to further develop their program in tandem with the needs of the Division of Child and Family Services; and she supports enhancements to the training process, such as piloting new training curricula, and offers guidance for individual training and program initiatives.

Patti VanWagoner is a visionary leader in the field of child welfare. Always keenly aware of the realities and needs of children and families, she combines insight from fieldwork with an extensive and well-articulated appreciation of the philosophy of practice. In the midst of the most trying and difficult tasks of our human services profession, Ms. Van Wagoner maintains a positive outlook and manages to stay on track, piloting any issue forward in both discussion and practice.



**Joseph F. Hagan, MD, FAAP**

Hagan and Rinehart  
Pediatricians, PLLC  
410 Shelburne Road  
South Burlington, VT 05403

Dr. Joseph F. Hagan plays an integral role in creating and assuring safety for Vermont's children in addition to responding to child abuse and neglect. A provider of pediatric care to many of the State's children, he also serves as co-Chair of the Vermont Citizens Advisory Board for the Family Services Division of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) and as the Pediatric Consultant for DCF. Dr. Hagan has worked hand-in-hand with DCF since 1985.

In his myriad of roles in association with the Department for Children and Families, Dr. Hagan all in one day may collaborate with a child's community providers to offer optimum services and prevent or limit Family Services involvement, provide care to a hospitalized child, and respond to an emergency call to consult on an allegation of serious physical abuse of a child. He makes himself available to social workers and managerial staff throughout the day and night, at work or on holiday, always willing to provide his expert opinion to address any situation—from failure to thrive to fractures to burns and all that comes in between. Dr. Hagan provides clear and concise information, explaining the mechanics of an injury or illness in layperson language and thus enabling social workers both to understand the situation at hand and to explain it to others.

A presiding chair and member of numerous American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) boards and committees, currently Dr. Hagan serves as Chair of the Birth Futures Education Center Project Action Committee and as media spokesperson for the Vermont Chapter of AAP. Locally, from 1995-2000, Dr. Hagan assumed responsibility as the supervising physician for the Spectrum One-Stop Clinic, a clinic providing medical care to homeless, runaway, and at-risk youth; and, from 1980-1989, he worked with the Chittenden County Child Protection Team in addition to taking on numerous other important roles for youth and their families.

Many Vermont families praise Dr. Hagan for providing outstanding pediatric care to their children. Many Vermont Family Services staff credit Dr. Hagan with providing the information essential to supporting families and preventing child abuse and neglect or protecting those children who have experienced abuse or neglect from future maltreatment. Compassionate as well as thorough, Dr. Hagan proves an invaluable asset to the citizens of Vermont.

# Virgin Islands

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**Mary Mingus**



**Clema S. Williams-Lewis**

Co-Directors  
Women's Coalition of St. Croix  
7 East Street  
PO Box 222734  
Christiansted, ST. Croix, VI  
00822

The Virgin Islands chooses to honor The Women's Coalition of St. Croix and its dynamic co-Directors, Mary Mingus and Clema S. Williams-Lewis. Since its start in 1981, the Women's Coalition has expanded to include 18 paid staff members, as well as opened a shelter for battered women and their children, a Closet-to-Closet Thrift Shop, and, recently, the Alice Pfaelzer Children's Center. Few organizations have had more positive impact than the Woman's Coalition. For over 24 years, the Women's Coalition has provided services free of charge to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child sexual assault, and other victims of crime.

Mary Mingus adopted the cause of the Women's Coalition of St. Croix in 1981, taking a year's sabbatical and working 12-hour days without pay for many years to develop a 24-hour program for sexual assault victims. Subsequently, she left her teaching career and, as a founding member, became the first Executive Director of the Women's Coalition. Thanks to the efforts of the Women's Coalition and Mary Mingus, thousands have received the help they critically need. She has received numerous awards honoring her work, including: the Sunshine Lady Peace Award, 2003; the Delta Sigma Theta Community Service Award, 2005; the Virgin Islands Hall of Fame Award, 2005; and the I Am Proud of You Award, given by the Hispanic Community, 2005.

Clema S. Williams-Lewis, who has a master's degree in counselor education and is a nationally certified counselor, has been working with the Women's Coalition of St. Croix since 1982. Prior to her current position as co-Director, she worked for the Coalition in the capacity of volunteer advocate, Chair of Advocates, Coordinator of Training and Support Groups, Chair of the Board of Directors, Supervisor of Summer Staff, and Assistant Director. Ms. Williams-Lewis participates in numerous community and national groups, including as Chair of the St. Croix Child Abuse and Neglect Task Force and Secretary for the Virgin Islands Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Council. Recent honors include National Association of Social Workers Award for Citizen of the Year, 2002; Sunshine Lady Peace Award, 2003; and Virgin Island's Women Hall of Fame, 2005.



**Marcella Farinelli Fierro,  
MD**

Chief Medical Examiner  
State Medical Examiner Offices  
Central District  
400 E. Jackson Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dr. Marcella Farinelli Fierro has served as Virginia's Chief Medical Examiner since 1994. Over the past 12 years, she has demonstrated her commitment to a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach to death investigation and to the use of death studies to promote public health and safety in the Commonwealth. She co-directs the Virginia Institute of Forensic Science and Medicine, offering week-long courses on topics such as advanced death investigation to medical examiners, crime scene investigators, judges, law enforcement investigators, prosecutors, forensic scientists, and social workers.

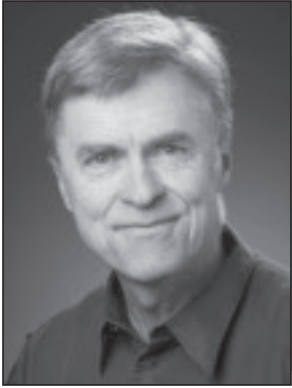
As Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. Fierro has established several fatality review teams and death surveillance programs—in the areas of child deaths, deaths attributed to adult or elder abuse, maternal mortality, and domestic violence/intimate partner violence. Committed to a data-driven, public health approach to violence and injury reduction, she believes all violent deaths are premature and therefore preventable. To this end, fatality review and surveillance uncover the specific circumstances of violent death and point the way to interventions.

Under her leadership and guidance, the State Child Fatality Team examined firearm deaths, suicides, unintentional injury deaths, caretaker homicides, and, most recently, motor vehicle deaths to Virginia's children. The Team has documented significant problems with firearm storage and safety in children's homes, links between caretaker supervision and accidental injury death, and strong correlations between child abuse and intimate partner violence. Team recommendations have suggested changes to Virginia law, agency policy and practice, and training and prevention programs.

The skill and dedication of Dr. Fierro and her approach to death investigation inspired mystery writer Patricia Cornwell to write a series of crime novels modeling her protagonist, Kay Scarpetta, after Dr. Fierro. Ms. Cornwell came to know Dr. Fierro when she worked as a computer analyst in Virginia's Office of the Medical Examiner. Ms. Cornwell's novels garner widespread appeal, making the work of forensic pathologists more familiar and accessible to the public.

Dr. Fierro makes a difference. Remarkably hopeful and optimistic, she spends her work time among the dead and uses the knowledge gained there to create safer and healthier communities.





## **John Stirling Jr., MD**

Pediatrician

700 N.E. 87th Avenue  
Vancouver, WA 98664

Dr. John Stirling, a Vancouver pediatrician, is well-known in Washington State for his long-standing, strong commitment to improving the lives of abused and neglected children. In his private practice, Dr. Stirling devotes time each week to serving this vulnerable population and to consulting with child welfare workers on abuse cases. Annually, his pediatric medical consultations and evaluations number approximately 200. Dr. Stirling's Vancouver Clinic serves as the sole referral center for child abuse evaluations covering a four-county area. Frequently, he provides medical evidence in court in addition to working extensively, on a daily basis, with child protective and law enforcement staff.

A provider of statewide pediatric consultations and evaluations for the Child Abuse Consultation Network, Dr. Stirling is the pediatric consultant for the Clark County Child Abuse Intervention Center, the Southwest Washington Sexual Assault Response Team, and the Washington State School for the Blind. He conducts training sessions on all aspects of child abuse and neglect. Well-published, Dr. Stirling also serves as a reviewer for several professional journals, including the *Child Abuse Medical Quarterly*, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, and *Child Maltreatment*.

His affiliation with several professional organizations also illustrates Dr. Stirling's ongoing commitment to these issues. Notably, Dr. Stirling is a founding and charter member of three of these groups, i.e., the Clark County Child Protection Team, the Clark County Infant and Child Death Review Committee, and the Ray Helfer Society, as well as a member of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children and an Executive Committee member of the Section on Child Abuse and Neglect of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Without question, Dr. Stirling is dedicated to preventing and treating child abuse and neglect. His contributions, both professional and voluntary, are extensive and impressive and deserving of recognition and commendation.

# West Virginia

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## **Joyce Cook**

Protective Services Specialist  
West Virginia Coalition Against  
Domestic Violence  
Elk Office Center  
4710 Chimney Drive  
Suite A  
Charleston, WV 25302

Joyce Cook, a Protective Services Specialist with the West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, deserves recognition as a pioneer in the collaboration between Child Protective Services and Domestic Violence Advocacy. For the past six years, she has worked tirelessly to build relationships in the service community that identify safety issues for both battered women and their children. Her ideas and energy provide the basis and act as a catalyst for current domestic violence policies and training curricula used by Child Protective Services. Additionally, she has helped to shape the State statute and procedures responsible for realizing improvements in the Circuit and Family Court systems.

Ms. Cook serves as an active member of the Court Improvement Project, the Domestic Violence/Child Victimization Workgroup, the Domestic Violence Definitions Workgroup, and the Citizens Review Panel. She also participates as an active trainer for these workgroups.





## **Helene Nelson**

Former Secretary  
Wisconsin Department of  
Health and Family Services  
1 W. Wilson Street  
Room 550  
Madison, WI 53708-8916

The leadership and passion of Helene Nelson during her four-year tenure as Secretary of Wisconsin's Department of Health and Family Service generated momentum among county child welfare agencies to build a statewide response to the Federal Child and Family Services Review. Under her direction, the Department initiated an extraordinary collaboration with county and tribal child welfare agencies that led to joint ownership of a plan to improve the quality of child services, resulting in substantive change.

Secretary Nelson successfully led Wisconsin through its two-year Program Enhancement Plan, including the development of the State's first continuous quality improvement system. Wisconsin chose the Quality Services Review (QSR) process to measure the quality and effectiveness of child welfare services on a statewide basis. As part of the QSR process, Wisconsin developed a peer reviewer system to allow for county Child Protective Services staff to participate in reviews in other counties. Additionally, a partnership was established between the Continuous Quality Improvement Program and the Children's Court Initiative, providing opportunities for improving outcomes in the county child welfare and court systems.

Ms. Nelson has championed key policy initiatives aimed at strengthening families, including universal and targeted home visiting for families at risk of child abuse and neglect. All aspects of her work in child welfare reflect her ongoing commitment to collaboration between systems. She strove to integrate in the daily task of child welfare the work of other systems so that the child welfare system could help families keep their children safely at home, while receiving the necessary and appropriate services to stabilize their circumstances. Families Forward, an initiative successfully implemented under her leadership, aimed to better serve families involved in multiple State systems, specifically child welfare and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, as well as substance abuse and mental health treatment systems.

Prior to her appointment as Department Secretary, Ms. Nelson worked for nine years in Dane County government, including four years as its Director of Human Services. She drew consistently upon her county experience to foster improved working relationships between State and local governments. Joining Forces for Families, one of her initiatives, brought together child welfare, school, and law enforcement personnel on behalf of struggling families in an innovative, multidisciplinary, and geographic-based team approach to supporting families.

***National Benefactor  
of the 16th National Conference  
on Child Abuse and Neglect***

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