

CONGRATULATIONS

DCFS ALL STARS

DIRECTOR'S EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD RECIPIENTS

January 2009

Outstanding Direct Service Staff Award

***Michael Brady, Supervising Children's Social Worker
Lakewood Office***

Michael Brady's dedication to the Department goals energize him to get involved with various work groups and projects. He chooses projects that will benefit both the CSW and the families. From the early stages Mr. Brady has been involved in the Parents in Partnership Program at the Lakewood office. He attends monthly PIP meetings, conducts parent orientations, and mentors a parent partner.

Mr. Brady, along with co-worker Helen Vardakis, took on the task of planning, training, and managing the operation of the first Family Visitation Center in the South County. In a span of a couple month months Mr. Brady and Ms. Vardakis took the center from concept to a reality. They assisted in the training of the monitors, secured toy donations for the center, developed an assessment tool for visitation monitors, and set up a referral system for staff to utilize the new program. The visitation center has been a wonderful resource to our staff, but most importantly to our families who now have a home-like environment to visit their children.

As a SCSW Mr. Brady has a diligent, but relaxed management style that makes him approachable by staff in and out of his unit. He has developed a strong unit that exceeds the county's monthly numbers on the utilization report. He is a terrific co-worker and the consummate team player. He is always willing to help out with duty, taking cases even when they don't meet transfer criteria, and assisting staff with emergencies even when he is not on duty.

In the last month, Mr. Brady responded to two medical emergencies in his unit, establishing himself as a true "Lifesaver" at the Lakewood Office. During a holiday party, one of his unit members was choking on a cookie to the point where she could not breathe and was turning colors. Mr. Brady swooped in and performed the Heimlich maneuver and successfully dislodged the cookie from his workers throat, saving her life in the process. A few days later his unit clerk unexpectedly fell unconscious at her desk. Mr. Brady responded, ensuring that 911 was called, and tried to keep her stable. He rubbed her shoulders while another staff member kept her cool with a fan. When she regained

consciousness, Mr. Brady was there to ensure that she received the medical attention she needed.

Mr. Brady has demonstrated a remarkable ability to handle crisis, both in the course of his work, as well as medical emergencies. He avidly participates in projects that benefit our families, while successfully balancing his duties as a unit SCSW. Michael Brady is definitely a tremendous asset to the Lakewood Office and the Department and very deserving of the January 2009 **DCFS ALL STARS** Director's Employee Recognition Award for Outstanding Direct Service Staff.

Outstanding Support Service Staff Award

Elaine Halim, Intermediate Typist Clerk

Adoption & Permanency Resource Division, Covina Annex Office

There are clerks in the Department who make themselves so useful and helpful...so indispensable, that the very thought of losing them brings about a twinge of despair. Elaine Halim is one of those rare, wonderful clerks. Ms. Halim has been an Intermediate Typist Clerk with the Adoption & Permanency Resource Division for the past 3 years. In that time, she has proven herself to be a highly productive and caring clerk; always willing to go the extra mile (or two). Her encouraging words, supportive stance, and positive attitude contribute greatly to the unit's spirits and cohesiveness.

Aside from being reliably thorough and accurate in her work products, Ms. Halim is very creative. She uses her skills to decorate worker cubicles, maintain the unit's photo album, and display unit achievements via hand-made charts which are designed in a cheery and clever fashion.

Ms. Halim has created many tools for the unit to help with its daily operations. Using the Outlook Calendar, she has established a calendar of upcoming court reports; complete with reminders to the workers and a display of the last minute order! She has created a tracking log for Concurrent Planning Assessments which calculates the average length of time it takes for workers to complete their assessments. The best part is that she does this extra work with a wonderful attitude.

Perhaps Ms. Halim's biggest achievement is the creation of the unit's Caseload Log. This project started out on a wish list. There was a need to demonstrate the various casework activities performed by adoption social workers. Since Adoption Workers are not primaries on their cases, and their roles have changed, their work was not captured in the regular tracking tools within the CWS/CMS or AIS systems; making performance evaluations less objective. Ms. Halim heard of the problem and made a suggestion to use the Excel program to record social worker activities. She did not have much experience with the Excel program, but with sheer determination, taught herself how to use formulas to calculate averages for each worker and organized the chart so that it met the stringent requirements of the unit. The log currently reflects the number of times a worker attends TDMs, TPR conferences, and pre-placement conferences. It also calculates the average length of time it takes for

a particular worker to complete their home studies, adoptively place children, and prepare cases for adoption finalizations. All of these items are invaluable insofar as documenting worker achievements and makes the writing of evaluations that much easier.

There are so many positive aspects to Elaine Halim, that it is difficult to put them all into words. Suffice it to say that she is a definite keeper and deserves to be recognized with the January 2009 **DCFS ALL STARS** Director's Employee Recognition Award for Outstanding Support Service Staff.

An Outstanding Colleague Of Yours Could Be the Next Winner.

NOMINATE Someone NOW!