

CONGRATULATIONS

DCFS ALL STARS

DIRECTOR'S EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD WINNERS

September 2009

Outstanding Directive Service Staff

Karen Bowman, CSWIII

Service Bureau 2

Karen Bowman, who communicates solely through American Sign Language, was one of the original workers when the Deaf Services Unit came into existence over 15 years ago. Karen originally worked as a Deaf Interpreter and Deaf Juror Coordinator for the Los Angeles Superior Court. After observing the language, cultural and service barriers faced by the deaf and hard of hearing families serviced by the Department, she connected with several public service providers and formed an advocacy group, the Advocacy Council for Deaf Abused Children (ACDAC) that still plays an active support role today. With the support of Children's Court and the ACDAC, the Deaf Services Unit was established with Karen Bowman being one of the three original workers.

Karen Bowman has played a significant role in expanding the unit into two separate Deaf Units. Karen persuaded Children's Court to utilize appointment court rooms designed for the sensitive communication needs of the deaf and hard of hearing families during court hearings. Karen provided three extensive trainings for the Children's Court judges, attorneys, court officers as well as the Deaf Services Unit on deaf language and cultural norms.

As a CSW, Karen works diligently to ensure her families receive equal opportunities to rebuild their lives so that their children can return to a safe home. Many of the families she has assisted in the past, with both reunification and adoption, continue to check in with her to let her know they are doing well.

Karen has encouraged aspiring performers on her caseload by involving them with the Rising Stars performing arts program. She regularly transports youth for countless rehearsals and performances. For the past 15 years, she has worked as a volunteer for the 999 Christmas party hosted by the Sheriff's Department for the families within the Deaf Services Units and the Medical Placement Units.

Karen is always available to support her co-workers when needed, whether it is an out of state visit or to consult on a case. She takes great pleasure in advocating and finding solutions on behalf of her deaf and hard of hearing clients. Her efforts on behalf of her clients have earned her the admiration of many within and outside the Department, but most importantly, her families. It is with great pleasure that Karen Bowman is awarded the September 2009 DERA Award for Outstanding Direct Service Staff.

Outstanding Team Award

Rudy Montano, ASM I

Bureau of Finance & Administration, Senior Deputy Director's Office

John Langstaff, CSA II

Bureau of Information Services (BIS), Senior Deputy Director's Office

The Web-Based Time Study is the Department of Children and Family Services' application that allows a fast and simple process for select employees to submit work-time study information. This system permits all case-carrying CSWs and case-carrying Eligibility Workers to document employee work time. The time/type information is then extracted, analyzed and translated to data that is the basis for reimbursement of funds to the County of Los Angeles from state and federal sources.

At inception, two employees stood out as the driving force for the design and movement of this project through its various phases, including the pilot and final Department-wide implementation of this valuable measurement tool. These employees are Rudy Montano, currently with our Bureau of Finance and Administration's Revenues and Assistance Section and John Langstaff, who currently works in the Department's Application Development Database & Research Group which is under the direction of the Senior Deputy Director's office.

These two employees worked independently and collaborated with various groups within the Department and with a programming consultant. They each dedicated many painstaking hours to provide our Department with this important fiscal aid and thereby supporting the Department's three critical outcomes of increased safety, reduced reliance on detention and out-of-home care, and decreased timelines to permanency for those we serve.

Congratulations to Rudy Montano and John Langstaff, the September 2009 DERA Winners for Outstanding Team Award for their contributions to the Web-based Time Study.

Outstanding Support Staff

Rebecca Pruitt, Secretary III
Santa Clarita

Amidst the endless refrain about too much work and too little time that is so common in the workplace, if you happen to be in the Santa Clarita workplace, listen closely and you will hear the clear, cheerful voice of Rebecca Pruitt:

- Good morning staff! “Remember to bring your favorite dish to the potluck tomorrow.”
- Good morning staff! “Remember that eCAPS is due today, so even though you are all very busy, please make every attempt to get that done.”
- Good afternoon staff! “We just received information that the southbound Interstate 5 is closed at Calgrove due to an overturned truck.”
- Greetings everyone! “If you accidentally left a car seat in your car, please return it immediately, since we have a small child who needs to be transported right now.”
- Good afternoon staff! Remember to turn off your computers before you leave today. The CWS code drop will take place this weekend, so you must turn them off. Have a great weekend!”

Rebecca Pruitt is a Secretary to one of the ARAs in this office, but her title should really be, “Office Mom.” Rebecca not only completes all her assigned duties quickly and thoroughly, she always makes time to assist others in whatever way possible. One of the most frequently heard phrases from Rebecca is, “How can I help?” Whether she is preparing an agenda for a meeting, tracking down a CSW or supervisor, or approving eCAPS, she performs her duties with a positive attitude and a commitment to high quality.

Rebecca treats everyone who calls with the utmost respect and dignity, ensuring that their questions are answered as soon as possible. She is warm, friendly and maintains a professional demeanor with all callers. Rebecca takes the time to listen to clients’ concerns; she offers them support and lets them know that their calls will be returned by the appropriate party. She responds to assignments and other inquiries from the Service Bureau as quickly as possible.

Rebecca does not settle for mediocre, nor is she content with maintaining the status quo. Because she is dedicated to helping others, she continually seeks ways to improve the “quality of life” in the Santa Clarita office. Whether it is developing an improved system for tracking assignments or arranging a birthday luncheon, she sees no obstacle too difficult to overcome. When the office experienced problems in tracking various units’ duty schedules, Rebecca created a “Duty Board,” visible to all in a high- traffic area to track who is on duty for which unit or section, who is on vacation and who has an RDO. Rebecca also

recently implemented an employee recognition program called, “Caught Being Good.” Anyone who wishes to acknowledge a colleague’s good performance fills out a small note puts it in a box on Rebecca’s desk, and the good news is shared with everyone at the next General Staff Meeting.

Rebecca routinely receives compliments from our Regional Administrator, our Bureau Administrative Team, clients and colleagues. A worker in her office recently provided the following statement about Rebecca: “Rebecca is the best goodwill ambassador this office has. She is a consistent morale builder. She is willing to help anybody with anything at any time. I hear the expert and compassionate way she handles difficult clients and staff on the phone. And of course, she is efficient, ethical, hard working and all that other good stuff. We are very lucky to have her.” The Department agrees and is proud to honor Rebecca Pruitt with the DERA September 2009 Award for Outstanding Support Staff.

Outstanding Administrative Manager

Elizabeth Howard, Manager

**Group Home and Foster Family Agency Performance Managing Section
Out of Home Care Management Division**

As Manager of the Group Home and Foster Family Agency Performance Managing Section, Elizabeth Howard plays a key role in providing leadership. She fosters a spirit of collaboration by providing her units a common focus. She holds regular meetings with her staff to advise them of critical departmental developments and encourages open communication, cooperation and the sharing of knowledge. She consistently uses her leadership skills to effectively integrate the Department’s vision and mission into the day to day practices of her workforce while promoting excellence and high levels of performance within her section.

Elizabeth sets very high expectations for herself and her staff. She readily recognizes each person’s uniqueness and strengths and parcels out assignments accordingly. She consistently provides her staff with the resources and encouragement to complete their assignments and demonstrates confidence that those tasks will be completed satisfactorily. She provides structure, direction and feedback, utilizing a direct, yet caring approach. She regularly measures progress and acknowledges her staff for their hard work.

Elizabeth is also a great collaborator, as evidenced by her ongoing work with both the Foster Family Performance Measures Task Group and the Residentially-Based Services Performance Measures Task Group. In February, 2009, Elizabeth organized the first ever Performance Measures Task Group Retreat, entitled “From Good to Great,” including the provider community, DCFS management and staff. This event resulted in the development of a new set of

goals and priorities on which to focus the group's attention for the coming year on achieving desired outcomes.

Staff members and community partners frequently comment on Elizabeth's exceptional people skills employing respect and dignity in all her interactions. Even when corrective actions involving providers are needed, she remains firm yet composed. She provides constructive criticism to her staff without demeaning or belittling. The entire Out of Home Care Management Division benefits from Elizabeth's professionalism and work ethic and accordingly, we honor her as the September 2009 DERA Winner for Outstanding Administrative Manager.

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

NOMINATE Someone NOW!