

CONGRATULATIONS

DCFS ALL STARS

DIRECTOR'S EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD RECIPIENTS

August 2008

Outstanding Administrative Staff Award

Lena Ward, Senior Departmental Employee Representative

Human Resources Division, Performance Management Section

Ms. Ward is one of L. A. County and DCFS' most helpful, knowledgeable, kind and dedicated employees. Her generosity with her time in assisting others is unparalleled. Her knowledge base about the structure, operation and policies that support the Department of Children Services is immeasurable. So much so, that even her superiors seek her help in some of the most difficult tasks.

Lena Ward came up through the ranks and she has unbelievable contacts all over DCFS, the county in general and with any number of deputies of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

The following are examples of the outstanding attributes of Ms. Ward:

- She has been a solid employee for the County of Los Angeles for more than 30-years.
- She manages one of the most difficult sections in the Department with poise, professionalism, and maintains a good working relationship with everyone she is involved with.
- Her advice and participation in resolving complex matters are highly regarded and her ethics and professionalism is impeccable.
- She is always willing to assist others even while working to meet the deadlines related to her duties.
- She is concerned about the well-being of her co-workers and always provides a level of comfort in her interactions which results in good morale within the Division.
- She is one of the most dedicated and committed employees the County of Los Angeles has ever had.

Lena ward truly deserves to be the recipient of the August 2008 **DCFS ALL STARS** Director's Employee Recognition Award for Outstanding Administrative Staff.

Outstanding Direct Service Staff Award
Miriam Munte, Children's Social Worker I
Compton Office

Miriam Munte is an outstanding and very energetic Children's Social Worker who never gives up trying to do the very best for her clients. An example of her outstanding casework is a case involving 7 siblings ranging in age from 2 to 15 years of age who were detained by DCFS over 18 months ago. 4 of these siblings are special needs children, who require a significant number of services in order to meet their needs, and the mother has special needs as well.

Ms. Munte was able to place those 4 siblings together in a home that wants to adopt them, should reunification with the parents be unsuccessful. She visits those 4 children and their caregivers regularly, and has connected the children to a multitude of services. She has done the same for the other 3 children, and has arranged weekly sibling visits for all of the children, as well as weekly visits between the parents and children. Ms. Munte has had to personally monitor most of those weekly visits because of inappropriate parental behavior.

Ms. Munte has connected the parents with services as well, personally escorting the mother to a local clinic on at least one occasion. She has also had to track down medical information on an adult sibling living in the home of the parents, and to report it to the court.

Recent proceedings in the Dependency Court have added considerably to Ms. Munte's workload. There have been 5 continuances on this contested case over the last 4 months all of which were due to "problems" at the court. Ms. Munte was ordered to appear to testify, but due to the "problems", the case kept being continued, and her testimony wasn't heard until two months later. Ms. Munte was required to attend 4 of those hearings, twice on her RDO, and she spent the entire day at court each time. Two of the hearings were held on consecutive days.

Court reports were ordered for those hearings and Last Minute Information was submitted twice. County Counsel told Ms. Munte that as the result of her court reports being so detailed, factual, well organized and complete, it made the County Counsel's job much easier to keep track of the 7 children on the case and to support the Department's recommendations. Judge Margaret Henry remarked towards the end of the trial that "DCFS efforts in providing both FR and FM Services in this case went well beyond reasonable efforts."

Not surprisingly, given all of the hard work that Ms. Munte put into the case, every recommendation that she made regarding placement and permanency for each of the 7 children was ordered by the court when the trial finally came to an end.

Miriam Munte is to be commended for her dedication and compassion for the children on her caseload. She is an excellent Children's Social Worker and very deserving of the August 2008 **DCFS ALL STARS** Director's Employee Recognition Award for Outstanding Direct Service Staff.

Outstanding Support Service Staff Award

Elizabeth Soto, Intermediate Typist Clerk

El Monte MacLaren Office

Since the arrival of Elizabeth Soto to the El Monte office the ER section is feeling her presence with her overwhelming support she provides to the ER units and the office as a whole. Ms. Soto is willing to assist with anything she is asked to do. In addition to her assigned duties she covers the reception area as needed. She takes her job seriously and executes her assignments in a diligent manner. Ms. Soto has been known to cover for other clerical staff during her lunch hour, and has placed her own lunch on hold until the job is completed. She has also taken the time to assist the ER CSW's in completing emergency paperwork as needed when the CSW's are out in the field on an emergency assignment.

Ms. Soto's dedication to her job has allowed the El Monte DCFS ER CSW's to spend more time visiting their clients and allowing them more time for investigations.

Ms. Soto is ALWAYS willing to help anyone who requests assistance and always goes above and beyond her duties. Ms. Soto's positive, friendly, approachable attitude has been an excellent asset to the El Monte DCFS office.

Ms. Elizabeth Soto always strives for the best and gives the best. She truly deserves the August 2008 **DCFS ALL STARS** Director's Employee Recognition Award for Outstanding Support Service Staff.

Outstanding Team Award

Lovette Panthier, Supervising Children's Social Worker

Jackie Solomon, Children's Services Administrator I

San Fernando Valley Office and Pasadena Office

CSA Jackie Solomon and SCSW Lovette Panthier are two brightly shining stars in DCFS today. In addition to their own jobs they exemplify teamwork when it comes to activities for DCFS youth. One very special event that this "team" should be recognized for is the "One Child at a Time" Celebrity Basketball Game. Ms. Solomon and Ms. Panthier are the co-founders and organizers of this event which was hosted by comedian/Actor Katt Williams. This was a great charity event for foster children residing in the San Fernando Valley which raised \$20,000.

The "One Child at a Time" Celebrity Basketball game was a star studded event with celebrities such as Snoop Dog and Magic Johnson. Ms. Solomon and Ms. Panthier worked endless hours and everyday for over 8 months with comedian Katt Williams and their committee members to put this event together.

Hundreds of foster children, community leaders and celebrities attended this event. Ms. Solomon and Ms. Panthier arranged for a meet and greet time for the foster youth with the celebrities.

Ms. Solomon and Ms. Panthier always have a can do attitude that have made these two employees exceptional. They see a need and decide to do something about it. In their work with foster youth they always inspire them and tell them there is light at the end of the tunnel. They encourage the youth to participate in events offered by the department as a break from their everyday routine and they are always willing to transport the youth to the events.

Ms. Solomon and Ms. Panthier have provided an excellent example of teamwork and what can be done when we are willing to work together to accomplish a goal. They selflessly gave of themselves to enrich the lives of the children in the San Fernando Valley. They are very deserving of the August 2008 **DCFS ALL STARS** Director's Employee Recognition Award for Outstanding Team.

**An Outstanding Colleague
Of Yours Could Be the Next Winner.**

NOMINATE Someone NOW!