FIA Icon

Family Independence Agency—Lansing, Mich. • January-February 2000

Happy Y2 new K

1999 went out like a lion as two more Project Zero sites reached "zero" and the new century began with no major computing hassles.

Out with the old—even if it ended on a high note—and in with the new. That was the prevailing creed as the year 2000 began without major system problems for Family Independence Agency offices around Michigan.

It was almost as good as the way the old century ended, when two Project Zero sites in Detroit reached "zero" in the waning days of December 1999.

On Dec. 21, the Warren-Conner Project Zero site in Wayne County reached zero, then the Fort Wayne district in Detroit reached the benchmark a week later (see pages 12-13.)

But the best news was worldwide relief that dreaded Y2K conversion glitches did not materialize.This was also true in Michigan state government.

"To prepare for the new year at home, I bought extra flashlight batteries, filled the vehicles with gasoline, looked at my checkbook to see if the date line had a '19' in it (no), shut down the computer, filled the bathtub with water, and warmed up the house an extra three degrees before midnight," said FIA director Douglas E. Howard Jan. 3.

"I saw that one computer system in Colorado turned over from December 31, 1999 to February 6, 1936. Figure that one out!"

-- FIA director Douglas E. Howard

"I now have extra batteries and plenty of gasoline, haven't written a check yet this year, ran one pen out of ink and then turned on the computer, emptied the bathtub, and the house is back to a normal temperature."

Howard said the efforts of FIA staff paid off as systems worked well when the new year started.

"All our painstaking testing paid off by not only giving us confidence, but by clearly helping prevent problems from occurring. Everyone who was involved in testing, planning, and transitioning deserves thanks.

"And those of you who were patient and understanding while the others were preparing for Y2K deserve a thank you, too."

"There have been a few minor annoyances along the way and there could be a few more. But we're in good shape, though, even with the minor annoyances.

"I saw that one computer system in Colorado turned over from December 31, 1999, to February 6, 1936. Figure that one out!"

FIA Icon for January-February 2000

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New year correspondence

We have the opportunity to read the FIA Icon and have found it to be informative and helpful. We serve many of the same target populations and administer programs which are sometimes affiliated such as MIChild and Medicaid outreach.

Barbara Hill, R. N.
Saginaw County Department of Public Health
Personal and Preventive Services
Saginaw

Happy New Year and thanks for the mention of our kickoff in the October-November 1999 FIA Icon. In my mind it is very important that we remove as many of the myths as we can before the inevitable slowdown in the economy so we can hopefully continue the public's perception that it is the system not the people that drive welfare caseloads.

Marc Del Mariani, Director
Van Buren County Family Independence Agency
Hartford

FIA people and places

In December FIA Outstate Operations director **Jim Nye** announced the appointments of **Kathryn McDonald** and **Janet Burch** as zone directors. McDonald, the former director at Lenawee County, became Zone 3 manager effective Jan. 9. Burch, who was previously director at Kalamazoo County FIA, took over duties as manager of Zone 4 effective Jan. 9. Nye later announced the appointment of **Janice Watkins** as acting director in Kalamazoo County.

Ken Kuhn, a youth group leader and family worker at the Adrian Training School, was hailed in a letter from the parent of a youngster in his section. "As I sat with her, this was my first time in years I could talk with her without screaming," said the mom. "I can see and feel in my heart she has changed so much. So many people over these past few years have told me what a bad thing I had done to take her to the state…Adrian Training School has truly made me proud of my decision. Thank you so much to you and your staff for being there for my baby. God bless you."

Effective Dec. 6, 1999 the intake application services at the Wayne County Hospital Corridor and Lafayette Adult districts were consolidated and the Lafayette District office was renamed **Lafayette Medical District**. Medical assistance applications are now filed at the Lafayette Medical District, 2000 West Lafayette in Detroit. Business hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p. m. Monday-Friday. The telephone is (313) 963-6002 voice; 963-6028 fax.

Gov. John Engler held his annual luncheon with Achievers of the Month Dec. 14 in Lansing. Former achievers attending were **Holly Word-Hill** of Detroit, **Sandra Rinehart** of Gaylord, **Kimberly Emelander** of Hastings, and **Rebecca Burch** of Owosso. A spouse, family member or employer accompanied each. "You have demonstrated trading welfare checks for paychecks is good policy and good practice," said Engler.

■ Do you know someone in or near FIA who deserves mention here for something significant or not so significant? Send a hardcopy or email item to any member of the editorial board or the editor: vandesandel@state.mi.us

FIA Icon

a publication of Michigan's Family Independence Agency
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Douglas E. Howard, *Director*
Family Independence Agency
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Larry VanDeSande, Editor

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From the Director

By Douglas E. Howard
Director, Family Independence Agency

Y2K over, now what? More computer issues to resolve?

Even though some contend the new millennium doesn't begin until 2001, let me be among the first to welcome you to this millennium. Welcome!

At the Family Independence Agency, we "passed" our Y2K "tests" on New Year's Day, meaning our significant systems operated properly and can be expected to do so at least until the next "test"—Leap Day on Feb. 29. When everything worked Jan. 1 we were relieved "Y2K The Movie" did not come true for us or the people our agency serves.

I've been told we spent 79 "employee years" in the agency preparing for the changeover to 2000. That's about 165,000 hours if my math is right. A common question after hearing that is, "What do we do with the time that is free up in the new year?" I asked and learned there are projects in place we expect to work on in the coming year. Here's a brief rundown of some of them.

■ Electronic Benefits Transfer will replace paper food stamp coupons and cash warrants with electronic accounts FIP and food stamp customers will access at grocery store checkout lanes. Michigan will be the 33rd location to implement the technology when we begin our pilot program in Jackson County later this spring. It will be implemented statewide by 2002. This is very exciting and the beginning of another new way of doing business.

■ More changes are planned for ASSIST. By the time you read this the entry of employment information should have been simplified. We will continue work to synchronize information between ASSIST and CIS and plans are under way to migrate the programs to one mainframe.

■ This autumn we will pilot new portions of the Service Worker Support System application to support the needs of children in foster care. We expect this will be deployed statewide in 2001.

■ Child support. The existing Child Support Enforcement System application will be installed in more Friend of the Court offices while the high-volume assessment project will define needs of Friend of the Court offices that serve large cities and have large caseloads. The State Disbursement Unit will provide employers with a single point to send all income holding payments.

■ The type of information stored in the DMB-operated Data Warehouse computer will be expanded and more people will be able to access it for regular and ad hoc reporting.

While this may or may not sound as a good as getting a new desktop work station five times as powerful as the one you have today, it is a short list of projects we will work on this year that were deferred by Y2K. By the way, I made a personal commitment to put a plan in place to roll out new desktop computers throughout the agency.

We have other responsibilities in 2000, too. New state accounting requirements of the statewide online system, MAIN, and things like a new payroll-personnel system will eat up a lot of our agency resources. There is also the issue of maintaining programs already in place and making regular adjustments to meet federal reporting requirements and/or get them to produce the information we want.

Given our other responsibilities and economic realities, we'll do the best we can. We have great staff in our information technology area, and they are excited about finding ways to serve you in the new century. Thanks for your good work and enjoy the new millennium.

Watersmeet woman honored as 73rd Achiever

Information: Kristie Backus
Gogebic County Family Independence Agency
Telephone (906) 663-6200

WATERSMEET—Joleen McGeshick received the 73rd Achiever of the Month Award on December 17, 1999 at a ceremony held at the Lac Vieux Desert Resort.

At the event, Gogebic-Ontonagon Family Independence Agency director Dale MacDonald welcomed the honoree and guests. MacDonald said Joleen is representative of our customers and their desire and determination to take chances to improve their skills and attain goals which at one time seemed impossible.

MacDonald introduced Richard Williams, chairman of Lac Vieux Desert Tribal. After an Ojibway prayer was read and translated in English, Williams said how proud he and all tribal community members were of Joleen's success.

Some 70 people attended the ceremony including local staff and Joleen's family members. Others in attendance included Jim Nye, director of FIA Outstate Operations, Zone 1 manager Nancy DeWees, Gogebic-Ontonagon County FIA Board members and FIA staff.

MacDonald introduced Douglas Howard, director of the Michigan Family Independence Agency, who paid tribute to Joleen for her outstanding progress toward self-sufficiency.

"Joleen is the seventy-third Achiever of the Month," Howard said. "The award was established in

Joleen McGeshick

October 1993 to recognize the contributions and achievements of participants in Michigan's landmark reform initiative, To Strengthen Michigan Families."

Howard said he is happy to acknowledge Joleen McGeshick who in the face of tremendous odds exhibited a great ability to meet life's challenges while making progress toward economic independence. He said Michigan's welfare system has undergone significant changes since Michigan implemented *To Strengthen Michigan Families* in October 1992.

"Those changes have made a positive difference in the lives of Michigan's public assistance recipients," Howard said. "The best news is that today more of our clients are working. In fact, 232,208 Family Independence Program cases have been closed since TSMF began because individuals like Joleen have earned enough to work their way off assistance."

Joleen McGeshick first applied for assistance with the Gogebic County FIA in February 1997. McGeshick had held a number of part-time jobs but had not been able to find steady employment that paid enough to meet the needs of her family. She is the single mother of two children, Austin, 4, and Alicia, 2.

The FIA helped her maintain a stable home for her family by providing emergency cash assistance for rent and utilities. In addition, car repairs were authorized to provide her with reliable transportation.

Joleen's family and Tribal Social Services were very supportive and often helped her with child care and transportation. Through the FIA Families First program, McGeshick received relocation funds and assistance with budgeting.

Although grateful for the help, she was determined not to make public assistance a way of life. Filling out required forms was another obstacle to applying for assistance. In the beginning, Joleen was overwhelmed by the paperwork and discouraged by reporting procedures.

However, with the efforts of the FIA Indian outreach worker, June Anderson, she soon realized that the process was not difficult. McGeshick was also referred to Work First in February 1997. Soon after the orientation she found a part-time job.

To Strengthen Michigan Families

Achiever of the Month

Her FIP case closed in February 1998, due to the earnings of her children's father.

In early 1999 Joleen signed up for a training program with the Lac Vieux Desert Resort Casino. In the spring she applied for a job there as a dealer, and now has a full-time job with benefits. Currently, her children receive transitional Medicaid.

"Joleen has gained inner strength and respect for herself since gaining employment," said Anderson. "Her positive attitude and self-worth have radiated toward all who come in contact with her."

Anderson said she has grown to admire Joleen and has been grateful to be a small part of her achievement.

James Saari, director of the Western Upper Peninsula *Michigan Works!* agency, said Joleen completed the Work First program and began employment shortly after. Saari said new state policies provide opportunities for FIA customers like Joleen to receive training.

During the event Joleen's mother, Gertrude McGeshick, said she is proud of her youngest daughter and of her other 12 children, as well.

The Lac Vieux Desert Tribal social services director, Sheryl Ivens, said the excellent working relationship with the Gogebic-Ontonagon FIA has been instrumental in success stories of Lac Vieux Desert Tribal members. Ivens said they were extremely proud of Joleen and her determination to become independent.

Howard presented Joleen with a framed certificate and a Kmart gift certificate.

"Because of their experience within both the welfare system and the workplace, achievers like Joleen have proven they are a valuable resource for our agency," he said.

Joleen with Austin and Alicia.

"The Achiever of the Month Award has generated a great deal of attention for Michigan's welfare reform effort. I am sure one reason is the program highlights not only individual success, but the opportunity to collectively acknowledge the many other recipients who have risen to the challenge and surmounted major barriers to self-sufficiency."

Gogebic County FIA presented Joleen with flowers, cake, punch, snacks and birthday gifts for Austin and Alicia, who both had December birthdays.

Joleen thanked everyone for attending the ceremony and for his or her support. Richard Williams gave a farewell blessing and hoped all have a safe journey to their destinations.

"Today's tribute highlights not only Joleen's accomplishments, it also reflects favorably on the Gogebic County FIA, the Western UP Michigan Works! Agency, the Lac Vieux Desert Tribal Social Services office and the many family and friends who have contributed to her success," said Howard.

"While we are here honoring Joleen, I would like to take this opportunity to commend all of you who have assisted her and others who have needed your services. The achiever ceremony is important because it allows us all the chance to see that what we can and do make a difference.

"Joleen has agreed to accept this month's award as a representative of the many recipients and their families who are working toward independence from the system. I believe her story will inspire and motivate others."

Gogebic and Ontonagon county staffs offer their congratulations to Joleen McGeshick. She is an example that hard work and determination can make a difference.

FIA awards $540,000 to adoption agencies statewide

State sets new record, helping 2,417 children move into adoptive homes in 1999
FIA survey shows most parents satisfied with state-provided adoption services

LANSING—The FIA made awards totaling $540,619 to 22 Michigan agencies in January.

The grant awards will provide post-adoption or related services to adoptive families in Michigan. The funds were allocated from a $942,554 award earned by the Family Independence Agency for adoption efforts during fiscal year 1998.

Gov. John Engler made the announcement Jan. 10.

"Thanks to the hard work of the Family Independence Agency and its private contract agencies in fiscal year 1999, 2,417 state wards have permanent, loving homes," said Engler.

"This is a record number of special needs children adopted in one year in Michigan and I am very proud of that accomplishment."

Grants were awarded from a nearly $1 million incentive award from the federal government earned by the Family Independence Agency.

The FIA earned the funds by increasing adoptions during fiscal year 1998—the period from October 1997 through September 1998.

Under terms of the incentive program, states are paid a set amount based on each state ward adoption finalized after the state reaches a baseline requirement. Adoption "finalizations" vary from placements insofar as they occur when the adoption is legally completed. An adoptive "placement" may be made prior to finalization.

In Michigan, the baseline number was 1,905—determined by averaging the number of adoptions finalized in the state for each year during the three fiscal year period 1995-97. The state exceeded that by more than 300 in fiscal 1998, therefore qualifying for the incentive payment.

The award is based on adoptions for state wards, children who entered the state foster care system often because of abuse or neglect in their birth homes.

"These are "special needs" children, often minorities, who usually have secondary physical or mental health impairments," said Family Independence Agency director Douglas E. Howard.

On average, Howard said they are older than the infants placed in adoption by some private or international agencies. They are often members of sibling groups where adoption is recommended for more than one child.

The federal government made the incentive payment program as part of the national "Adoption 2002" initiative. The goal is to double the number of adoptions nationwide between 1996 and 2002. Funding for the incentive program is an outgrowth of the 1997 federal Adoption and Safe Families Act.

The state's share of incentive payments for efforts in fiscal 1999 will not be known until later this year. The FIA expects to receive another incentive payment for 1998, however, and will announce more grant awards after those funds are authorized.

The FIA made grant awards in a competitive program based on input from adoptive families.

"Parents who adopted state wards helped define the services they needed," said state FIA director Howard. "We surveyed 649 adoptive families around the state who told us what they needed."

Howard said families most frequently cited a need for support groups, respite services, recreational activities and educational services for their children.

"The families we surveyed made it clear they appreciated services they received at the state level," said Howard.

"Three-quarters remembered receiving a booklet on the FIA Adoption Subsidy Program and almost everyone said their last conversation with an adoption subsidy worker was courteous.

"More than 90 percent reported satisfaction with services they received from the Adoption Subsidy Office."

The FIA typically provides financial subsidies and special health care benefits to families that adopt special needs children. The subsidy—the amount of which is based on the child's prior foster care payment—provides basic support for special needs children until age 18.

In September 1999 the state was paying 16,554 subsidies averaging about $600 per month.

"The input from adoptive families helped our agency decide what kind of services to fund with our incentive payment, and where to provide the services," said Howard.

"This is an example of government collaborating with its customers to determine and meet their needs."

Agencies receiving grants are identified on the chart on page 7.

Agency and location	Amount	Services to be provided
Michigan Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, Holt	$49,168	The statewide association will develop a curriculum and provide training to parents whose adopted children were born with drug addictions or trauma tized by drug-abusing adults.
Ingham County FIA, Lansing	Up to $40,000	In collaboration with Clinton and Shiawassee counties, will expand wrap around services to adoptive families.
Child and Family Services of the Upper Peninsula, Marquette	$8,892	Will provide post-adoption mentoring for adopted youth in Alger, Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw, Ontonagon and Marquette counties.
Child and Family Services of Northeast Michigan, Alpena	$24,940	Will in 10 counties train parent advocates and provide funds to develop a public awareness campaign to identify local post-adoption services.
National Adoption Resource Center, Southfield	$25,000	Develop and disseminate a public education pamphlet about adoption issues and adjustment problems for statewide distribution.
Isabella County FIA, Mt. Pleasant	$12,900	Provide in-home service training and parent consultants for support groups and adoptive parent training series.
St. Clair County FIA, Port Huron	$9,125	Develop an adoptive parent training series, resource packets and resources for adoptive parents whose children have Attention Deficit Disorder.
Bay County FIA, Bay City	$2,385	Develop resource materials and training curriculum, support group costs and a toll-free phone number for information and referral requests.
Wayne County Attorney General's Office, Detroit	$121,410	Develop a pilot project addressing barriers in "legal risk" adoptions. A legal risk adoption is not finalized because of an appeal to the termination of parental rights. The pilot will address issues specified by state courts.
Central Michigan Community Mental Health, Big Rapids	$15,000	Recruit, train and monitor mentors for high-risk children and families in collaboration with public schools and human services coordinating bodies.
Catholic Social Services, Grand Rapids	$23,625	Provide services to high-risk adoptive families using wraparound services. Also develop community resources for respite care and mentors.
Spectrum Human Services, Southfield	$25,000	Expand current Wayne County post-adoption services to include mentoring and daytime respite components, referral and intake assessment for families requesting or referred for services.
Child & Family Services of Northwestern Michigan, Traverse City	$3,700	Provide resource and educational materials for adoptive parents and children.
Catholic Social Services, Muskegon	$24,500	Expand services of and families served through the Muskegon Adoption Connections Post-Adoption Support Program.
Kalamazoo County FIA, Kalamazoo	$25,000	Establish ongoing support groups for adoptive parents and children.
Allegan County FIA Allegan	$6,954	Establish a parent support and training group and expand post-adoption services.
Ionia-Montcalm FIA, Ionia	$7,000	Provide funds for therapeutic camp experience for adoptive families.
Family and Child Services of Lenawee County, Adrian	$5,000	Develop parent-child support services for families in Lenawee and surrounding counties.
Washtenaw County FIA, Ann Arbor	$11,900	Post-adoption support group and educational materials for families.
Midland County Foster Adoptive Network, Midland	$1,400	The community group will develop a library of reference and educational materials.
Genesee County Community Mental Health, Flint	$47,000	Develop alternative to out-of-home placement and provide tutoring to adoptive families.
Saginaw Count y FIA, Saginaw	Up to $50,720	Develop enhanced post-adoption services including mentoring and skills building for parents.

Bay Pines fills important niche in Upper Peninsula

Escanaba center serves citizens from all over U. P. and other counties
Center finished first half-decade of service last October

By Dane Ross, Director
Bay Pines Center
Telephone (906) 789-1232

ESCANANBA—The Bay Pines Center celebrated five years of service to the people of Michigan last Oct. 3.

Bay Pines Center is a regional detention and treatment facility that provides services to both male and female juveniles, ages 12-19, who reside in the counties of the Upper Peninsula. Built in 1994 at a cost of $4.2 million, Bay Pines Center is the newest and most modern facility of its kind operated by the Family Independence Agency.

Located in the heart of the Upper Peninsula, this 40-bed facility provides maximum-security detention beds for both male and female juveniles as well as a specialized treatment program for males who have been convicted of felonies and/or misdemeanors.

In the five years the Bay Pines Center has been in operation, the facility has housed youth from all 15 Upper Peninsula counties and many from U.P. Tribal communities, as well as from counties in the Lower Peninsula.

As of its fifth birthday, Bay Pines Center has admitted 1,434 youth including 114 youth in the treatment program and 1,321 young men and women in detention. The average length of stay for youth in the treatment program has been approximately 10 months.

Service area

About 80 percent of youth served over the past five years at Bay Pines Center have been from the Upper Peninsula. However, about 20 percent of the youth coming into the facility are from other areas of the state. Most of this 20 percent has been girls who were placed at Bay Pines due to the scarcity of maximum security detention beds for females elsewhere in the state. Bay Pines has been able to provide this much needed service for young women.

The philosophy and programs at Bay Pines Center reflect the leadership shown by the FIA Office of Juvenile Justice in dealing with the problems of juvenile crime. A staff planning committee assesses ongoing programs and develops new initiatives.

Educational program

The detention educational program reports an average gain of 2.5 months of educational progress for each month a youth is in the program, as well as improved attitudes toward academics by youth experiencing success.

Bay Pines Center has hosted high school graduation ceremonies for three of its youth in detention in the five years it has been open, while others have gone back to their home schools to graduate with their class. Individualized education plans are developed for youth with special learning needs.

Special education teachers develop and deliver courses in substance abuse and anger management. “Young Girls/Boys Lives” is a

course dealing with boundary issues, relationships, hygiene, drugs, and decision making. Plans for the near future include a parenting class utilizing computerized dolls to simulate the needs of an infant as well as an instructional course in art.

Youth in treatment participate in several pre-vocational courses including food service and the vocational-technical computer-assisted programs in robotics and aviation.

Long-term rehabilitation

Bay Pines Center provides a residential treatment program for male juvenile offenders. Using a group format, youth are encouraged and assisted in identifying patterns of thought and behaviors that are repeated in cycles related to the crimes they have committed.

Treatment emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for youth to learn about the effects of their actions on others and to make amends for the harm they have caused through their delinquent behaviors. Through the group process, youth develop a more positive value system and learn appropriate ways to get their needs met.

Restorative justice and family involvement

The philosophy of "Balanced and Restorative Justice" is present in all aspects of the Bay Pines treatment program.

Treatment services focus on issues of accountability, competency development and community safety. Each youth is required to develop and implement a plan of reparation to repay the harm done to the victim and the community. All families are encouraged to participate in the ongoing care and treatment of their child. Family strengths are utilized as an integral part of the overall treatment plan.

Substance abuse

In response to requests from Bay Pines' customers—courts, local FIA staff, schools, and families—a specialized program in substance abuse has been initiated.

Staff persons working with this treatment group have had comprehensive training in the statewide Center for Applied Behavioral Sciences program of substance abuse treatment, which is funded by a federal U.S. Department of Justice grant to the Michigan Office of Drug Control Policy.

These staff work individually as advocates and mentors helping youth take responsibility for their addictions. They also lead treatment groups to guide the youth in confronting thinking errors and negative behaviors related to their substance abuse.

Community involvement

A group of community leaders including the local state representative, Michigan State Police, Escanaba Public Safety, local schools, banks, attorneys, and private citizens make up the Bay Pines Center Community Advisory Committee.

This group serves as a link between the center and the community. The members keep the community informed regarding the operation of the facility, assist in the development of new and better services for the U.P., and bring community concerns to the center's administration.

Bay Pines administration and staff look forward to the future with enthusiasm, creativity and energy to meet the new challenges of a new century.

During its first five years of operation this long-awaited Upper Peninsula juvenile center has filled a unique need for citizens of the region.

Working with FIA management and the citizens of Michigan, the Bay Pines administration and staff look forward to the future with enthusiasm, creativity and energy to meet the new challenges of a new century.

Michigan awarded $2.5 million for meeting goals

LANSING—Michigan received a $2.5 million federal payment for being successful in its welfare reform program during 1997-98.

The funds are distributed to states that achieve welfare reform goals and were awarded by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Gov. John Engler made the announcement Dec. 7, 1999.

"This is another indication our program is moving in the correct direction," said Engler.

"We are rewarded for being among the best states at helping people get in the work force and earn more money. We continue to be a national leader in helping people trade welfare checks for paychecks."

Since Michigan began its waiver-based welfare reform program *To Strengthen Michigan Families* in 1992, its Family Independence Program (FIP, formerly AFDC) caseload has declined from more than 200,000 cases to less than 80,000.

The caseload has been steadily declining almost every month for the past five years. The FIP caseload is today similar to what it was about 1970. Since October 1992, Michigan has closed more than 228,000 FIP cases because recipients earned more income than program standards allow.

"We are very proud of this award and its indication that our reform program is a success," said state FIA director Douglas E. Howard. "We had some anxiety that we would not receive a bonus because the program ranked the job entry rate for FIA customers between 1996 and 1998."

Michigan scored consistently well in all four areas, never failing to grade out below 17th among the 46 states that competed for bonuses. Michigan finished tied for 9th with California in workforce success improvement between 1997 and 1998. The state finished 11th in job entry for the same period, 16th in job entry for 1998 and 17th for workforce success in 1998.

"We had already reduced the caseload in Michigan by 1996, so our overall job entry rate was less than it would have been had we waited until 1996 to begin our reform program," said Howard.

He said Michigan's program, first built on a number of federal waivers approved during 1992 through 1994, surpassed the program in most other states. "In Michigan, we reformed our cash welfare program faster and more successfully than most other states," he said.

"We have one of the best, if not the best, reform programs in America."

Rank	1998 Performance JOB ENTRY	Workforce Success	Most Improvement Between 1997 & 1998 JOB ENTRY	Workforce Success
1	Indiana	Minnesota	Washington	Florida
2	Delaware	Arizona	Louisiana	*New York
3	Tennessee	Connecticut	Oklahoma	*Washington
4	North Dakota	California	Nevada	South Carolina
5	Nevada	Wyoming	South Dakota	Illinois
6	Pennsylvania	Indiana	West Virginia	Minnesota
7	Wyoming	South Carolina	Minnesota	Rhode Island
8	Utah	Florida	Delaware	Arizona
9	Texas	Iowa	Massachusetts	*California
10	Illinois	Hawaii	Rhode Island	*Michigan

*These states tied by having the same combined weighted ranking score.

About high performance bonuses

WASHINGTON, D. C. —Twenty-seven states were awarded the first high performance bonuses created to reward superior results in reforming welfare, said the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The $200 million in bonuses, authorized by the 1996 welfare reform legislation, were given to the states with the best records in moving parents on welfare into jobs and their success in the workforce.

The high performance bonuses reward states for annual results in four categories: job placement, job success (measured by retention and earnings), biggest improvement in job placement, and biggest improvement in job success. The $200 million is allocated among the four categories, with the top 10 states in each category receiving an amount proportionate to their percentage of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant.

"We've always been clear that changing the culture of welfare means requiring work and rewarding success," said Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala. "I'm very pleased that these states have demonstrated results in helping welfare recipients enter the workforce, and succeed there."

Genesee County partners join a "Quest for Success"

By Doug Wiliams, Deputy Director
Genesee County FIA
Telephone (810) 760-2647

A participant wins a prize at "Quest for Success." Pictured top left is Doug Williams; at right is Cindy Chapman.

FLINT—Another Project Zero site closed out 1999 by proving collaboration is the key to success.

On Dec. 8, 1999 the Genesee County Family Independence Agency hosted a Project Zero community forum. The event, "A Quest for Success", was held at the Ramada Plaza in Flint.

The purpose of this forum was to bring together resources from the community to our customers in a single location. During the event, Genesee County partners provided our customers with information to assist in securing and maintaining employment.

Nearly all 194 Project Zero customers who attended responded with enthusiasm and gratitude. One customer's evaluation spoke for many when it said, "Thank you for your concern and support toward my quest for success."

The day began with everyone gathered in the Ramada Plaza's main conference room. At that time, I had the pleasure to join Genesee County FIA director Denise Chambers and Flint Mayor Woodrow Stanley in offering introductions and welcomes.

In his opening remarks, Mayor Stanley said, "Success is not spelled S-U-C-C-E-S-S. It is spelled W-O-R-K."

Throughout the day customers had the opportunity to attend four out of 16 workshops covering important topics including: legal issues; what employers look for when hiring and promoting employees; child support issues; educational opportunities; programs available for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers; car purchase and repair; housing issues; attitude awareness; stress management; money management; transportation. Presenters included FIA director Denise Chambers and Genesee County FIA Board member Carol Jaworski.

More than 40 community partners provided information on display tables, with agency representatives available to answer questions. Representatives from the city of Flint, Mott Adult High School, Mott Community College, FIA Bureau of Child Support, Genesee County Community Action Agency, HUD, Metro Transit Authority and many more were on hand. Attenders were able to get makeovers by Mary Kay and Beauty Control Cosmetics at two displays.

During lunch, a fashion show coordinated by LOVE Inc., a community volunteer organization, was presented to show examples of appropriate and inappropriate work apparel. Some attire was donated by Mervyns Department Store. Other items of clothing were put together from Genesee County's community clothes closets.

Onsite child care services were available through the Rainbow Learning Program, a service presented free of charge to customers. Twenty-one children participated in the childcare activities. This made it possible for some customers to attend who otherwise would not be able to due to unavailable child care.

In addition to the information available, incentives were given at the end of each workshop, lunch and the closing ceremony including gas cards, phone cards, tool kits, bill organizers, calculators, oil changes and school supplies. Many items were donated by community businesses. The final incentive of the day was a fully decorated 7-foot Christmas tree donated by Target. A family who did not have a tree warmly received it.

Denise Chambers

Surveys were done at the end of the day. The effort to make the forum a success was rewarded by positive responses. Comments included "very informative and helpful. Will help for years", "extremely motivating", "I learned about my rights as a tenant", "thanks for caring and sharing" and more.

For more information contact Genesee County Project Zero coordinators Michelle Chockley, (810) 760-2776, or Cindy Chapman at (810) 760-2500.

Warren-Conner reached "zero" Dec. 21

East Side Detroit site was 32nd to reach the standard

The Wayne County Warren-Conner Project Zero site reached "zero" Dec. 21, 1999. Project Zero is Michigan's welfare-to-work program being carried out in 49 counties. "Zero" is the point in time where all target Family Independence Program (formerly AFDC) cases on the books are working and earning income.

"This is another success story in the revitalization of Detroit," said Gov. John Engler Jan. 3. "The Warren-Conner area of Detroit was a blighted neighborhood where hope did not exist just a few years ago, but today the story is much different.

"Project Zero is successful because people want to work, and communities support work. The Warren-Conner district is an example of that winning partnership."

Project Zero measures "target" cases — those of more than 60 days' duration that are required to participate in Work First, find work and have earned income. It excludes cases deferred because of recent childbirth, disability, family situation or a related reason.

The Warren-Conner district became a part of Project Zero in October 1997. It represents an East Side neighborhood near Detroit City Airport in the Empowerment Zone.

The Warren-Conner district serves Detroit residents who have seen their neighborhoods revitalized in recent years, said district manager Wanda Bailey.

"Reaching zero is the result of a lot of hard work by our workers, members of our community and our customers — who want to work," said Warren-Conner district manager Bailey.

"Our community embraced Project Zero. The Empowerment Zone is coming back strong and we are part of that comeback."

Bailey praised the effort of community partners and employers including the city of Detroit, Diversified Educational Services (the Work First subcontractor), Michigan Community Coordinated Child Care (4C), the Warren-Conner Coalition and Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce Job Ladder Program.

Diversified provides van service and helps Warren-Conner customers find jobs. Warren-Conner is one of three Wayne County districts sharing a contract with Gooden Transportation Company to provide bus services for its customers.

Wanda Bailey

The Warren-Conner Coalition is an Empowerment Zone entity that works with employers to create jobs and local businesses to rebuild the area, including an East Side beautification project. The 4C is a Project Zero partner and helps Warren-Conner customers acquire child care services.

"Having earnings is a first step for our customers," said Bailey. "Our next step is to help them attain self-sufficiency. We will work with the Job Ladder Program to help customers reach this goal."

When Warren-Conner joined Project Zero in 1997, it carried 2,609 total FIP cases with 2,033 in the target group. Of those 1,532 did not have income. On Nov. 30 of this year, the district had 1,207 total cases and 506 target cases with 96 not having earned income.

The district reduced target cases without earnings substantially from October to December 1999, said Warren-Conner's Project Zero coordinator, Cheryl Bellomy. "Over the past 18 months the Warren-Conner district adopted a new attitude — the 'whole community,'" Bellomy said.

Bellomy said the district hosted job fairs in October, November and twice in December with local employers recruiting prospective employees. The Warren-Conner district dispatched Special Worker Assistance Teams — they called them "SWAT" teams — to customer homes to advise them of new jobs.

"The job fairs focused on East Side employers, including those in Roseville, Warren and Mt. Clemens," she said. "Our main thrust in the job fairs was to build the East Side employer base.

"The job fairs showed there's a lot going on in the Empowerment Zone, where the partners have a common focus on employment."

Project Zero started in 1996 and there are currently 49 Michigan counties participating in 70 distinct sites. This includes all Wayne and Oakland county districts providing Family Independence Program services. Since Oct. 1, four of Michigan's five largest counties are represented in the program.

■ Other Project Zero sites to reach zero one or more time since September 1997 include: Alger, Alpena, Barry, Benzie, Berrien, Charlevoix, Eaton, Emmet, Gladwin, Grand Traverse, Hillsdale, Kalkaska, Kent, Lake, Leelanau, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Menominee, Midland, Montmorency, Newaygo, Oceana, Ottawa, Presque Isle and Wexford-Missaukee counties and the Wayne County FIA Forest-Ellery, Fort Wayne, Lincoln Park, Romulus, Taylor and Tireman district offices.

Fort Wayne reaches "zero"

Southwest Detroit site became 33rd to attain the benchmark

When the Wayne County Fort Wayne district Project Zero site reached "zero" Dec. 28, 1999 it became the fourth Family Independence Agency district in the city of Detroit and the seventh in Wayne County to reach zero since September 1997.

"This is another great story in Detroit," said Gov. Engler. "The Fort Wayne district is a multi-ethnic multilingual part of the city. It is a low-income neighborhood in the Empowerment Zone. Project Zero will succeed anywhere people want to build a successful partnership in their community."

The Fort Wayne district joined Project Zero in October 1998 when the project was expanded from 12 to 35 areas of the state. It represents a Southwest Detroit neighborhood.

"This is another triumph for the Wayne County Family Independence Agency," said FIA director Douglas E. Howard.

The Fort Wayne district serves areas in Detroit and Highland Park benefiting from their placement in the Empowerment Zone, said district manager Dorothy Mims.

"Reaching zero is a testament to the great work of our staff, our partners and everyone in our community," said Mims. "Project Zero gave us the opportunity to use the resources in our community.

"The lower income neighborhoods in the southwest part of the city are being revitalized and new businesses are coming in here. This is due in part to our placement in the Empowerment Zone and our ability to work with other community agencies.

"We owe thanks to every community agency in our area," she said. "Without them, we would not have gotten to zero."

Mims cited many community partners including the district's Work First contractors, Ross Innovative Employment Solutions, Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation and Arab-American Chaldean Council. Working with Fort Wayne staff, they provide orientation, transportation, job readiness and employment placement services for district customers. The city of Detroit Employment and Training Department is the *Michigan Works!* Agency serving Fort Wayne.

Dorothy Mims

The Fort Wayne district had an extraordinary caseload reduction in the 15 months since it became a Project Zero site. When Fort Wayne joined Project Zero in October 1998 it carried 2,400 total FIP cases with 1,516 in the target group. Of that group, 769 did not have income.

On Nov. 30 of this year, the district carried 1,235 total cases and 366 target cases, a 76 percent reduction from 13 months earlier. On Nov. 30 the district had only 52 target cases without income, a 93 percent reduction from October 1998.

Program success began to accelerate in October when they implemented a Project Zero Task Force, said Nancy E. Patterson, Fort Wayne district Project Zero coordinator.

"When we got down to 231 cases without income on Oct. 4, we started the task force and asked for volunteers," said Patterson. "Six of our specialists worked intensively through home visits and at orientation with any new cases.

"This was a team effort between our field workers, support staff and management team."

Patterson said many community agencies share in the feat including those that serve the district's Spanish-speaking customers. The district includes Vietnamese- and Arabic-speaking families, as well.

"As part of the Empowerment Zone committee in this neighborhood, we were able to connect with many community resources," Patterson said. "Several serve our Spanish-speaking customers, who comprise 15 to 20 percent of our caseload."

She noted the assistance of: Southwest Detroit Mental Health, a part of the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency; the city-operated Community Health and Social Services Center; Mercy Education Program, Delray United Action Council and many other organizations.

Patterson said Spanish-speaking customers living in the "Mexicantown" neighborhood received assistance from Latin American Social and Economic Development and Latino Family Services.

"There is not much day care available in this area," Patterson said. "We have joined with Vistas Nuevas and others in a day care collaboration to look at ways to improve the situation and get new providers in the neighborhood. 4C is represented on-site in our office and provides assistance to customers at orientation." Vistas Nuevas is a Head Start program and 4C is the Child Care Coordinating Council.

Charlevoix Achiever beats welfare twice

Says daughter was her motivation, independence her goal & gets special holiday gift

By B. J. Worden, Family Independence Manager
Charlevoix-Emmet County Family Independence Agency
Telephone (231) 547-3712

CHARLEVOIX—Nov. 19, 1999 was cold and rainy but that did not stop 40 people from gathering to honor the 72nd recipient of the Achiever of the Month award.

On that day Jana Lashmit, with her five-year-old daughter Shanna by her side, accepted the award from FIA director Douglas E. Howard, who called her representative of many recipients and families working toward independence.

Many times we celebrate success without considering what it takes to achieve victory. Howard said he is proud of the achiever program "because it celebrates the challenges along the road as well as the destination."

He went on to say that "achieving is what FIA is all about" but helping people get jobs is more than just a FIA issue. "The partnerships we forge with communities and employers are crucial in helping people gain employment and self-sufficiency," he said.

We all make plans as to what our lives will be like. But when life turns out to be different than we'd hoped, it's easy to drift. Sometimes it takes hard work and determination to get back on track.

Jana Lashmit is doing the work and taking the steps to make a better life for her family. She says her inspiration for doing so is Shanna.

In summer 1998, Jana, a single stay-at-home mom, found herself in a bad situation with her daughter's father. She contacted the Women's Resource Center in Petoskey for help. When she made the decision to end the relationship permanently, she was faced with the immediate needs for food, shelter and medical services for herself and her daughter. In July 1998, she sought assistance from FIA and Work First in Emmet County. Through those agents she found a job at Hertz Rent-a-Car at the Pellston Airport and in October of that year her case was closed.

In January 1999, she relocated back to her family home in Charlevoix to hopefully provide some additional stability for Shanna. But her transportation was unreliable and

Jana Lashmit

she soon realized that she'd need to find a job closer to home.

After unsuccessfully searching for employment, she reapplied for temporary assistance at the Charlevoix FIA. Her FIP, food stamps, and Medicaid case was reopened in February 1999. Jana's caseworker, Mary Ann Kelly, explained the program requirements to her. More importantly, Mary Ann listened to Jana when she discussed her situation and her desire to make a better life for her daughter.

"Jana stressed that her situation was temporary," Kelly said. "She said she would find a job. She was very determined and I was confident that she could do it."

Jana credits Mary Ann with being empathetic and a good listener. In one of their initial discussions, Jana said she would need day care to pursue employment. Mary Ann helped by referring her to the Northwest Michigan Community Coordinated Child Care consultant. Nanci Kersey, who works in our office three times a week, talked with Jana and ordered a list of local child care providers.

"Within minutes, the list was faxed to the local office and (Nanci) was on the phone, helping me set up interviews with day care providers," Jana said.

Jana was referred to Work First in February, where her priority was updating her resume and contacting local employers. She was able to find a part-time job at a local hotel on Feb. 28. After securing this job she decided that to get a better job with more hours, she would need to brush up on her office skills. She signed up for classes through the East Jordan Learning Lab where for three months she worked hard to improve her typing and computer skills.

This became the key that enabled her to find her second part-time job with the Old Kent Insurance Group, acting as an office assistant to Agent Tim Bruce. Jana has been very successful with Old Kent, increasing her responsibilities and hours to the point where she only needs to work one job.

Speaking on behalf of Old Kent Insurance Group, Bruce said

when Jana came in for the interview he noticed right away how diligent and responsible she was. And she has proven herself on the job. In a small office, everyone needs to pull his or her own weight and jump in regardless of the task.

"She's able to do her job without supervision," Bruce said.

Jana's FIP case closed in April 1999 due to the additional income from the Old Kent job. Today, while she still receives transitional Medicaid, food stamps and day care assistance, she is planning her next step: to go back to the Learning Lab for additional skills training. She is also considering studying to take the test to become a licensed insurance agent.

Lashmit realizes that it isn't always easy for any parent. She, herself, went back to the Women's Resource Center "a million times." She persevered because she knew there was a better life out there for herself and Shanna.

"I learned that we deserved better," she said. Now in addition to her job she helps out with Shanna's kindergarten class and wants to stay involved with the things that are important to her daughter. Jana said her daughter has always been the focus of her life, even through the hard times.

Jana credits her late mother, Shirley, with being an important influence in her life, always providing support and encouragement. "She was always there for us," Jana said. "That's why I kept trying to keep my family together."

Her mother died three years

Jana and Shanna

ago from complications of a brain tumor and Jana wants to focus on taking care of Shanna and being there like her mother was for her. "I want to set an example for her," she said.

When Jana was called forward to accept her award, she and Shanna came up to the podium together. While she thanked her friends and family and all those who helped her, she attributed her motivation to her daughter.

"I couldn't do it without her," she said. "She brings such love and sunshine into my life."

During the ceremony, Jana received accolades from Sherry Buick, her counselor at the Women's Resource Center.

"As a parent on a scale of one to 10, Jana is a 12," Buck said. To Jana this praise meant as much, if not more, than the achiever award.

Director Howard and Mary Ann Kelly, acting for the both board and staff members at Charlevoix-Emmet FIA, presented gift certificates to Jana.

For those of us who attended the event from FIA, the ceremony became more than a celebration of Jana's achievements. Howard thanked local FIA staff and our community partners at Northwest Michigan Works! the East Jordan Learning Lab and the many others doing the tasks large and small that cleared the way for Jana's successes.

Often, we are so busy with applications and phone calls, emergencies, standards of procedure and redeterminations, home calls and the other day-to-day stuff that we lose track of the big picture. In the words of one FIS, "We are so caught up in getting the job done, it's easy to forget why we're doing it."

So the morning of Nov. 19 became a way for all of us to refocus on the big picture—that every time we interact with our customers we have an opportunity to make a difference; and to commit to making the most of our opportunities.

We congratulate Jana on her achievements and thank her for allowing us to be a part of them. With all the support she received, Jana indicated she would someday like to go back and help other people who are in the same situation. Until then, she says it is her goal to live independently.

"Don't ever give up on what you think is right," she said. "Get help. It may take years, but you can do it."

■ On a special note, Jana reported to her worker that, after a write-up of her story and the ceremony in the local newspaper, she received an unsigned congratulatory Christmas card with $225 worth of traveler's checks inside. "What a neat community-based response," said Terry Salacina, director of Charlevoix-Emmet FIA.

Holiday spirit alive in Gratiot County

"Santa's closet" opens up for local children
Community donates funds, time and effort to good cause at Christmas

By Gloria Wallace, Volunteer Services Coordinator
Gratiot County Family Independence Agency
Telephone (517) 875-5181 or 772-8446

ITHACA—Over the past holiday season the Christmas spirit was alive and well at Gratiot County Family Independence Agency.

On Dec. 14, the Gratiot County FIA staff held a "Santa's closet" event for local children. "Santa's closet" provided gifts for children to choose for two adults in their lives.

From 9 a. m.-7 p. m. that day, 163 excited and smiling children went through the gift-laden FIA conference room as staff "elves" assisted them with their selections. Gifts were provided to children of FIA customers and other low-income families in the community.

Gratiot County FIA did outreach through flyers, food stamp mailers and local community organizations to reach children in the community. About 100 gifts remained in "Santa's closet" after Dec. 14. These were offered free to other children from families the FIA serves.

"Gratiot County FIA was the initiating force behind the 'Santa's closet' event that directly benefited children in the county," said Judith Friday, director of Gratiot-Isabella County Family Independence Agency. "The event was supported by the FIA office and the surrounding community."

Planning for "Santa's closet" began in October when a core of staff members began putting the event together. A local community-organization stepped forward and donated $500 to the event. Gifts were primarily items received through the NAEIR warehouse program. Other gifts were purchased with donated funds.

The Galesburg, Ill.-based NAEIR warehouse is a non-profit resource that accepts hard donations from corporations and provides them to non-profit agencies in the lower 48 states. Access is through membership with NAEIR.

Volunteer services coordinators in FIA have actively used this program for more than eight years. NAEIR has supplied everything from tools to personal care items to clothing to the kitchen sink for FIA customers. It has been a very good resource for the dollar.

As Dec. 14 grew nearer, staff members recruited several organizations to volunteer for wrapping parties. The response was strong and this year's volunteer wrappers included National Honor Society students from Alma and Ithaca high schools and a teen group from St. John's Catholic Church in St. Louis.

Other volunteer wrappers came from a religious education student group from St. Joseph's Parish in St. Louis and Girl Scout Troop 316 from St. Johns.

Staff and volunteers spent several hours organizing the conference room for the participating children. Children and their parents were welcomed by Santa's elves, who escorted the children through the gift selection process.

Children came from across Gratiot County to select gifts for two special adults in their lives. One mom told staff that Christmas was looking less bleak this year just knowing that there were people like the staff members and volunteers who put on this program, who cared enough to do this event for the kids.

"Santa's closet" has a six-year plus history first beginning in Ionia County FIA and later being adopted by Montcalm County FIA before its introduction at Gratiot County. Our rewarding program was initiated by Gratiot County staff, supported by the community through donations and volunteer assistance, and shared with the children and families of Gratiot County.

New state law redefines child abuse

Gongwer News Service
Jan. 3, 2000

LANSING—Gov. Engler signed into law a bill broadening the definition of a term that serves as the key aspect in establishing first- and second-degree child abuse.

The bill, Public Act 273 with immediate effect, allows prosecutors to bring the felony charges for such injuries as brain damage, broken bones, bruises, joint injuries, poisonings, burns or cuts.

Depression at work: can a supervisor help?

"Ann," a first-level supervisor, has noticed that one of her employees, "Bill," has been coming to work late and has acted differently, once he arrives.

In particular, Bill seems distracted, tired and forgetful. On some occasions over these past few weeks, Ann has observed Bill acting irritable and withdrawn. Although his work is getting done at an acceptable level, Ann has considered discussing her observations with Bill informally, but is not sure how helpful this would be.

As a supervisor, you may have found yourself in a position similar to Ann's since, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, one employee in 20 is experiencing clinical depression. Perhaps you have had an employee who was clearly not performing his or her job at an acceptable level, but you didn't want to address the issue because of how depressed he or she seemed.

These problems are typical of the issues caused by depression in the work place. Clinically depressed employees are often unable to perform their jobs to a satisfactory level and their supervisors are often at a loss about how to best respond.

Between Jan. 1 and March 31, 2000 the Employee Service Program, in conjunction with the National Depression Screening Project is offering a confidential telephone screening test for depression. Any state of Michigan employee or immediate family member can call 1-800-887-5676 and take the four minute anonymous test over the telephone. The responses are tabulated while the caller is on the line and if the results suggest the presence of depression, the caller is given information on how to obtain medical assistance.

Over 80 percent of people respond positively to treatment, often within as little as four weeks. Left untreated, however, depression can continue to seriously impair an employee's performance for months.

By making your employees aware of the depression screening program, you will offer them a resource that could either resolve or prevent the potentially serious consequences of untreated depression.

Please feel free to contact the Employee Service Program at 373-7630 or 800-521-1377 if you have additional questions about the depression screening program, or if you wish to confidentially consult about any specific employee situations.

The Depression Screening Program is part of the Employee Service Program administered by the Office of State Employer.

Are you suffering from depression?

You may not know exactly what's wrong. However, you know you just don't feel like your usual self. You're not enjoying the things that once gave you pleasure, and you're having difficulty doing things that were once easy for you to do. You may also feel a sense of hopelessness, worthlessness or despair. In addition, you may by having problems with your sleeping patterns (insomnia or oversleeping).

If several of these symptoms apply, you may be suffering from depression. Depression is a medically treatable illness that affects nearly 18 million people each year in the United States. As common as it is, depression is often misunderstood or unrecognized. Much like high blood pressure or allergies, depression is one of the most medically treatable disorders.

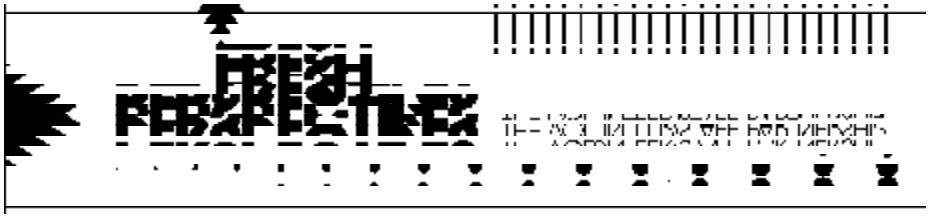
How can you tell if you are suffering from depression? How do you know if you should be talking with your doctor or a mental health professional? The first step may be to make a phone call and take a free, four-minute, and anonymous screening test for depression. The screening test is available to state employees and immediate family members 24-hours a day through March 31, 2000. To take the test, please call 1-800-887-5676.

If you have further questions, please contact the Employee Service Program at 1-800-521-1377. Please make a call, and get started on the road to a happier and healthier life.

FIA participation in Make A Difference Day

15 county offices held events during October occasion
Next Make A Difference Day scheduled Oct. 28, 2000

Information: *Diana Algra*
Telephone (517) 373-9210



The ninth annual Make A Difference Day was held Oct. 23, 1999. This is a day when friends, relatives, neighbors and coworkers join together with nonprofit organizations, school, religious institutions, local businesses and service clubs to take part in community projects. It is a day when the spirit of volunteerism can be rallied into a year-round commitment to making a difference in our communities through volunteering.

This October, more than two million volunteers nationwide participated in Make A Difference Day projects in communities across the country. Nationally, the day is sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation and USA Weekend magazine.

In Michigan, more than 78,000 volunteers participated in more than 500 local projects. Michigan sponsors include the Council of Michigan Foundations, Michigan Campus Compact, Michigan Community Service Commission, MSU Extension, Michigan Family Independence Agency, volunteer Centers of Michigan and United Way of Michigan.

This year 15 county FIA offices took part in Make A Difference Day. Some of the projects included:

■ In Presque Isle County, MSU Extension and Presque Isle County FIA joined others to host the Sunrise Side Healthier Communities Project, a health fair for all ages with the theme "Good health makes a difference". The health fair included health care provider exhibits, a state trooper dive boat and dive team, face painting, food, fire department extrication equipment demonstrations, pumpkin carving, smoke house first safety demonstration and the county Health Department health care-a-van.

■ In Macomb County, the county FIA sponsored a Diaper Depot project to collect new disposable diapers of all sizes for children in foster care and children of low-income families.

■ In Alpena County, Family Services Corps—Michigan's AmeriCorps members—the Club and the city of Alpena hosted a city beautification project. They planted trees and are continuing to monitor their health and growth.

■ In Muskegon County the FIA sponsored an Adopt-A-Highway cleanup, a Crop Walk, a blood drive for the American Red Cross, a clothing drive, a coats, shoes and blankets drive, and a personal care products drive. All events were designed to honor Make A Difference Day and promote the State Employees Capital Campaign and service among the employees.

The Alcona, Arenac, Bay, Chippewa-Luce, Dickinson, Ingham, Iosco, Lenawee, Macomb, Manistee, Mecosta, Montmorency, Muskegon, Ogemaw and Presque Isle county FIA offices participated in Make A Difference Day activities in 1999. The 2000 event will be held Oct. 28.

For more information or photographs of this year's Make A Difference Day projects, visit the Michigan Community Service Commission website at www.state.mi.us/career/mcsc

Agreement aids Burton Center

FIA juvenile facility gets help from state prison
DMB purchasing starts idea leading to new arrangement

By Penny Griffin
Michigan Department of Management and Budget
Telephone (517) 335-3463

LANSING--When employees think "out of the box" and focus on the outcome, solutions arise that can provide even greater benefits than what was originally being sought.

Linda Cummings, a buyer in the DMB Office of Purchasing, helped identify the solution to resolve a customer's problem and got the results they wanted.

On Dec. 31, 1999 the current food service contract for the Burton Center, a Family Independence Agency juvenile detention center for

Partners celebrate "zero" at Lincoln Park

Downriver district hit zero in November, celebrated in January

WAYNE—State and Wayne County Project Zero partners gathered at a Jan. 4 event to celebrate welfare reform success in the Wayne County FIA Lincoln Park district.

FIA director Howard joined Wayne County FIA officials, Lincoln Park district manager Barbara Borden state and local partners to celebrated the district's success achieving reaching zero target families without earned income.

"Lincoln Park manager Barbara Borden and her staff did a great job,"said Howard.

"When we started Project Zero not many people believed it could be successful. Zero is not only possible, but the new expectation."

The Lincoln Park district reached zero on Nov. 15, 1999. On that date every targeted welfare family in that district was working and had earned income. It was the 31st Project Zero site to achieve this accomplishment.

The Lincoln Park District joined Project Zero in October 1998. At the beginning of the project, the district had 752 target cases, of which 298 had no income. By Oct. 31, 1999 the district had 257 target cases of which 29 had no income.

Lincoln Park's Project Zero committee. Top left-right: Brenda Shelton and Linda Jewell. Middle: Wanda Bonner, Marcia Ynclan, Shirley Rucker, Tom Jones. Bottom: Gina Rellias, Sonita Henry, Johnnie Fox.

"Thanks to the hard work of my staff, community partners and local employers our customers are working," said Borden.

"Our bold, creative, and innovative efforts to put welfare customers to work have proven effective. This community supports work. We collaborated with many businesses and agencies to achieve this goal."

As a Project Zero site, Lincoln Park staff developed relationships with community agencies and new community resources. They combined the new resources with intensive customer attention and significant one-on-one interactions to meet their objective.

"Community partnerships are responsible for Lincoln Park's success," said Howard.

"The district's Work First partner, the Downriver Community Conference, deserves special recognition for outstanding collaboration. Many other agencies and businesses can share the credit for Lincoln Park's achievement of zero.

"There was a time when no one believed this could be accomplished in Wayne County, but the skeptics were wrong."

males in Detroit, was going to expire and finding a new vendor had grown difficult. So Cummings, with FIA consent, approached the Michigan Department of Corrections to see if they were interested in providing food service to Burton Center.

Cummings brought the Burton Center administration and the Ryan Correctional Center in Detroit—a state-operated correctional facility—together to go over the FIA needs.

After identifying their needs and coordinating with Ryan, the FIA agreed to immediately purchase needed equipment for the Burton Center food service area and food carts for transporting the food from Ryan to the Burton Center.

Beginning Jan. 1, Ryan started providing prepared meals to Burton Center three times a day. In addition, maintenance staff from Ryan helped Burton make some needed repairs in the food service area.

"These are the sort of outcomes we can achieve when we work with our customers," said Dave Ancell, director of DMB Office of Purchasing.

PFS II: building solutions with Jackson's families

New phase of strength based-solution focused training comes to Jackson
Program being piloted by five collaborating county offices

By Kelly Case, Services Section Manager
Jackson County Family Independence Agency
Telephone (517) 780-7658

JACKSON—On Dec. 2, 1999, Jackson County Family Independence Agency services staff, supervisors and managers joined together for an in-service day exploring our commitment to greater customer service. This was the first of what we hope to be many activities associated with the Jackson County component of the **Partnerships for Safety II** (PFS II) strength based-solution focused initiative.

Pictured left: Jackson County CPS supervisors Kelly Case, Nicki Kegerreis and Tanda Reynolds.

FIA partners from Jackson, Wayne, Kent, Clinton and Shiawassee counties have collaborated since April 1999 to pilot PSF II. As a work in progress we continue to look for opportunities to enhance customer service and meaningful interventions with application of solution focused techniques.

Through periodic consultation with Insoo Kim Berg, a respected researcher, author, and recognized authority in strength based-solution focused interventions, our agenda is to promote the highest level of this practice and development of expertise among the supervisors in the pilot offices.

The supervisors go on to serve as daily trainers for front-line staff. With continued enthusiasm for PFS II and identified growth in front-line staff, the process has now elevated to a level where more formalized staff training will be very beneficial at the local level.

Building on earlier training

PSF II is a distinct and more interactive "second round" initiative to promote greater awareness and daily practice of strength based-solution focused techniques among FIA child welfare staff. In PSF I, training was conducted through a more formal and traditional process with large group lecture sessions for managers, supervisors, and line staff. Part of this process was rolled into required components of the FIA's Child Welfare Institute curriculum.

In order to support and enhance the message of PSF I, the second round PSF II is being "piloted" to determine if success can be achieved through supervisors acting as trainers at the local level. The theory is that such an arrangement will allow the strength based-solution focused concepts to be more readily applied to real-life, daily case situations. In doing so, the process becomes more meaningful to staff while promoting and reinforcing the positive agency cultural shift on an ongoing basis.

The people who get together from pilot counties are child welfare supervisors, managers and one dual county director. They meet with Berg, members of her training staff and Susan Kelly, manager of the FIA Office of Community and Supportive Services, on a regular basis. In these meetings, we review activity and progress to date, receive direction and additional training through modeling then role-play and brainstorm the continued course for this process.

At the December meeting

In keeping with the philosophy the Dec. 2 meeting in Jackson, called "Building Solutions with Jackson's Families", focused on leadership by services supervisors to convey the message. The training day was split into two full sessions allowing each staff person to attend one half-day session.

Each session began with welcome and brief opening remarks from the Jackson County FIA services supervisors who shared their commitment to the agency, the customers we serve, and to continuing improvement in the manner in which services are provided. Each training facilitator shared a bit of

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PFS II in Jackson County *from page 20*

personal experience as a customer, FIA worker, or person responsible for the delivery of quality.

Susan Kelly served as program sponsor, mentor, and honorary Jackson team member. Kelly has been a member of the Jackson PFS II team since mid-1999 and has provided weekly consultations.

Her participation and insights were particularly significant for staff. Kelly's support and participation confirmed that the cultural shift to a strength-based environment is encouraged at all levels within the central FIA structure. As an FIA administrator, her presence acknowledges the current services worker role is extremely challenging and has relatively little room for additional responsibility.

Meeting customers halfway to success

Dan Cowan of Orchard Children's Services served as guest speaker. In his presentation, Cowan challenged staff not to get hung up on the rhetoric of strength based-solution focused philosophy but to embrace the emotional aspect of this service delivery option as an opportunity.

He encouraged the audience to recognize that the philosophy does not require us to throw away what is already working. Instead, he said it challenges us to accentuate what we already successfully use in daily practice to meet customers, recognize and respect their role as a partner in assuring success.

In successfully joining with our customers, Cowan said, we capture control of our piece of the solution building equation. This helps ease our burdens in meeting case-work responsibilities while assuring that we are truly making a difference with the families we serve.

Playing the role

Following Cowan's presentation, Jackson FIA services supervisors entertained with a humorous role-play demonstrating various intervention techniques. This was an icebreaker for many in attendance, allowing staff to see their supervisors in a much different light. The result was copious amounts of healthy laughter with both audience and performers having a great time.

With enthusiasm established and everyone anxious to share their insights, teams were then formed to select and perform role-play situations from a handful of subjects presented. Contrary to traditional reluctance to participate with role-play, the positive spirit helped everyone enjoy the interaction and actually made it difficult when time brought the sessions to a close.

Each session ended with a restatement of PSF II commitment by supervisors and facilitators. Supervisors and managers vowed to constantly seek new opportunities for improvement in the work site and to clarify expectations for staff. Services staff members were challenged to maintain 100 percent focus in partnering for success with our families and individual customers.

A buffet luncheon brought the morning and afternoon groups together for camaraderie and relaxed discussion. Each participant received a certificate acknowledging his or her participation and commitment to the PFS II initiative, and each received a plaque commemorating the training event.

New federal legislation boosts employment for people with disabilities

Washington, D. C. —In a Dec. 17 ceremony, President Clinton signed into law the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. The legislation makes it possible for millions of Americans with disabilities to join the work force without fear of losing their Medicaid and Medicare coverage.

Under current law, people with disabilities often become ineligible for Medicaid or Medicare if they work, putting them in the untenable position of choosing between health care coverage and work. The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 will break down these barriers and help the nation tap the full talents of the millions of Americans who are disabled.

This legislation creates two new options for states to offer a Medicaid buy-in for workers with disabilities. It provides $150 million in grants to encourage states to take this option and creates a new Medicaid buy-in demonstration to help people whose disability is not yet so severe that they cannot work.

The legislation extends Medicare coverage for an additional four-and-a-half years for people in the disability insurance system who return to work and enhances employment-related services for individuals with disabilities through the new "Ticket to Work" program.

EQUIP grants awarded to child care providers

81 new grants total more than $227,000

The FIA released 81 Enhanced Quality Improvement Program, or EQUIP, grant awards Dec. 17. The 81 awards total $227,635.

Grants to 13 child care centers, 20 group providers and 48 family providers will improve Michigan child care programs. Special emphasis is on increasing infant care, care for children with special needs and care during non-traditional working hours.

Grants are available to centers, group homes and family day care homes that serve children from low-income families. The grants are awarded by the FIA and administered by the Michigan Community Coordinated Child Care Association, or 4C.

"These grants will increase availability of child care throughout the state," said FIA director Howard.

"We know that access to adequate child care enhances the

County	City	Grant award	Grant proposal
Allegan	Plainwell	$2,044	Infant equipment, outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Antrim	Elk Rapids	$3,500	Fence
Barry	Plainwell	$3,028	Remodeling
Barry	Hastings	$3,459	Infant equipment, indoor activities
Barry	Hastings	$3,484	Fence, outdoor & infant equipment
Bay	Bay City	$3,488	Infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Bay	Kawkawlin	$2,769	Remodeling, infant equipment, computer
Bay	Bay City	$2,775	Computer, infant & outdoor equipment
Bay	Pinconning	$3,500	Fence
Bay	Bay City	$1,832	Fence
Berrien	Sodus	$2,520	Infant equipment, cots, fence, indoor activities
Berrien	Benton Harbor	$1,817	Egress window, infant equipment
Calhoun	Battle Creek	$2,674	Computer, bathroom
Cass	Niles	$3,480	Outdoor equipment, remodeling
Cass	Dowagiac	$3,500	Infant equipment, bedding, computer
Cass	Cassopolis	$3,500	Infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities, beds
Charlevoix	Boyne City	$3,500	Infant equipment, indoor activities
Cheboygan	Wolverine	$957	Outdoor equipment
Cheboygan	Cheboygan	$713	Infant equipment
Chippewa	Sault Ste Marie	$3,421	Indoor activities, infant equipment
Chippewa	Kincheloe	$1,816	Infant equipment, computer
Chippewa	Kincheloe	$992	Outdoor equipment
Clare	Clare	$2,635	Outdoor & infant equipment, indoor activities, scanner
Clinton	St. Johns	$3,471	Computer, indoor activities, outdoor & infant equipment
Genesee	Flint	$3,500	Infant equipment, computer, cots
Genesee	Flint	$3,500	Carpet, storage, egress window, computer
Genesee	Flint	$3,004	Infant equipment, indoor activities, computer
Gladwin	Beaverton	$2,952	Outdoor equipment, computer
Gogebic	Ironwood	$3,493	Carpet, infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Gd Traverse	Williamsburg	$518	Infant equipment
Gd Traverse	Traverse City	$2,802	Carpet, computer, storage, stroller
Gd Traverse	Traverse City	$1,399	Remodeling, outdoor equipment
Gratiot	Ithaca	$3,500	Outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Ingham	Lansing	$2,697	Infant & outdoor equipment, cots, computer, storage
Ingham	East Lansing	$2,926	Computer, storage, indoor activities, outdoor equipment
Ionia	Belding	$3,500	CO detector, outdoor equipment, floor tile
Iosco	Tawas City	$1,670	Infant & outdoor equipment, cots
Iron	Crystal Falls	$3,494	Indoor activities, outdoor equipment, cots, storage
Isabella	Mt. Pleasant	$2,409	Outdoor equipment, indoor activities, carpet
Isabella	Mt. Pleasant	$3,410	Computer, crib, indoor activities

ability to gain and maintain employment, so we will spend a total of $900,000 on EQUIP grants this fiscal year to help Michigan families keep their children safe while the parents are working."

Proposals funded by grants address: equipment to increase care and improve sleeping arrangements; computers and age appropriate software to enhance pre-school and after-school education; indoor equipment for preschool education and development; outdoor equipment for fitness and motor development; equipment to increase safety; resources to support parent education, early childhood development; workshops to improve staff knowledge and caregiver techniques; barrier-free enhancements and equipment for special needs care; and more

"These grants make it possible for parents to go to their jobs with confidence that their children are being cared for in ways that meet their individual needs," said Howard.

Another round of EQUIP grants for the fiscal year will be awarded this spring. Maximum awards will be $3,500. A rundown of current awards follows.

Kalamazoo	Portage	$1,992	Computer, software
Kalamazoo	Portage	$1,487	Computer
Kalamazoo	Scotts	$904	Outdoor equipment
Kalamazoo	Vicksburg	$2,499	Carpeting, beds, remodeling
Kent	Grand Rapids	$2,877	Computer, outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Kent	Grand Rapids	$3,486	Outdoor equipment
Kent	Grandville	$3,245	Outdoor equipment
Lenawee	Clayton	$1,940	Computer, outdoor equipment
Livingston	Pinckney	$2,991	Infant equipment, cots, indoor activities
Macomb	Mt. Clemens	$2,118	Printer, infant & outdoor equipment
Macomb	Sterling Heights	$1,960	Computer, art supplies
Macomb	Clinton Twnshp	$3,375	Outdoor equipment
Marquette	Marquette	$3,500	Computer, bed, indoor activities
Mecosta	Big Rapids	$3,500	Remodeling, printer, infant equipment
Missaukee	Lake City	$2,000	Remodeling
Muskegon	Muskegon Hts	$3,478	Egress window, computer, infant equipment
Muskegon	Muskegon	$3,162	Infant & outdoor equipment, cots, indoor activities
Newaygo	Newaygo	$2,992	Fence, outdoor equipment, ramp
Newaygo	White Cloud	$3,336	Outdoor equipment, indoor activities, computer
Oakland	Pontiac	$2,620	Fence, computer, bed
Oakland	Oxford	$3,499	Infant & outdoor equipment, air purifier
Oakland	Pontiac	$3,101	Infant equipment, training
Oceana	New Era	$3,470	Egress window, outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Ogemaw	Rose City	$3,290	Infant equipment, curriculum, cots
Ontonagon	Ontonagon	$3,481	Computer, infant equipment
Osceola	Marion	$2,142	CO detector, storage, indoor activities, infant equipment
Otsego	Gaylord	$3,500	Remodeling
Ottawa	Zeeland	$2,922	Infant equipment, indoor activities
Ottawa	Grand Rapids	$3,500	Infant equipment, storage, carpeting
Ottawa	Grand Haven	$3,187	Infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities, computer
Saginaw	St. Charles	$2,916	Infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Saginaw	Saginaw	$2,192	Fence
Sanilac	Croswell	$1,014	Outdoor equipment
St. Jospeh	Sturgis	$2,503	Fence, indoor activities
Van Buren	Decatur	$2,865	Outdoor equipment
Washtenaw	Ypsilanti	$3,499	Outdoor repairs, computer, indoor & outdoor activities
Washtenaw	Milan	$3,409	Fence, infant equipment, indoor activities
Washtenaw	Ann Arbor	$3,487	Indoor activities, infant equipment
Wayne	Westland	$3,498	Computer, infant equipment, indoor activities, storage
Wayne	Detroit	$3,500	Infant equipment
Wayne	Southgate	$3,479	Indoor activities, infant equipment

FIP cases at lowest level since 1970

The November 1999 Family Independence Program average daily caseload was the lowest number since June 1970. In November, the average daily caseload was 77,622. Of those approximately 37,000 were child only or deferred cases, meaning only about 40,000 cases represented work ready adults.

Gov. John Engler made the announcement Dec. 21.

"What a wonderful way to close out the millennium," said Engler. "Welfare reform continues to provide a new way for families to receive temporary assistance, while they deal with issues that prevent them from becoming self-sufficient. This has been one of the bright lights in welfare administration in the past 30 years."

The FIP caseload has declined by 65.8 percent since March 1994, when it totaled 226,863 cases, the highest number in recent years.

"As we proceed into 2000, we will continue to seek opportunities to creatively serve our customers, " said FIA director Douglas E. Howard. "We will work closely with our local partners to ensure that appropriate services and supports are provided to those who need the help."

Current and former FIP recipients continue to receive supportive services that enable them to become self-sufficient. Some of those supports include day care, food stamps and medical assistance.

November data show 67,066 families qualified for day care assistance from FIA, representing 124,366 children. Of those families, 19,503 are currently or were formerly receiving FIP.

During November, 50,848 food stamp households were working and received cash instead of food stamps. To be eligible for "cash out" a food stamp recipient must work and earn at least $350 monthly for three successive months. Families receiving the benefits get a check instead of food stamp coupons.

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