

CONGRATULATIONS

DCFS ALL STARS

DIRECTOR'S EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD WINNERS

May 2010

Outstanding Administrative Manager

Christina Hernandez, CSA I

Belvedere

Cristina is a gift to the Belvedere Office. She is a diligent, thorough, committed, and an extremely knowledgeable team player. As the SLS for Belvedere, she allocates and integrates services for our most needy children and critical cases. She is attuned to the needs of the office, the community, and the children we serve. She embraces the Department's mission of increased safety for children and works closely with staff and families to ensure that children who need critical services and care receive them timely and that they are tailored to the needs of the child.

Managing the care of children with multiple mental health concerns is difficult, and often times, the challenge is multiplied by lack of community resources and/or lack of knowledge of available resources. In these instances, Cristina is our "go to girl"— she knows internal and community resources and is always able to guide staff to offer children safety and stability in the least restrictive placement setting. Her professionalism is evident in her interactions with all staff and community partners from DMH. She models collaboration in everything she does. No matter how encumbered she is by the amount of work her role entails, she is always available to assist and support staff in ensuring children's mental health needs are met.

Cristina regularly participates in office meetings, working hand in hand with line workers to assist families in obtaining expedited services. She has been instrumental in accessing grief counseling for staff and families in recent child fatalities in our office. In a recent TDM, although multiple service providers were present including a DMH provider, Cristina was the only one who was able to explain mental health services to the family and assure the family and ER CSW that the child would be immediately linked to appropriate services. It must be noted that Cristina was on her RDO and when the facilitator called her for assistance, she did not hesitate to call back to assist. In another case, Cristina worked closely with the CSW in accessing and coordinating services for a teenager who was severely depressed, in a semi-catatonic state, and able to do very little self-care and daily living tasks. Cristina participated in placement TDMs, maintained the entire resources team (PHNs, Wrap-Around, DMH, D-Rate, and administrators) and kept everyone abreast of meeting outcomes, including exploring multiple placement options for the youth in question. This is the type of commitment and knowledge that rises above the call of duty, and sets

Cristina apart as a stellar team player. Congratulations to Cristina Hernandez, the 2010 May DERA winner for Outstanding Administrative Manager.

Outstanding Support Service Staff

Brenda Hodges, Accountant Technician

Adoption Payroll, Glendora Office

Brenda Hodges has worked in the Adoption Payroll Section for 24 years processing monthly checks single-handedly and monitoring those cases where approval has been granted for continuing payment after the youth has turned 18 and where payments have stopped. Until recently, Brenda was also making address and name corrections and updating the Adoptions Assistance Program (AAP). She always comes to work early to keep on top of her job. She is very knowledgeable on every aspect of the AAP program and is always ready to help co-workers when they have a question. Once the AAP Program was updated and became web-based, it took almost 30 additional employees to do what Brenda had done alone for years. Brenda is regarded by her peers as an excellent employee and a major asset to our Department. She has been operating at a high level of professionalism for many years and is deserving of the 2010 May DERA award for Outstanding Support Staff.

Outstanding Direct Service Staff

Claudia Breda, ER SCSW

Vermont Corridor

Claudia Breda, an ER SCSW at the Vermont Corridor Office with 15 years of DCFS experience, excels in everything she does. She responds to requests for assistance without hesitation, is detailed oriented, follows up on urgent matters in a timely manner and ensures all matters are completely resolved.

Last year when additional experienced supervisors were needed at the Vermont Corridor office, Claudia assisted where she could for four months while working with her own workers in the back end. Her timely assistance was recognized and praised by administration. Claudia is someone the staff knows they can go to with a variety of questions and find the answer they are looking for.

She has always demonstrated outstanding social work skills and does an effective job supervising her unit. Her excellent written and verbal skills are evident in her interactions and correspondence with parents, care providers, law enforcement, community agencies and staff. Claudia has exceptional knowledge of juvenile court procedures, DCFS policies and procedures with a focus on child

safety issues. She teaches her ER unit to make thorough family assessments with recommendations reflecting the best interests of the children in mind.

Claudia consistently demonstrates good judgment, impartiality, cultural sensitivity and the ability to educate and inspire others. She is an approachable person, helpful to co-workers and often sought out for consultation.

In the past, she has provided three-month in-house trainings to new CSWs out of the academy. She has worked on the ASFA Compliance Team, participated in Celebration with ILP for the last eight years, has been a co-facilitator with the Ease-In Program, and is the office's liaison for the Trust fund. She does it all.

For these reasons and many more Claudia Breda deserves the May 2010 DERA award for Outstanding Direct Services Staff.

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

NOMINATE Someone NOW!