

# Making Things Happen

Through Self-Empowerment...Keeping Our Kids!



## DCFS Partnering with Parents Cook County Birth Parent Council Institute Day



June 20, 2008  
Ramada Inn Lakeshore  
Convention Center  
Chicago, IL



**Monique Smith** is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with 20 years of experience in the Behavioral Healthcare field. She has held a variety of clinical, administrative and training positions with various social service agencies and universities in the Chicago area. Ms. Smith received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Services/Criminal Justice from Bradley University and her Master of Social Work Degree from the University Of Illinois-Jane Addams School Of Social Work. Ms. Smith is currently employed as a Trainer Specialist with Chicago State University.

**Maurice L. Sykes** is an Assistant Public Defender assigned to calendar 12-L in Juvenile Court and works with birth parents on a regular basis. He attended the University of Illinois and graduated with a B.A. in Finance in 1988 and received a JD - General Education in 1994. Mr. Sykes has been practicing law since November 1994 and has worked in several practice areas including general civil/real estate practice from 1994 until approximately 2002. He has been working with the Public Defender's Office in the Child Protection Division since December 2002. Mr. Sykes currently sits on the Board of Directors for several not-for-profit organizations and is a board member for the Family Defense Center, a resource for parents or individuals involved in the child protection system. Mr. Sykes also served in the U.S. Armed Forces for the past 20 years and currently holds the rank of Major.

**Kelley A. Thornton** is the Assistant Deputy Public Guardian at The Office of the Cook County Public Guardian (OPG). Ms. Thornton joined the office in 1996 as an entry level attorney, and has risen through the ranks to become the number two person in charge of the Office's Juvenile Division. The Juvenile Division of the OPG currently represents approximately 10,000 children under the jurisdiction of the Circuit Court of Cook County. Ms. Thornton has been in her current position since 2005. She oversees the supervision of over 150 attorneys, various child welfare professionals, investigators, a nurse, a psychologist, and various support staff. On a day-to-day basis, Ms. Thornton provides direction, establishes policy, and guides the development of an experienced and diverse staff committed to quality representation and advocacy of children. Ms. Thornton attended Hampton University and received a Bachelors of Arts in English Education, and is a 1992 graduate of Howard University School of Law. Prior to attending law school, Ms. Thornton taught high school students in the Chicago Public School system. She has presented at the National Black Child Development Institute Conference in 2000, 2002, and 2005, and at the Child Welfare League of America Conference in 2001. She has also presented at various local school and agency workshops. Ms. Thornton's volunteer experience includes serving as the Assistant Director of a mentoring program for young ladies between the ages of 11 and 18. She is also a scholarship committee member for both R.A.Y. (Reclaim A Youth), a not-for-profit organization that provides enrichment programs and scholarships for youth in the south suburbs, and the Chicago Chapter Hampton University Alumni Association. Ms. Thornton and her husband are the proud parents of two very active young boys.

**Jeff Walker** began his employment with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services in January 1989, as a Child Welfare Services Caseworker. He then worked as a Child Protective Investigator from January 1994 through June 1998, at which time he became the Special Assistant to the Deputy Director of Administrative Case Review. In May 2000, Mr. Walker became the ACR Program Manager for Cook North region, and then the ACR Program Manager for Cook Central in June 2002. Mr. Walker became the acting ACR Program Manager for Cook South in March 2004 and Cook County ACR Administrator in May 2004. Mr. Walker holds a Masters of Arts in Social Work and a Masters of Business Administration.



Rod R. Blagojevich  
Governor

Erwin McEwen  
Director

Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the 2008 Cook County Birth Parent Council Training Institute! On behalf of the management and staff of the Department, I thank you for your willingness to partner with DCFS to attend this Institute Day. As many of you have completed your journey through the child welfare system, still many are beginning this journey. We recognize that the journey is often wrought with challenges that at times may seem impossible to overcome but your presence here today indicates you are striving to arm yourselves with information that will help you during your journey to keep your children.

Today's Institute, "Making Things Happen: Through Self-Empowerment...Keeping Our Kids" is focused on helping you to understand the child welfare system and how it impacts on you in the worker/parent relationship, service planning, administrative case review, parent rights and responsibilities and the role of the guardian, public defender and other attorneys. This Institute also reflects the original goal of the "Partnering With Parents Statewide Initiative to provide families with a voice in the policies, programs and services provided to them. The Parent Partners Council is one way parents can assist DCFS to see, hear and understand the needs of families as they journey toward reunification or work to stay together." The Core Council parent members have effectively communicated the needs of parents to DCFS and as a result this Institute has been developed.

Now get ready to enjoy a day of learning and interacting with other parents and child welfare professional staff during the general session, workshops and during lunch.

I would like to commend the members of the Birth Parent Council, and the Steering Council who worked with the Clinical Division's Office of Birth Parent Services and other DCFS divisions for their excellent effort in leading in the development of this Institute Day.

Thank you again, for your willingness to attend.

Sincerely,

Velma Williams  
Assistant Director

Office of the Director  
100 West Randolph, 6-200 • Chicago, Illinois 60601-3249  
312-814-4650 • 312-814-8783 / TTY



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## Cook County Birth Parent Council History and Mission

The ultimate purpose of child welfare agencies is to help families in crisis become stable and unified. In child welfare, birth parents have been sorely overlooked, which hinders and many times defeats the purpose. The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) introduced the Partnering With Parents Initiative to address the concerns and needs of birth parents as the agency recognized the need for change on behalf of parents receiving child welfare services. Its main goal is to give families a voice regarding the policies, programs and services provided to them. To that end, the Birth Parent Councils of Cook County were created, which includes a Core Council and a proposal for three councils in each region for a total of nine. Currently there is one council in each Region: North, South, and Central.

The mission of all councils is to identify issues concerning birth parents and present these issues to the appropriate government officials to bring about durable policy changes that will aid all parents with DCFS involvement, now and in the future. All members of the councils are birth parents.

The Council of parents recently elected officers to serve in the following positions to represent Cook County Birth Parents: Gregory Cox, Chair; David Israel, Co-Chair; Theresa Cope, Secretary; and Verna Townsend, Co-Secretary.

The Council also has developed committees chaired by birth parents to continue the planning and development of the Cook County Council. The committees are:

- The Support Committee, which helps to recruit and retain parents, encourage parents and mentor parents when requested. Help to identify resources and services within the community and the Council to assist parents as they navigate the child welfare system.
- The Media Committee, which helps to develop newsletters, flyers and materials for the Web site
- The Training Committee, which helps to plan in-service training sessions based on parents' priorities and identify the presenters for sessions, they also plan the Birth Parent events that will be held such as: Institute Days, In-Service trainings and Birth Parent presentations to new child welfare staff attending Foundations and Child Protection training.

Birth parents who are interested in joining the Cook County Birth Parent Council or would like more information may contact 312/328-2828.

*By Ramona Randall*

**Dorretta Evans Parker**, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, has over 35 years of experience. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology/Mathematics and her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her areas of expertise are maternal and child health (program planning, monitoring and evaluation), child abuse and neglect, and the education and training of students. She is also an experienced clinician. Ms. Evans Parker is currently employed as a part-time Research Specialist with the Illinois African-American Family Commission. She is also serving as adjunct faculty for the Graduate School of Social Work at Chicago State University, teaching field practicum and Human Behavior in the Social Environment. Ms. Evans Parker's other professional experiences include: Maternal and Child Health and Health Facilities Branch Chief with Region V Health, Resources and Services Administration (HRSA); Senior Social Worker and Chairman of Child Protective Services Team, Michael Reese Hospital; Director, Early Childhood Diagnostic Center of Charleston Memorial Hospital, Charleston, W.VA; Senior Social worker at W. VA Rehabilitation Center and Medical Social Worker at Cook County Hospital (now Known as John Stroger Hospital). Ms. Evans Parker has served her community in various volunteer roles including serving on the boards of The YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago, Henry Booth House, Women's Health Center (Charleston, W. VA); serving as Big Sister with Big Brothers and Big Sisters; and serving as officers in her church organizations, Homeowner's Association and her sorority.

**D. Jean Ortega-Piron** was appointed Guardian of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) on September 3, 1996. Prior to her appointment, Ms. Ortega-Piron served as Executive Assistant to Governor Edgar's Special Counsel for Child Welfare Services. Ms. Ortega-Piron began her career in human services in 1980 as a law clerk for the Illinois Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (DMHDD). She served in a variety of attorney positions for that agency, including General Counsel. In 1987, she left her DMHDD General Counsel position to serve as the DCFS Chief Administrative Law Judge and Administrator of the Administrative Hearings Unit, which she created. Ms. Ortega-Piron holds a Bachelor's degree from Rosary College and a Juris Doctorate degree from IIT/Chicago Kent College of Law. She has served on the Illinois Special Olympics Board of Directors, the St. Joseph Catholic School Board, a board member of the Illinois Christian Legal Society, an executive committee member of the Abraham Lincoln Marovitz Inn of Court, and chairwoman of the Chicago Bar Association Mental Health Law Committee and the DuPage County Bar Children's Advocacy Committee. She is a recipient of the IIT/Chicago Kent College of Law 2007 Professional Achievement Award, the 2005 Chicago Bar Foundation, Richard J. Phelan Award for Outstanding Public Service and an honorable mention for the 2005 Jefferson Awards.

**Lourdes Rodriguez** has been a human service professional since 1981, when she earned her BSW degree from Lewis University (Illinois). Ms. Rodriguez has worked solely in child welfare since 1975 in a variety of settings and levels, including as a supervisor of counseling for Jobs Corps, executive director of The Spanish Center, health services coordinator for Head Start of Will County, and with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services since 1983, serving as a caseworker, investigator, and child welfare administrative case reviewer, and since 2005 as DCFS Statewide Burgos Coordinator. Ms. Rodriguez currently serves on the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations Advisory Council, DCFS Birth Parent Council, and DCFS Latino Advisory Committee. Over the last 30 years she has served on numerous boards, committees and councils working with youth, HIV prevention, homelessness and anti-poverty initiatives and Latino families.

**Diane Mariani, CADC, NCRS**, is Coordinator of the Maternal Addiction Center at Haymarket Center in Chicago. The “MAC” provides specialized residential treatment and supportive services for 32 pregnant women and their children. Ms. Mariani advocates for increased services for pregnant women by connecting with area hospitals, clinics and other agencies and resources. She is also an active member of the Austin C.A.R.E. Network, working to reduce infant mortality in the Austin Community through education and empowerment.

**Valerie McDaniels** has been employed with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services since February 1985. During her tenure with DCFS, she has served in the capacities of Child Protection Investigator, Child Protection Lead Investigator, Child Protection Supervisor, and Child Protection Manager. Currently, Ms McDaniels is the Intact Manager for Cook South Division of Child Protection’s Intact Family Services teams. Ms. McDaniels served on many workgroups and committees responsible for revising and/or drafting new policies for DCFS, and serves as the regional DCP coordinator for all activities related to COA reaccreditation efforts. She has provided various trainings to staff across all three Cook Regions. Ms. McDaniels also has extensive history with private agencies via work with Catholic Charities, Ada S. McKinley, and Volunteers of America. She also enjoyed the experience of serving as a house parent with her husband to three to six DCFS wards through the agency Homes for Children. Ms. McDaniels holds a graduate degree from the University of Chicago’s School of Social Service Administration; is a certified case reviewer for the Council of Accreditation (COA); and is a member of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) an affiliate of APHSA. On the lighter side, her hobbies are church, bowling, dancing, and gathering with family and friends.

**Catherine McNeilly** is the Administrator for Research, Evaluation and Quality Assurance and the Senior Consultant to the Office of Training in the Division of Clinical Services and Program Development at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. As such, she is responsible for oversight of all training activities and services in the Department, including budget, operations and curriculum development and review. She also is the administrator for the Office of Quality Improvement activities that support training and clinical service delivery within the Division. She is returning to DCFS after serving as the Director of the MISA Institute. The Institute was part of the Heartland Training Center for Human Service Excellence at Heartland Alliance located in Chicago, IL. She holds an appointment as Adjunct Instructor at the University of Chicago School of Social Services Administration and at the Adler School of Professional Psychology. Dr. McNeilly had previously been the Manager for Mentally Ill Substance Abuser (MISA) programs for the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASA) in Illinois. Dr. McNeilly has worked for the state of Illinois in a number of programs. She was previously the Manager for the DCFS substance abuse and child welfare integration program. She was also the program administrator for integrating substance abuse and mental health services for the Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA). She developed the treatment initiative for problem gamblers at DASA as well. Dr. McNeilly received her degree in clinical psychology from the Adler School of Professional Psychology in Chicago. She has extensive experience as a trainer, both nationally and locally. She is a certified drug and alcohol counselor who has worked in the field for over 15 years.

## Welcome to the 2008 DCFS Birth Parent Council Institute Day!

We’re glad you’re here! Our Birth Parent Core and Steering Committee Members have worked long and hard to offer you a memorable training experience! Efforts have been made to develop workshops based on what parents have identified.

### Birth Parent Core Council Officers

Gregory Cox, Chair

David Israel, Co-Chair

Theresa Cope, Secretary

Verna Townsend, Co-Secretary

### Members

Leon Alexander

Lavell Bolden

Angela Cummins

Jean Davis

Letitia Franklin

Joseph Gibson

Cynthia Hoyle

Latresia Nash

Natasha Oglesby

Eric Prater

Ramona Randall

Gigi Young

Rayvese Woodfork-Smith

# Thank You

The Birth Parent Council and Cook Birth Parent Administration would like to extend our special thanks to our Steering Committee, for their on-going support, consultation and tireless commitment to the Cook County Birth Parent Council Program. Steering Committee members sacrifice their time, energy and freely share their expertise to further the development of the Cook County Birth Parent Councils.

## Steering Committee Members

Marilyn Arnold	Theresa Matthews
Gloria J. Bell	D. Jean Ortega-Piron
Michael Byrd	Dorretta Evans Parker
Bob Dwyer	Lourdes Rodriguez
Katie Eller	Peggy Slater
Sheila Freeman	Monique Smith
Karen Harrington	Annette Stafford
Jacqueline Johnson	Donna Steele
DeJuan Jones	Benita Uti
Maya Maclin	Carmen Valesquez
Diane Mariani	

## Special Thanks

Thank you to our Program Staff members: Donnella Bishop-Ward, Marsha Harris and Marnie Winston; the DCFS Division of Communications; and our community partners for their support of the Cook County Birth Parent Council Program.

Community Partners from the following organizations graciously have allowed the Cook County Birth Parent Council Regional Councils to meet in their facilities: Kennedy-King College, Marillac Social Center and St. Vincent DePaul Center.

Special thanks to The McDermott Center – Haymarket for its support of the Cook County Birth Parent Council, including encouraging and often transporting DCFS parents to attend Council meetings.

Special thanks to each of the Regional Birth Parent Council members from Cook North, South and Central who have worked tirelessly with the Core Council to support the development of the Cook County Birth Parent Council by helping to identify parental issues and concerns.

held to assist in the development of transition plans for older wards of the state before they age out of the system. In addition to her duties in the Cook County Juvenile Courts, Mrs. Barnes-Johnson is regularly called upon to assist clinicians in other states and countries in developing comprehensive plans to improve the services provided by those facilities. She is a certified trainer for DCFS and a peer reviewer for the Council on Accreditation. She also participates in an internship program at the Management Planning Institute in Chicago doing clinical counseling as she works towards obtaining her license as a Licensed Clinical Practice Counselor. Mrs. Barnes-Johnson received a B.A. in Sociology from Knoxville College and later went on to attain a M.A. degree in Guidance and Counseling from Chicago State University. She is a long-time member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., one of the oldest black greek sororities in the history of the U.S. Additionally, she is a member of the National Black Social Workers Association, National Council of Negro Woman, and National Social Workers Association.

**Rick Love, M.H. S, CRADC**, is Assistant Director of Staff Training and Development at Haymarket Center. He has worked in the field of substance abuse for the past 15 years, in several treatment capacities including both clinical and supervisory positions. Mr. Love has trained extensively both within and outside of Haymarket Center on numerous addiction-related topics. He currently provides and coordinates Haymarket Center staff in-service trainings and assists in developing workshops for the Spring, Autumn and Summer Haymarket Institute. Mr. Love is a graduate of Northeastern Illinois University with a B.A. in Sociology, as well as a Masters Degree in Health Science from Governors State University.

**Maya P. Maclin** is currently employed as a Foster Care Supervisor at Kids Hope United. She is also an active member of the Birth Parent Council's Steering Committee. Ms. Maclin has worked in the Child Welfare community 2001. She previously worked for Catholic Charities as a Child Welfare Specialist III and later was promoted to supervisor. Ms. Maclin also worked at Mercy Home for Boys and Girls in a residential setting with young adolescent girls. Her interest in counseling services began early with her desire to help people; this included helping her peers during high school to deal with issues ranging from school to sexual abuse. The interest set the stage for her current career path. Ms. Maclin is a graduate of Chicago State University with a B.A. in Psychology and obtained a M.A. in Counseling-Psychology from Saint Xavier University. She is currently studying to obtain Licensure in Counseling.

**Bakahia Madison, MA, CADC**, is the Acting Assistant Clinical Director at Haymarket Center and has over 13 years of experience in the field of substance abuse. She holds a Bachelors Degree in psychology as well as a Masters degree in Community Mental Health from Roosevelt University. Ms. Madison is currently pursuing her Doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology-Argosy University. Her concentration is client-centered therapy and she has facilitated several client-centered group discussions on diversity issues. Ms. Madison's training experience includes working with clinical staff, social workers, teachers, and the Chicago Public School system. In addition, she had developed workshops on topics such as conflict resolution, behavioral management for children and adolescents, and integrating women and children services in treatment centers.

## Presenter Biographies

**Marilyn Arnold** has been employed with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services for 21 years. Ms. Arnold began her career with the Department as a Child Welfare Specialist II. Subsequent to that, she has worked with the Division of Quality Assurance for nine years as a Management Operations Analyst and Regional Quality Specialist. In May 2000, Ms. Arnold began her tenure as the Manager of Organizational Development, Communication and Training, for the Department's Best Practice/SACWIS Project. Ms. Arnold has also functioned as a Special Assistant to the Director and currently is the Associate Deputy Director over the Division of Administrative Case Review. Ms. Arnold's educational career includes a Bachelor of Science Degree from Illinois State University, Normal, IL and a Master Degree in Social Work (MSW) from Loyola University of Chicago, IL. In addition, Ms. Arnold has completed Harvard University's, "The John F. Kennedy School of Government", Executive Leadership Program. Ms. Arnold is a certified Peer Reviewer with the Council on Accreditation (COA) for Children and Family Services and a Consultant with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. Also, Ms. Arnold is on the Board of the National Association of Foster Care Review (NAFCR). In addition, Ms. Arnold has certification from the Center of Conflict Resolution (CCR) as a certified mediator. Ms. Arnold resides in Matteson, Illinois and has two adult sons. She enjoys reading, dancing and cooking during her spare time.

**Gloria J. Bell** has been the DCFS Liaison for the Haymarket McDermott Center since September 2006. She provides counseling and coordination of services to DCFS parents currently in treatment at the McDermott Center. Ms. Bell works very closely with parents from the Cook County Birth Parent Regional Council-North by ensuring those parents interested are able to attend monthly meetings. Ms. Bell is also an active member of the Birth Parent Steering Council. Ms. Bell previously worked as a Child Development Specialist on Athey Hall at the Haymarket day care program for five years. She also was a former DCFS child welfare case manager and worked with birth parents with children in foster care and also worked with intact families. Ms. Bell has a Bachelor of Arts degrees from DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois.

**Patrick Bitar** Assistant Public Defender Patrick Bitar is assigned to Calendar 7-G in the Juvenile Court and was highly recommended by birth parents as an attorney concerned about his clients understanding the Juvenile Court process.

**Bob Dwyer** has served as an attorney for the Department of Children and Family Services since September 2004. Mr. Dwyer began as a staff attorney in the AHU unit and presented cases on behalf of the Department at expungement hearings. In January 2005, Mr. Dwyer was promoted to Supervisory Regional Counsel at Juvenile Court in Chicago. He now supervises the work product of one paralegal and three attorneys who are assigned to four calendars 1-A, 7-G,12-L &13-M. Mr. Dwyer is also an active member of the Cook County Birth Parent Steering Council.

**Jacqueline Barnes-Johnson** has served as a State Certified Social Worker with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services for 12 years. In her current capacity as a Public Service Administrator, she supervises court facilitators for the DCFS Office of Legal Services located in the Cook County Juvenile Court Building. In this role, she assists caseworkers and attorneys with a wide array of social work and clinical issues in a number of courtrooms serving abused/neglected and delinquency children from all over the Chicagoland area. Mrs. Barnes-Johnson represents the DCFS Office of Legal Services at Juvenile Court in the innovative Benchmark Hearings, which are

## Birth Parent Council Institute Day Agenda

8:30 a.m.

**Registration/Continental Breakfast**

9 a.m.

**Welcome & Opening Remarks**

Donnella Bishop-Ward, Program Administrator

**Introductions**

Erwin McEwen, Director, DCFS

Velma Williams, Assistant Director, DCFS

Greg Cox, Chair, Cook County Birth Parent Council

9:30 a.m.

**Keynote Address**

Dr. Cathy McNeilly, Administrator for Research, Evaluation and Quality Assurance, DCFS

10:15 a.m.

**Break**

10:30 a.m.

**Workshops**

- Parent Rights & Responsibilities, Lakewood Room
- ACR and Service Planning, West Private Dining Room
- Substance Abuse: Impact on the Family, Conference Room D
- Role of the Guardian, Public Defender, East Dining Room

Noon

**Networking Luncheon and Resource Exhibits**

1 p.m.

**Workshops**

- Parent Rights & Responsibilities, Lakewood Room
- ACR and Service Planning, West Private Dining Room
- Substance Abuse: Impact on the Family, Conference Room D
- Role of the Guardian, Public Defender, East Dining Room

2:30 p.m.

**Break**

2:45 p.m.

**Closing Session & Evaluations**

Dorretta Evans Parker, Research Specialist,

African American Family Commission

David Israel, Co-Chair Cook County Birth Parent Council

4 p.m.

**Surprise Event**

**Exhibit Tables will be located in the Kenwood Room during lunch, afternoon break and after closing session.**



## 2008 Cook County Birth Parent Council Training Institute "Making Things Happen Through Self-Empowerment... Keeping Our Children"

### Parent Rights & Responsibilities

### Lakewood Room

Birth parents are major stakeholders in the child welfare process and in order to progress successfully toward reunification or maintaining their children parents must understand fully their rights and responsibilities as it relates to DCFS services and interventions. Likewise caseworkers also need to know what is expected of parents to ensure parents receive adequate service and support from them. This workshop will address what parents and caseworkers need to know to ensure a proper worker-parent relationship resulting in stabilization and reunification.

*Presenters: Lourdes Rodriguez, DCFS Statewide Burgos Coordinator; Valerie McDaniels, DCFS Cook South Intact Manager; and Jackie Johnson, DCFS Court Facilitator Supervisor*

*Parent Facilitators: Letitia Franklin and Jesse Body*

### Administrative Case Review and Service Planning

### West Private Dining Room

Monitoring of casework progress by parent, child, caregiver and caseworker are required by law for service plans and are monitored and reviewed every 6 months by Administrative Case Reviewers. This process helps each of the stakeholders like parents, the child and the Juvenile Court personnel to know if they are meeting their tasks and objectives in related areas such as education, drug treatment, counseling, housing, job training, parenting and therapy to name a few.

*Moderator: Marilyn Arnold Associate Deputy, ACR*

*Presenters: Jeff Walker, ACR Administrator; Monique Smith, Trauma Trainer; and Maya Maclin, Supervisor, Kids Hope United*

*Parent Facilitators: Eric Prater and Rev. Terry LeNoir*

### Substance Abuse: The Impact on the Family

### Conference Room D

When parents are working within the child welfare system and they are also dealing with substance abuse issues this process alone may create significant stress on the parent as he/she attempts to engage in services identified by DCFS and the drug treatment provider. What happens to the family, the children and relatives? How does this impact affect the child? How does the child deal with feelings such as loss, abandonment, hurt, anger and guilt? What happens to the family when a parent relapses? What happens when the goal of return home is reached? How do the child and parent begin the process of reunifying? What services and resources are available to parents? What services should DCFS provide to the family?

*Moderator: Gloria Bell, DCFS Liaison Haymarket Center*

*Presenters: Bakahia Madison, Assistant Clinical Manager, Haymarket Center; Diane Mariani, Program Manager, Haymarket Center; and Rick Love, Director of Training, Haymarket Center*

*Parent Facilitators: Rayvese Woodfork-Smith and Cynthia Hoyle*

### The Role of the Guardian, Public Defender, and Guardian Ad Litem (GAL)

### East Private Dining Room

When children come into the child welfare system for placement and are not returned home immediately the Department will be awarded legal guardianship by the Juvenile Court. Often parents wonder who this parent is appointed by the court and what her role is. This workshop will give parents the opportunity to meet the DCFS Guardian D. Jean Ortega-Piron. Parents will also meet attorneys from the Office of the Public Defender and the Office of the Public Guardian (GAL), charged by law to represent parents and children in the Juvenile Court proceedings. Who are these attorneys? What is the role and responsibility of the public defender toward their client, the parent? How can parents learn to develop an attorney/client relationship? In addition, parents will learn that the GAL is appointed by law to provide legal representation to children in the care of DCFS in order to make recommendations to the judge about what is in a child's best interest. Parents will also learn that the goal of the GAL attorney is not to separate families, but when appropriate to help reunite families.

After completing this training, participants will be able to:

- Understand the role of the DCFS Guardian
- Understand the role of the Public Defender
- Know how to access the Public Defender
- Understand the role of the Guardian Ad Litem
- Understand the Juvenile Court system and how guardianship is awarded to DCFS
- Understand the role of other attorneys and Juvenile Court personnel
- Understand the legal terminology used during court proceedings

*Moderator: Bob Dwyer, DCFS Office of Legal Services*

*Presenters: D. Jean Ortega-Piron, Guardian, DCFS Office of the Guardian and Advocacy; Kelly Thornton, Assistant Chief Deputy, Office of the Public Guardian; and Patick Bitar, Assistant Public Defender, Office of the Public Defender*

*Parent Facilitators: Leon Alexander and Ramona Randall*