

CONGRATULATIONS

DCFS ALL STARS

DIRECTOR'S EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD WINNERS

November 2009

Outstanding Administrative Service Staff or Manager

Ed Fithyan, ARA

Belvedere Office

Upon assuming his position as the Belvedere ARA, Ed Fithyan demonstrated a commitment towards team work, collaboration and ensuring that fair Concurrent Planning protocols would be followed. Ed makes sure all voices are heard at the monthly CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) meetings. Even when these decisions are unpopular, policies and protocols are adhered to without coming across as overbearing. This has allowed the Belvedere office to achieve great permanency outcomes and assume a leadership role in Concurrent Planning. The office has seen their over-due Concurrent Planning Assessment (CPA) list reduced from over 120 in 2008, to just 40 in late 2009. CPAs are critically important in ensuring that children do not languish in foster care without permanency. Early permanency intervention with families has demonstrated an increase in family reunification rates, thus allowing the Department to achieve 2 of its 3 main goals.

Recognizing the impact of due diligence and notice process on .26 timelines, Ed created an office-based training to tackle the needs of the office surrounding Concurrent Planning. In a recent review of continued .26 cases, over 40% were continued for legal notice reasons with incomplete due diligence. Due diligence is a basic component of reasonable efforts and facilitates family searches and connections. Ed's training was comprehensive with unique "how-to" instructions. This helpful staff training was shared at a CIP (Continuous Improvement Process) meeting at Court and all 12 regional offices present showed an interest in having that same type of training given to their staff. It is clear that Ed has used his leadership role effectively, ensuring team work and at the same time, ensuring the improvement of permanency outcomes for DCFS children. Congratulations to Ed Fithyan, the November 2009 DERA winner for Outstanding Administrative Manager.

Outstanding Direct Service Staff

Virginia Lyle, SCSW

South County Office

For over 20 years, SCSW Virginia Lyle has trained and mentored numerous CSW and SCSW staff with her extensive child welfare knowledge. Virginia is well regarded by her peers and provides a unique perspective to the historical relevance of policies and procedures. She is always willing to participate in focus groups that enhance the social worker's ability to do their job and assist our clients. Recently, she participated in the Lakewood CQI meetings which addressed the linking of cases between adoption, DI, and the services CSW. She is an active participant in the SNAP meetings providing insightful evaluation and suggestions on improvements. She provides helpful feedback when drafts of new policies are created. Virginia is a strong advocate for her staff maintaining the same unit members for several years, two of which have been in her unit for over 12 years. This is a testament to her positive management style, being a team player and never hesitating to assist in covering duty, attending TDM's, and reviewing court reports. When clarification is needed, she is the "go-to person" always ready to provide assistance. She is open to case-conferencing even with staff outside her unit, including SCSWs. Virginia often takes difficult cases from other units. She is strength-based in her approach even before it became a Department practice. She always focuses on the safety of the child while being sensitive to the family's level of functioning and cultural issues. She is a solid SCSW and an inspiration to those who work with her in the South County. Her experience, wisdom, fairness, and advocacy for clients and staff have earned her the November 2009 DERA award for Outstanding Direct Service Staff.

Outstanding Team Staff Award

Point of Engagement/Visitation Section

Clara Lee-Narahara, CSA I

Carmen Covarrubias, CSA I

David Yada, CSA I

Community-Based Support Division

The collective effort of David Yada, Clara Lee-Narahara, and Carmen Covarrubias, POE-Visitation's CSA I Team, on programs and initiatives that support the Department's three main goals, deserve special recognition. They are the backbone for multiple initiatives and projects including but not limited to: Up-Front Assessments, Enhanced Visitation Action Planning, Linkages, the Incarcerated Parents Program, SPA 1 and SPA 2 Visitation and Safe Exchange Centers.

The POE-Visitation section's CSAs, unlike many others in their level, do not have one primary job duty or role. They must be accountants and budget analysts, social workers, community collaborators, program monitors, program developers, researchers, transcribers, trainers, etc. They have to be able to create an Excel file analyzing agencies funding balances one minute and the next, provide information to a referred client on whether or not they can qualify for a certain

program, and then turn around again to create a Memorandum of Agreement or Statement of Work.

As a team, the POE-Visitation CSA I's are well-rounded and excel in their multiple responsibilities. What is really great about the team is their ability to collaborate well internally and with their multiple external partners. As part of the Community Based Support Division, they are required to interact daily with community and County partners. While they are firm on issues, required to maintain the Department's objectives, they keep a very polite and professional tone when working with providers and other partners. It is a testament to their character that they have not received any complaint about their dealings with their multiple partners. While each gets frustrated or stressed at times, they use humor to get past the difficulties facing them and support each other to persevere in their work. They are all extremely dependable and can be counted on to stay late or come in during their RDOs in order to complete an assigned task without being asked. In short, the POE-Visitation Section's CSA I's are really great as individuals, but as a team, they are stupendous!

Outstanding Support Service Staff Award

Syed M. Hasan, ITC
Headquarters

The overall goals of Internal Affairs are to preserve and promote the safety and welfare of children and families served by the department. Internal Affairs evaluates specific employee conduct to ensure that the best interests of children, their families, staff and the department are served. Internal Affairs investigates allegations of employee improprieties, which in the view of Internal Affairs, can not or should not be investigated by the region where they occurred. Examples include but are not limited to: abuse of position and/ authority, fiscal/procedural irregularities, acts/threats of violence and failure to provide appropriate mandated services to clients. The timely response to Internal Affairs requests for employee personnel information that Syed Hasan provides is a critical part of these investigations. Mr. Hasan promptly retrieves employee information, never needs to be reminded of requests and always informs the section when documentation is ready. His efficiency and professionalism are invaluable.

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

NOMINATE Someone NOW!