

CONGRATULATIONS

DCFS ALL STARS

DIRECTOR'S EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD WINNERS

January 2011

Outstanding Administrative Manager

Marina Janofsky, ASM I

Headquarters, Health and Safety Management

Marina Janofsky is an Administrative Service Manager I in the Health and Safety Management Section who is regarded by all as friendly, caring, energetic and dedicated. Marina is always willing to go out of her way to service staff and assist management in looking for different alternatives to solve problems. She provides helpful direction to employees, especially with questions relating to the Family Medical Leave Act.

Marina is very approachable and willing to take on additional tasks. Most recently, when the Manager of Health and Safety retired last January, she assumed the responsibilities of that section for a couple of months while continuing to perform her normal duties. Marina demonstrates sensitivity, not only for the employees she assists, but for their families as well.

Marina exemplifies patience, professionalism and cooperation when working with her colleagues, as well as our external partners such as the CEO. She effectively negotiates with third party administrators to ensure our employees are receiving appropriate treatment, which allows them to return to work in a timely manner, resulting in a cost savings to the Department. She regularly attends meetings and trainings related to Health and Safety and brings back pertinent information to share with her colleagues. Most importantly, she completes her work with a positive attitude which creates a productive work environment. Marina's level of dedication to the Department is unwavering and admirable and for these reasons she is the February DERA award winner for Outstanding Administrative Staff.

Outstanding Direct Service Staff

Sonja Hearon, CSW II

Vermont Corridor

Sonja Hearon is currently an Intensive Services Worker (ISW) in the Vermont Corridor office who can be counted on to provide whatever services are necessary to meet the specific needs of her clients and assist her colleagues.

Her interviews with children, parents and collaterals are always very thorough and detailed. Sonya makes as many visits as possible to ensure child safety and assess how well the child is adjusting to placement.

After receiving a case, she promptly initiates HUB referrals, clothing allowances, requests for birth certificates, medical, dental, school, psychological, criminal and all previous DCFS or other County records,

Understanding that permanency is a priority of the Department, Sonja takes the time to interview each prospective relative or non-related relative caregiver who shows an interest in having the child placed in their home. She routinely expedites relative home assessments in preparation for possible placement.

Sonya is very professional in her work habits, maintaining well organized case files and entering all pertinent information in a timely manner. In describing Sonja's work ethic two words come to mind— consistent and efficient. Congratulations to Sonja Hearon, the DERA award winner for Outstanding Direct Services.

Outstanding Team Award

Training Section-Eligibility Worker Academy

El Monte

Taft Robinson, Staff Development Specialist
Connie Johnson, Staff Development Specialist

Taft Robinson and Connie Awanyai Johnson are the training team for all eligibility functions, including the comprehensive 80-hour Eligibility Worker (EW) Academy. The EW Academy is for newly-hired and existing eligibility workers focusing on eligibility functions, operations of revenue enhancement, the intake process and funding sources. In 2010, five EW Academies were completed. There are six EW Academies scheduled for 2011.

In addition to being training presenters, Taft and Connie research and develop all training materials. This requires an in-depth knowledge of all eligibility functions and procedures. They keep abreast of federal, state and county policy, procedural changes, and update training materials as necessary. This ensures that EW Academy trainees receive the most up-to-date policies and procedures.

EW Academy graduates' reaction to the training has been overwhelmingly positive. Some comments from post-training evaluations include:

- "...I have some training that I will use in my workplace with confidence"
- "I learned so much from the two of you...well presented"
- "Very well organized. Excellent!"
- "I now have more confidence in my approach to eligibility determination."
- "I learned some things I didn't know before attending the academy."
- "Keep up the good work!!"

Eligibility staff play an integral role in DCFS' service to children and families. It is essential that they be well-trained to determine eligibility and funding sources for our children and families and the providers that serve them.

The Eligibility Worker Academy, with curriculum researched, developed and presented by Taft and Connie, is an example of team work at its best. Although both have other non-eligibility related assignments, they coordinate their time and efforts to ensure that the EW Academy training materials are current and their presentations are interesting and informative. Taft Robinson and Connie Johnson are well-deserving of the DERA award for Outstanding Team Staff.

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

NOMINATE Someone NOW!