

### Karen's Corner



November is here and in the spirit of Thanksgiving, I'd like each of you to know how much I appreciate your dedication to DHHR. Over the past few weeks, we've been celebrating your public service with employee appreciation events in various offices, and I have had the opportunity to participate and learn more about the great things you are doing.

In September, I was so pleased to recognize those who have devoted years, some with more than 45 years of service, to the Department. Commitment is vital to improving the lives of families, communities, and the people we serve, and I truly appreciate your hard work.

Although I was not able to attend every event across the state, I am happy to hear of the much-deserved luncheons and activities held in each Bureau and office. Whether you've been here for days or years, your contribution and expertise are important.

I have spoken before in this column about the cooperative and caring spirit we see in each other as members of DHHR. I am so grateful for the knowledge each individual has to offer and consider myself privileged to lead the team. Remember, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." (Helen Keller)

### DHHR launches program to strengthen families and children within their home communities

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources is getting an opportunity to change how we use federal funds designed to support the child welfare system. The goal of our project, *Safe at Home West Virginia*, is to provide wrap-around behavioral health and human services to keep more at-risk kids in their home environments.

On October 15, Governor Tomblin announced the Department's pilot program, which will allow the Bureau for Children and Families to have more flexibility in delivering services to children ages 12-17 and their families. With a goal of developing a model that can be replicated, DHHR will work with providers and others over the next year to design the implementation.

DHHR Cabinet Secretary Karen L. Bowling said, "Our children should be safe, healthy and successful in their home settings, and *Safe at Home West Virginia* aims to offer this support. As the project is implemented in the target counties, we will track outcomes to ensure we are providing the right types of services before rolling out the program statewide."

DHHR's *Safe at Home* team is excited to move forward after attending a convening among other approved waiver states on October 29-30, in Washington, DC. It served as a learning platform for participating jurisdictions, generating knowledge that can benefit children across all states.

"It will take hard work from public and private partners to make this project successful and create stability for our children," Secretary Bowling said. "I am proud of my team lead by BCF Commissioner Nancy Exline for their work in submitting the waiver application and we will be enlisting others as we move through the implementation period."

West Virginia is one of ten states that will receive this competitive federal waiver from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. The project, expected to launch by the end of 2015, will focus on improving outcomes for children and families in Berkeley, Boone, Cabell, Jefferson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Morgan, Putnam and Wayne counties.



## Bryan Rosen recognized as WV's Procurement Officer of the Year



Dave Tincher, Bryan Rosen and DHHR Secretary Karen Bowling

Bryan Rosen, director of purchasing for the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, has been named the 2014 Procurement Officer of the Year for the State of West Virginia. This honor is given by the State Purchasing Division to individuals who demonstrate high levels of performance and professionalism, and are viewed as role models in their profession. This is the second time an employee from the Department of Health and Human Resources has earned this honor.

Bryan began his career in West Virginia state government in 1998 with the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) as an accountant for the Office of Grants Management and then served as an administrative services manager for the Bureau for Public Health and the Bureau for Medical Services. He has served as the director of purchasing since 2009.

In May 2014, Bryan earned the Certified Professional Public Buyer credential, a national certification from the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council (UPPCC). Under Bryan's leadership, the DHHR Purchasing Office became the first state agency to reach 100% certification through the UPPCC, and is only 1 of 171 agencies worldwide holding UPPCC Agency Certification status. The UPPCC is an international governing body that has certified more than 10,000 professionals around the world. Certification requires staff members to meet established criteria consisting of public purchasing experience, education/training and successful completion of a rigorous examination. "This award and the UPPCC Agency Certification are a testament to the efforts of my outstanding team," said Bryan.

"I am extremely proud of Bryan and our Purchasing Office," said Cabinet Secretary Karen L. Bowling. "These employees exemplify our commitment to professionalism and excellence."

Bryan is a Kanawha County native and graduate of West Virginia State University and the Community College of the Air Force.

## Employee Spotlight: Gretchen Bradshaw & Rayelle Snow



Rayelle Snow



Gretchen Bradshaw

Finding a child a "forever home" is one of the important duties within the human services side of DHHR. This behind-the-scenes work happens quietly to protect the child's privacy and security, and adoption stories and those who assist are deliberately kept out of the news. This month's employee spotlight features Gretchen Bradshaw and Rayelle Snow, two employees who work to make special matches of children to their forever homes in Region IV (Braxton, Clay, Fayette, Greenbrier, Monroe, Pocahontas, Summers, McDowell, Mercer, Nicholas, Webster, Raleigh and Wyoming counties). Their teamwork recently resulted in a note of thanks from new parents who are adopting a son.

From the letter, sent in August 2014: "I want to bring attention to the awesome job a few of your employees are doing and give credit where it is truly due... These two ladies are simply fantastic... These ladies are hard workers and we are truly blessed to get to work with both of them! Hat's off to them!"

Debbie Totten, social services supervisor for Greenbrier County, said, "Our workers work hard and do a great job and it is nice for someone outside the agency to notice and give such a heartfelt thank you." Gretchen, an adoption specialist, and Rayelle, a homefinder, were deeply touched by the family's letter. Gretchen began working for DHHR as an adoption specialist in June 2011, and previously worked in North Carolina and Ohio in adult protective services, child protective services and the school system. "The gratification of making a forever home for a child when the adoption is complete give me a feeling of honor," notes Gretchen. "The letter of gratitude from the family has been a wonderful feeling... it is so vital that our children feel a sense of belonging, safety, security and permanency." Rayelle joined the Department as a homefinder contracted through Burlington United Methodist Family Services in March 2014, and completed an internship with homefinding in 2013. According to Rayelle, "Without the Department to intervene and provide support, there would be so many lost individuals, especially the children who need a loving home."

Neither Gretchen nor Rayelle grew up in the Mountain State; both relocated to West Virginia as adults. "The one thing I have seen and witnessed since living in West Virginia is the sense of 'neighbors helping neighbors' and 'strangers helping strangers,' people coming together to help one another no matter what the situation," says Gretchen. The same could easily be said of Gretchen and Rayelle by the children and families they bring together, and the forever homes they help to build.