2007 MADISON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

Table of Contents

Deputy Commissioner 1
Economic Security 4
Medical Assistance 11
Adult Protective Services 15
Medicaid Home Care Programs 17
Child Support Enforcement 19
Employment 22
Staff Development 25
Burials/Aid to Disability Determinations 29
Home Energy Assistance Program 32
Transportation 34
Systems 37
Children's Services 39
Foster Care and Institution Placements 43
Adoptions 47
Homefinding 49
Preventive Services 53
PINS Diversion 56
Child Protective Services 59
Child Welfare Social Worker 63
Parent Aides 64
Transportation Aides 66
School Services Program 67
Teenage Services Act Program 73
Legal 75
Madison County Sheriff's Investigative Unit 79
Administrative Services 83
Resources 108

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

In 2007, a total of 12 employees left the Department of Social Services. Two employees resigned, nine retired, and one seasonal employee was laid off at the end of the HEAP season. Six employees requested, and were granted, leaves of absence. Two were medical, three were maternity leaves, and one was personal.

The vacancies that resulted from persons leaving the Department occurred at many levels. Retirements included three Social Welfare Examiners, a Senior Social Welfare Examiner, an Office Assistant II, a Caseworker, a Paralegal, a Computer Programmer, and a Welfare Employment Representative. Vacancies due to resignations included a Caseworker and a Support Investigator. The remaining vacancy was due to a Social Welfare Examiner, which was a seasonal position, being laid off at the end of the HEAP season.

Two of the Social Welfare Examiner vacancies were abolished and replaced with the creation of two seasonal Energy Resource Aide positions. One of these positions was filled by reinstating the employee who had been laid off at the end of the HEAP season. The other position was filled by hiring a new employee. The other two Social Welfare Examiner vacancies were filled by promoting Office Assistant II employees. The Senior Social Welfare Examiner vacancy was filled by promoting a Social Welfare Examiner. The Office Assistant II vacancy was filled with the hiring of a new employee. The two Caseworker vacancies were filled by hiring new employees. The Paralegal vacancy was filled by hiring a new employee. The Computer Programmer position that became vacant was abolished. The Welfare Employment Representative vacancy was filled by

promoting a Senior Social Welfare Examiner. The Support Investigator vacancy was filled by promoting an Office Assistant II.

There was a total of 13 promotions within the Department during 2007. Three Office Assistant I employees were promoted to Office Assistant II. Two Office Assistant II employees were promoted to Social Welfare Examiner. An Office Assistant I was promoted to Social Welfare Examiner. A Casework Assistant was promoted to Senior Social Welfare Examiner. An Office Assistant II was promoted to Casework Assistant. A Caseworker was promoted to Senior Caseworker. A Senior Social Welfare Examiner was promoted to Welfare Employment Representative. A Social Welfare Examiner was promoted to Senior Social Welfare Examiner. An Office Assistant II was promoted to Support Investigator and a Support Investigator was promoted to Senior Social Welfare Examiner.

Three positions were abolished during 2007 upon becoming vacant – a Computer Programmer position and two Social Welfare Examiner positions in the HEAP unit. The Computer Programmer's responsibilities were assumed by the County Information Technology Department. The two Social Welfare Examiner positions were replaced with the creation of two seasonal Energy Resource Aide positions, who are employed during the HEAP season.

Three new positions were created during 2007 – a Senior Social Welfare Examiner and the two aforementioned seasonal Energy Resource Aide positions. The Senior Social Welfare Examiner position was added to the Employment unit in order to address the increasing workload and regulatory demands.

Two positions were reclassified during 2007. An Office Assistant I in the Children's Services unit was reclassified to Office Assistant II and an Office Assistant II in the Clerical Support unit was reclassified to Office Assistant I upon becoming vacant. Both of these reclassifications occurred because it was determined that the job duties of each position were more in line with the job titles they were reclassified to.

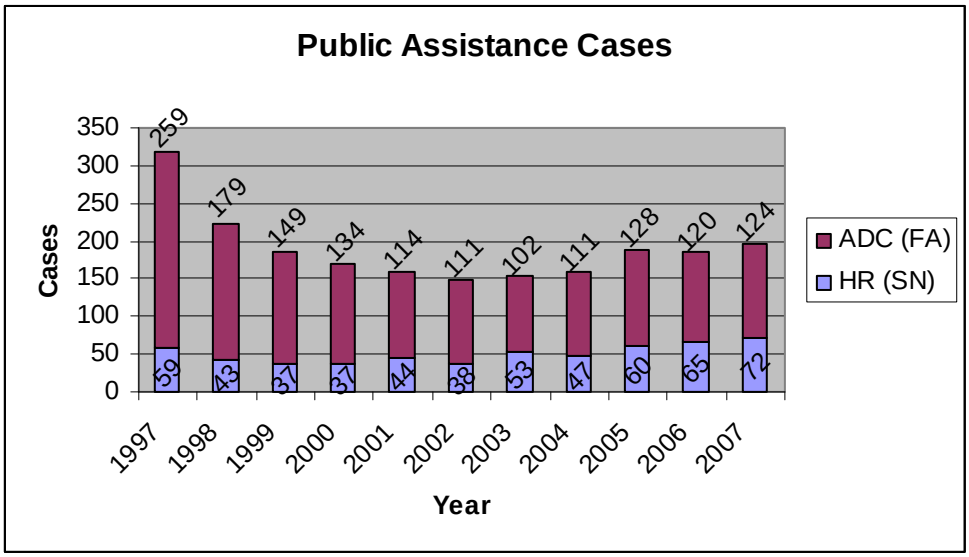
Twenty-one employees of the department qualified for the attendance bonus in 2007, compared to 24 in 2006, in accordance with Bargaining Unit Agreements. To be eligible for this, employees must be on full pay status for the entire previous year and not incur more than three days of sick leave in that 12-month period.

At the end of 2007, there were 118.5 positions within the Department of Social Services plus four Sheriff's Deputies provided through a contract with the Sheriff's Department to conduct fraud investigations and provide building security.

Submitted by Stephen Garneau, Deputy Commissioner

ECONOMIC SECURITY

The year 2007 consisted of the Madison County Department of Social Services Economic Security unit's continuation of success in keeping the Family Assistance caseloads reasonably low. Motivating families to self-sufficiency continued to be our number one goal. This has been accomplished through a variety of programs operated under the Temporary Assistance unit.



Temporary Assistance saw an overall increase in the number of cash assistance cases in 2007. The average number of Family Assistance cases increased 3 percent (120 cases in 2006 to 124 cases in 2007) while Safety Net cases increased 11 percent (65 cases in 2006 to 72 cases in 2007). This resulted in a total caseload increase of 6 percent (185 cases in 2006 to 196 cases in 2007). Considering the struggling local economy, Madison County Department of Social Services was fortunate to see only a modest increase in the caseload.

We continued to operate or start a wide assortment of services this past year. We continued to serve as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. The VITA program allows low-income families free electronic filing of income tax information. The program continues to be a successful collaboration among the Department, Community Action Partnership (CAP), and Colgate University. Students from the college prepared 392 tax returns, bringing $704,882 of federal/state income tax refunds into the county in 2007. This effort also resulted in Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) totaling $304,098.

The unit was also involved in collaboration with the Upstate Institute of Colgate University. A student intern conducted a research project which evaluated outcomes of 13 Preventive and TANF services programs provided through contracts with various community-based organizations. Conducting the project involved meeting with program and agency directors, researching best practices (statewide, nationwide, etc.), and analyzing current programs' individual fit within the community. This study has been valuable in helping to determine the allocation of funding among the various programs based on outcomes and need.

County residents continued to utilize the Department's online food stamp screening and application process. During 2007, we had 248 residents of Madison County apply for food stamps online. The goal of this initiative was to increase the number of households participating in this program. This continues to show success as, on average, the food stamp caseload increased by four percent as compared to 2006. Also, during the year the Department participated in a food stamp telephone recertification pilot program in preparation for statewide implementation. All food stamp

recertification interviews are now done by telephone in Madison County, which makes it easier for County residents to continue their participation in the program.

The unit continues to participate in a number of other initiatives currently underway. CAP and SUNY Morrisville, in collaboration with the Temporary Assistance unit, continued to receive TANF funding from a grant through the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) that has allowed the purchase of automobiles for low-income working families.

The DSS Deputy Commissioner, who oversees the financial program areas, continues to participate in a Forensic Case Management initiative with representatives of the Mental Health and Probation Departments. The purpose of the initiative is to successfully transition County jail inmates with mental health issues back into the community after they have completed their sentence. The Deputy Commissioner serves on a task group related to this initiative, which meets monthly with the forensic (Mental Health) case manager in an effort to coordinate services such as temporary assistance, food stamps, Medicaid, or adult services for those clients who have recently come out of the jail.

The Mid-York Child Care Coordinating Council also continued to receive funding through the Child Care Development Block Grant to provide for a fulltime staff person to be housed at the DSS office. This person works closely with the DSS Day Care unit in the day-to-day operations of assisting parents with procuring child care so they can maintain gainful employment. This staff person also conducts recruitment/training activities in an effort to enlist more providers of registered child care.

During 2007, DSS continued to utilize TANF services dollars from the Combined TANF allocation to fund several TANF services projects. The Community Action Partnership received funding to continue with provision of a housing stabilization program and also a transportation services program. The housing stabilization program funded such items as first month's rent, moving expenses, and minor rehabilitation to name a few. During the year, this program served 346 low-income families.

An example of the kind of assistance the funding provides was a young man who became disabled from an injury on the job site. He fell behind on rent due to no income or disability for several months. His wife and child would have been homeless if CAP had not been able to provide rental payment until a disability payment was made to the family.

The CAP transportation services program provides direct client transportation services to assist low-income individuals in obtaining or maintaining employment. This program provides for direct client disbursement of funds for the cost of vehicle repairs, maintenance, purchase, rental, gas vouchers and driving lessons. During the year, this program served 269 participants.

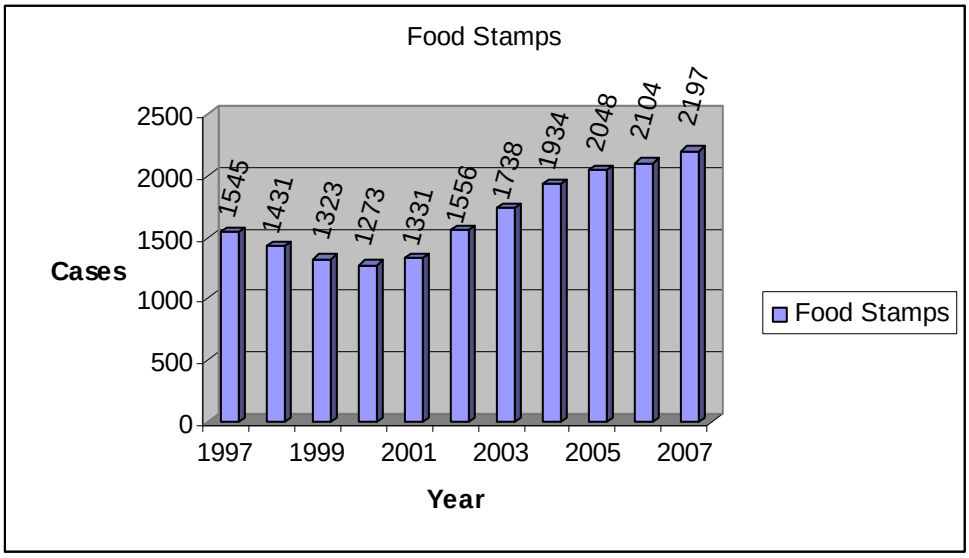
Funding was also granted to Liberty Resources, Inc., to provide an Enhanced Drug and Alcohol Case Management program. This program provides drug and alcohol assessments/referrals and case management services to individuals in an effort to help them become employable. During the year, 38 persons received drug/alcohol assessments and an average of 10 individuals per month received case management services. These services resulted in 21 individuals' achieving an employment goal.

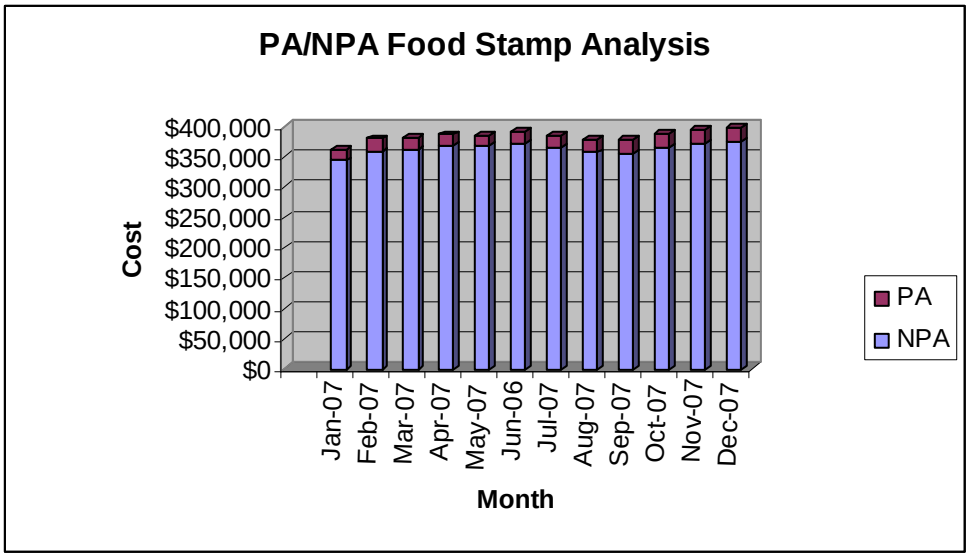
During 2007, DSS continued to have funding available through a separate allocation of Non-Residential Domestic Violence Services TANF funds. This funding was utilized to continue a contract with Liberty Resources, Inc., for a program that provides therapy services to children who live in Madison County and have witnessed and/or are victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, and other violent crimes. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to also participate in the treatment. Through providing these services to children and their families, it is believed that physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and domestic violence will be significantly decreased. This program served an average of seven children/families per month during the year.

We saw a continued caseload increase in food stamps with a high of 2,251 cases in December and a low of 2,165 in February. We averaged 2,197 cases for the year, representing 4,547 residents of the County. The food stamp caseload has increased by 41 percent over the past five years, indicating that more of our neighbors need the nutrition that food stamps provide. In fact, it is important to note that food stamps, a totally federally subsidized benefit, adds $383,283 monthly and over $4.5 million annually to our local economy by the food purchases made at local grocery stores.

As a means to provide nutrition education to food stamp recipients, DSS continues to partner with Cornell Cooperative Extension to secure funding through the USDA for a food stamp nutrition education program. The program, called Eat Smart New York, teaches people to budget and stretch food dollars, prepare healthy meals and snacks, plan and prepare low-cost easy menus and recipes, handle and store food safely,

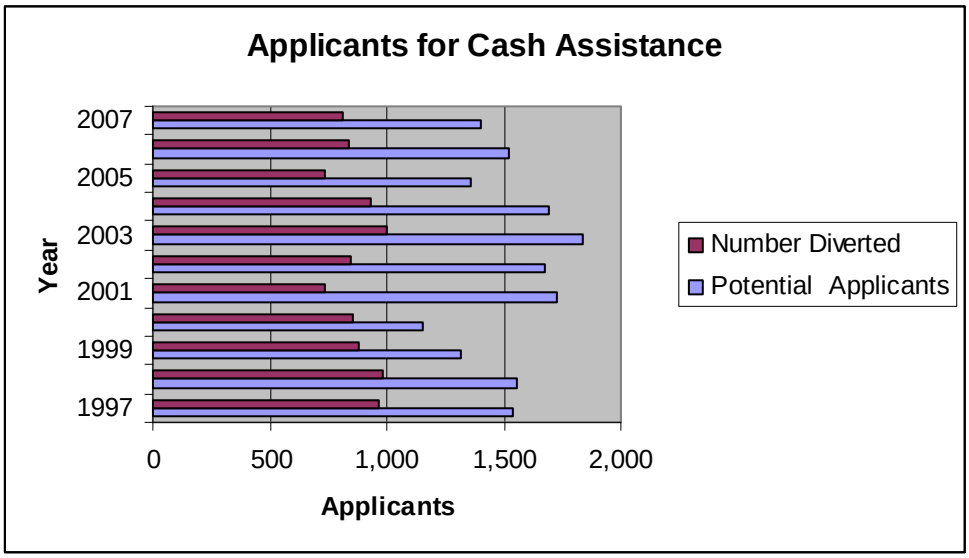
and add more fruits and vegetables to their diet. During 2007, this program served 100 families consisting of 338 persons.





The cornerstone of the Temporary Assistance unit remains "front door diversion." The concept was instituted in July 1995 by a group of employees who wanted to offer our clients something more than an application for assistance every time the person came into the Social Services office. This group felt that we could possibly "divert" up to 20 percent of the applications into some other form of assistance (Medicaid, food stamps,

day care, HEAP, or directly into private sector employment). We have seen an average of 57 percent, or 72 per month since the beginning of the program, of the persons applying for public assistance diverted into some other form of help. The program has saved the county an average of $32,818 per month or a total savings of $4,922,645 since we began. In 2007, we continued to see impressive results – 1,405 persons came into the Social Services building to apply for public assistance with 811 diverted (58 percent) for a yearly savings of $369,005.



Submitted by Stephen Garneau, Deputy Commissioner

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

There were no new Medicaid programs in 2007; therefore, I will take this opportunity to outline the Medicaid program services as mandated by the state and federal governments.

The Medical Assistance (Medicaid) program is federally mandated. Through that mandate, states must offer the following services through their Medicaid programs:

- Inpatient hospital
- Outpatient hospital
- Other laboratory and x-ray
- Certified pediatric and family nurse practitioners
- Nursing facility services and supplies
- Early and periodic screening, diagnostic, and treatment (EPSDT) for children under age 21
- Family planning services and supplies
- Physician services
- Medical and surgical dental services
- Home health services for beneficiaries who are entitled to nursing facility services under the state's Medicaid plan
    - Intermittent or part-time nursing services provided by a home health agency or by a registered nurse when there is no home health agency in the area
    - Home health aides
    - Medical supplies and appliances for use in the home
- Nurse mid-wife services
- Pregnancy-related services (and other conditions that might complicate pregnancy)
- 60 days postpartum pregnancy-related services

New York State has elected to include the following services under the State Medicaid plan:

- **Provider services**
    - Prescription and non-prescription drugs
    - Private duty nurses
    - Psychological services
    - Transportation services
    - Rehabilitative services

- **Hospital/Clinic**
  - Dental services
  - Case management services
  - Physical therapy
  - Occupational therapy
  - Speech, hearing, and language therapy
  - Emergency hospital services provided in non-Medicare participating hospitals
  - Hospice care
  - Diagnostic services
  - Screening services
  - Preventative services
  - Clinic services

- **Medical Equipment**
  - Optometrist services and eyeglasses
  - Prosthetic and orthotic devices
  - Hearing aids
  - Prescription shoes
  - Dentures

- **Other**
  - Intermediate care facilities for persons with Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD) and related conditions
  - Inpatient psychiatric services for persons under age 21 and those over age 65
  - Nursing facility services for persons under age 21
  - Personal care services
  - PACE – all inclusive care for the elderly
  - Tuberculosis-related services

As shown, the New York State Medicaid program is the most comprehensive health insurance coverage available.

Medicare Part D Update

In January 2006, all Medicaid/Medicare beneficiaries were enrolled in Medicare Part D for prescription coverage. Medicaid drug expenditures were reduced by $373,385 in 2007, due in large part to Medicare Part D coverage for Medicaid/Medicare enrollees.

How Medicaid Helped a County Resident in Need

At approximately 11:30 a.m. on a Friday in October, a call came into the agency from a Public Health Nurse who was in the community completing a nursing assessment for home-care services for an individual who was discharged from the hospital the previous day. When discharged from the hospital with a diagnosis of throat cancer, the individual left with multiple prescriptions and instructions to report to Syracuse for radiation therapy in three days.

At the nursing assessment, it was discovered that the individual did not have prescription drug coverage or transportation to begin the radiation therapy. DSS was able to arrange to have an employee travel to the individual's home to complete a Medicaid interview. Once back at the office, the employee placed a telephone call to Rural Health Initiatives, a not-for-profit agency that assists individuals in obtaining prescriptions. Another call was placed to the Madison County Office for the Aging to arrange transportation for the radiation therapy. Rural Health Initiatives was able to assist the individual in obtaining prescriptions the next day and the Office for the Aging was able to arrange transportation so the radiation therapy began when ordered. The Medicaid application was quickly processed at which time prescription coverage and transportation services began through the Medicaid program. Through a joint effort, the individual was able to access care quickly and Medicaid eligibility has allowed medical care to continue.

The Future of the Medicaid Program

The paradigm of change to view the Medicaid program not as a form of welfare, but as health insurance has begun. At the state level, Medicaid is now administered through the Department of Health's Office of Health Insurance Programs. Program

changes, which become effective in early 2008, include: allowing clients to attest to residency and income at case recertification; a change in the practice of ending eligibility when clients move between counties, replacing it with transferring Medicaid eligibility to the new county of residence; the Family Health Plus Premium Assistance Program wherein employer-sponsored health insurance premiums will be paid for Family Health Plus enrollees when cost effective; Presumptive Eligibility for Children where children will be enrolled in the Medicaid program by federally qualified health centers and a plan to suspend, and not end, a Medicaid eligible person's coverage if he/she is incarcerated, which will allow prompt reinstatement into the Medicaid program upon release.

Submitted by LuAn Judd, Director of Medical Assistance/Financial Aid

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

For 2007, the Adult Protective Services unit investigated 139 referrals. This was an increase of 24 from 2006. A referral means that anyone that has concerns about someone aged 18 and over in Madison County can call the Adult Services unit to express these concerns. These concerns could be, but not limited to, a person or persons who are suffering from dementia, are being taken advantage of financially, have housing issues, are being neglected by others entrusted to take care of them, have drug and alcohol problems, or have mental illness. An Adult Services Caseworker would be assigned to the referral. This Caseworker would then go to the home to check on the individual or individuals to assess their needs and offer services if the person or persons want them.

These services include, but are not limited to mental heath services, drug and alcohol services, and housing. In order for these services to happen, we work closely with agencies such as the Madison County Mental Health Department, the Madison County Probation Department, Liberty Resources, New York State Parole, ARC, Community Action of Madison County, Madison County Public Health, the Madison County District Attorney's Office, and various police agencies. We currently have two Caseworkers who perform these duties.

The unit also includes a Casework Assistant. This position was redefined in 2007. Currently, this position is responsible for conducting drug and alcohol screenings when people apply for public assistance or Medicaid, handling utility shut off notices received from either National Grid or NYSEG, and assisting applicants who are unable to read or write through the application process. This worker also assists the Caseworkers and the Day Care unit as needed. Six hundred seventy drug and alcohol screenings were

completed in 2007. There were 45 utility shut offs and 17 individuals were aided in applying for assistance.

One example of an Adult Services case involved an 18 year old that had been abused and abandoned throughout her life. She spent much of her childhood in residential facilities. Once she turned 18, her father put her in a rooming house and left her to fend for herself. She suffered from bi-polar disorder, borderline personality, and oppositional defiant disorder. She also was pregnant. The Caseworker assigned to this referral was able to get this person the help she needed by arranging for care through the Mental Health Department, Public Health Department and Liberty Resources. The Caseworker also made regular visits to the home to insure things continued to go well. The Caseworker was delighted when the baby was born and the client requested that the Caseworker come to the hospital to see the baby.

Submitted by Timothy Collins, Case Supervisor Grade B

MEDICAID HOME CARE PROGRAMS

Another aspect to the Adult Protective Services unit is the inclusion of a Caseworker who works exclusively with Madison County Public Health to provide Medicaid Home Care programs.

Madison County's Medicaid Home Care programs provided in-home care to 119 individuals in 2007. The Long Term Home Health Care programs provided 63 clients with expanded home care services. The program admitted 18 individuals in 2007 – two were admitted from extended care facilities. The average age was 73 with the ages ranging from 41 to 96. The average DMS-1 score was 193. Twenty-two percent were male and 78 percent were female.

Skilled care was provided at approximately 40 percent of the monthly allowable cap of $4,279. Health-related care was provided at approximately 39 percent of the monthly allowable cap of $2,889. The Long Term Home Health Care programs continue to maintain residents of Madison County in their own homes in a cost effective manner.

The Personal Care program provided personal care assistance to four county residents in 2007. The Consumer Directed Personal Care program admitted 13 new clients in 2007. A total of 39 clients received personal care through this program. Twelve residents of Hamilton Manor received personal care services through the Limited Licensed Home Care Services program.

A Referral was received from a 23-year-old Madison County resident seeking personal care assistance for himself. He was in a motor vehicle accident in January 2006, which left him with multiple cervical fractures, resulting in Tetraplegia. He also developed Stage IV Ischial Pressure Ulcers, which required dressing changes. He

required assistance with all of his Activities of Daily Living (ADL)s. Family members had been providing care and were experiencing burnout. His mom and his wife were both employed.

Doctor's orders were obtained. A Public Health Nurse and DSS Caseworker made a home visit to assess his needs. At that time, the various Medicaid Home Care programs were discussed and the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) seemed to meet his needs. He was approved for personal care assistance through the CDPAP, which enabled him to hire, train, and schedule his own home care attendants. Best of all, he was able to stay at home and receive the care he requires.

Submitted by Tracy DiVeronica, Caseworker

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

The Child Support Enforcement Unit (CSEU) is mandated under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act to ensure that legally responsible persons, to the best of their ability, contribute toward the support of their children. Madison County Child Support Unit provides custodial parents with assistance in obtaining financial support and medical insurance coverage for their children by locating parents, establishing paternity, establishing support orders, and collecting and distributing child support payments.

The Child Support Unit helps any custodial parent, regardless of income, without charging any fees. Public assistance clients are automatically referred for our services. Private clients may make application for our services by visiting the Department of Social Services or making application through Family Court during a Family Court child support hearing.

November 2007 marked the first year anniversary of the statewide implementation of the New York State Child Support toll free Customer Service Helpline (CSH). Effective November 2006, all telephone calls regarding local child support cases, as well as general child support inquires, have been directed to the CSH. The Customer Service Helpline was a statewide initiative designed to insure prompt response to all child support inquires and improve overall effectiveness of local child support services. The call center provides general program and case-specific information. Depending on the nature of the call, a local district electronic referral may be forwarded for review by the appropriate local Child Support Unit requiring an action to be taken by a worker. The number of electronic referrals for 2007 totals 859.

At the local level, these referrals may be resolved with several processes – verbal or written contact with the customer, an employee, or other agency. As a result of this process, the Child Support Unit has experienced a doubling of clients' visits to the agency. Locally, after experiencing the first year of changes and pains, we hope this process will allow the local Child Support staff to focus their efforts on support establishment and collection.

Year 2007 was also the year the New York State Division of Child Support Enforcement initiated the direct deposit of child support payments and the issuance of debit cards for custodial parents. Through the electronic transfer of funds from our Support Collection Unit bank account, a custodial parent could have his/her child support payments directly deposited into his/her designated bank account or placed on a debit card issued by the New York State Division of Child Support Enforcement. Custodial parents have welcomed this added option as a replacement for outdated paper checks. Replacing stale dated and lost checks are a thing of the past and have allowed the unit to utilize more time on auditing cases in preparation for filing petitions.

Exceptional Performance

Madison County Child Support Unit was proud to receive a visit from New York State Commissioner David Hansell to accept an award for increased collections. The following is an excerpt taken from the New York State Office of Temporary Assistance and Disability Website:

> "May 4, 2007 the state commissioner charged with oversight of child support enforcement in New York recognized Madison County child support workers Monday as being among the best in the entire state.

David A. Hansell, commissioner of the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), said Madison County increased overall collections by 6.24 percent in 2006 – well above the state average of 3.51 percent – and was just one of four counties to exceed 5 percent.

"'Thanks to the dedicated staff in Madison County, more than ever parents are accepting responsibility for the financial wellbeing of their children and the result is a brighter future for the children and their families,' said Hansell, who presented each member of the child support unit with a certificate recognizing their work.

In addition to outstanding collections, Hansell said, Madison County also ranks among the best in New York State in all other performance measures used by OTDA to track the effectiveness of child support enforcement efforts."

Other 2007 Highlights

- 102 - Individuals were scheduled for genetic testing at the department to establish paternity.
- 801 - Petitions were filed addressing paternity establishment, child support and/or medical insurance or enforcements.
- 796 - Audits were completed in preparation for filing petitions in Family Court.
- 1186 - Orders were received and processed by the unit.
- $6,091,963.00 – Total amount of collections for 2007.

Submitted by Inez DeGroat, Director of Child Support Enforcement/Financial Aid

EMPLOYMENT

The Employment unit handles welfare-to-work activities, focusing on enabling public assistance and food stamp applicants and recipients to achieve self-sufficiency through work. The unit provides a range of services, including group orientation and assessment; one-to-one service planning; motivational training; job search and placement assistance; job readiness training; supportive services, including day care and transportation; approved vocational training; and work experience.

In 2007, the Employment unit initiated a program to provide intensive case services to noncompliant and other at-risk families in receipt of temporary assistance. A Senior Social Welfare Examiner position was created in January 2007 to be responsible for administrating the intensive case services, as well as helping to address the workload and regulatory demands that have been placed upon the Employment unit to meet mandatory employment participation rates imposed by the federal government. The program was intended to support the Department's efforts to identify and address factors with clients that may contribute to noncompliance with program requirements and assist them with securing appropriate work and work-preparation activities to improve the economic wellbeing of families. The program has proven to be successful in providing the Employment unit with a more comprehensive picture of the barriers that clients are struggling with and facilitating the efforts of the clients to work through their situations.

The Day Care unit is instrumental in assisting families with financial assistance for day care to enable them to work, look for work, or attend employment training. A family's eligibility is determined based on income, reasons for needing day care, their children's ages, and individual needs. The Day Care program helps applicants and

recipients of temporary assistance to achieve self-sufficiency through work and to assist other eligible families with the means to remain self-sufficient. Throughout 2007, an average of 223 children per month received day care through the Child Care Development Block Grant funding for a yearly total of $678,768.00.

Initiated in 1992, the Madison County Mobile Work Crew also plays a significant role in assisting employable temporary assistance and food stamp applicants and recipients to achieve self-sufficiency. Individuals are assigned a specific number of hours, based on their temporary assistance and food stamp grants, and they must report to the department ready, willing and able to work. Under the direct supervision of the Work Crew Leader, the work crew completes various jobs for the community that allows the participants to acquire job skills and responsibility. During 2007, the work crew completed 7,643 hours while working on over 26 various projects listed below:

Major Projects

- Town of Sullivan – repaired and coated roof in Chapman Park
- Madison County Landfill – remodeled, painted and installed overhead doors at Cazenovia transfer station.
- Oneida Elks Club – painted and repaired kitchen.
- Town of Sullivan – painted and repaired Sullivan Park caretaker's house.
- Madison County Highway Department – painted office.
- Canastota D.P.W. – repaired and painted D.P.W. building.
- Canastota V.F.W. – build a 32' x 30' addition.
- Stoneleigh Housing – remodeled offices, halls and installed new floor.

- Cedar House – painted building interior.
- Town of Lenox – repaired and cleaned skate park.
- Department of Social Services – moved file cabinets.
- Madison County Parks – installed new roof and painted pavilion in Oxbow Park.
- Madison County Family Court – moved files.

Minor Projects

- Department of Social Services – detailed cars weekly.
- Department of Social Services – removed snow from vehicles each workday as weather determined.
- Madison County Health Department – removed snow from vehicles.
- Department of Social Services – moved furniture, paper, files, etc.
- Over the Hill Gang – set up and took down necessary stations for fishing derby.
- Visually Impaired People Services of Madison County – set up and cooked for picnic.
- Town of Stockbridge – moved hay for downhill race.
- Employee Assistance Program – transported food donation.
- Madison Oneida Historical Society – set up and took down for Craft Days.
- Boxing Hall of Fame – set up and took down induction ceremony.
- Madison County Landfill – installed storm door and cleaned grounds.
- Town of Sullivan – installed park benches.

Submitted by Inez DeGroat, Director of Child Support Enforcement/Financial Aid

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Staff Development office is responsible for securing and providing training that develops and maintains the skills needed by our staff to successfully perform their job functions and to cope with their ever-increasing job demands. Agency staff completed a total of 5,366 hours of locally-arranged and state-provided training in the year 2007. This is an increase of 1,400 hours over the previous year. Staff participated in a total of 348 different training events, including everything from new worker orientation to college credit courses. The agency spent $8,739 on training expenses for the year. This represents monies used for registration fees, lodging, meals, and travel.

New worker training was provided in house to 19 employees. This included both new hires and promoted employees. In-house training is provided as a joint effort among the Director of Staff Development, the director of the program area, and the employee's supervisor. Some staff members have their training enhanced with programs provided under state contract with one of several colleges, including Brookdale Center on Aging, SUNY Albany, and SUC at Buffalo. State training is provided at a cost to the local district of $14 per day. Necessary lodging and the cost of some meals are included in this fee.

It can take a new worker anywhere from two weeks to six months to be fully trained to perform independently in his/her position. For example, let us take a look at training a new worker assigned to the Child Protective Services (CPS) unit receives.

On day one, the Caseworker meets with the Director of Staff Development/IT for an orientation session. This includes informing the employee of agency policies and procedures, securing an ID badge, getting a tour of the

agency, and being introduced to coworkers. The two will also get together on day two for hands-on computer training, including inquiry into the many state systems. The rest of the first week is spent with the supervisor or another experienced Caseworker. During this time, the Caseworker will be observing, accompanying another worker on home visits and investigations, and reading program manuals. If possible, the new worker will accompany an experienced worker to court to observe. The first two weeks are spent in giving a new worker a good overview of the job so he/she will have a frame of reference when the training becomes more specific.

New York State has mandated that all Caseworkers attend new worker core training. Sometime after the first week, a Caseworker will start his/her state-sponsored core training. This 20-day training program enhances the Caseworker's competencies by providing knowledge and skills to effectively work with families. Core training is held on an alternating schedule in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, or Albany. If the employee has to travel more that 35 miles one way to the training, then the state pays the lodging and travel costs. If the distance to the training is less than 35 miles, then the worker must commute each day. The training is spread out over an eight-to-ten-week period. When the employee is not at training, there are specific activities that he/she must complete at the office.

After completing core training, the Caseworker must attend six additional days of training that concentrates on Child Protective investigations. Once these two state training courses are complete, the worker is allowed to conduct CPS

investigations on his/her own. This initial training can cover a period of almost four months. During this time, the worker has not been able to pick up a caseload or be a fully functioning worker, which causes his/her coworkers to pick up the slack.

One of the biggest challenges this year was not with the training of new employees, but came about as a result of new CPS legislation enacted by New York State under Chapter 525 of the laws of 2006. This legislation states that "all CPS Supervisors must satisfactorily complete a course in the fundamentals of Child Protection developed by the Office of Children and Family Services that strengthens and expands current training procedures for CPS supervisors" by November 2007. The legislation also requires all CPS Caseworkers and supervisors to participate in a minimum of six hours of "in-service" training annually.

One of the challenges in meeting the supervisory requirement was with the limited number of courses that were offered locally. Because of this, numerous supervisors had to be out of the office at the same time. Making arrangements for 30 employees to attend qualifying training sessions became a juggling act determining who had what and when, and getting approval for some of our locally-arranged sessions to qualify for the CPS in-service training.

We were well represented at the state's conferences this year with employees attending the New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA) Winter and Summer Conferences, the Child Support Enforcement Conference, the LAN Administration Conference, and the Welfare Fraud Investigator's Conference, among others.

Staff participated in 50 LearnLinc courses. LearnLinc courses allow trainees from across the state to gather together in a classroom environment using their desktop computers. Instructors and trainees can interact verbally with each other while viewing common content on the computer screen. These methods for delivering training save the county in the time the worker is away from the office and in travel costs.

Another way that workers can receive state training without leaving the office is through Training Space. Training Space offers computer-based training on specialized topics. A worker can participate in these types of training at a time of his/her choosing. Workers took advantage of six different classes offered through this medium in such areas as HEAP eligibility and food stamp budgeting topics.

Eight employees took advantage of tuition reimbursement offered through their union contracts. A total of $14,593 was paid out in tuition reimbursement during 2007. Six of these participants are pursuing a Bachelor's degree, one is pursuing an Associate's degree, and one is pursuing a Master's Degree in Business Administration. One employee graduated from Cazenovia College in December with a Bachelor's degree in Human Services. Two supervisors in the Children and Family Services unit are pursuing Master's degrees in Social Work through Syracuse University. Tuition and books for this class are being paid out of the state's Social Work Consortium Fund.

The year ahead sees us offering more new worker training as a result of several retirements and resultant promotions within the agency. Training on supervision will be at the forefront of our efforts due to the increasing number of first-time supervisors.

Submitted by Diane Myers, Director of Staff Development/IT

BURIALS

In 2007, several changes were made in the process to apply for and in the payment of requests for burials. These changes were implemented to improve the effectiveness of the burial program. The significant changes are noted below.

The first change was the passing of a new resolution by the Madison County Board of Supervisors. This was the first rate increase funeral directors received since 1997. The new resolution addressed the increased costs of both burials and cremations and also addressed anatomical donations. The new resolution allowed an additional compensation for the cost of a casket up to $400.

The second change was to the income eligibility determination process. In the past, the eligibility standard was determined by using the Public Assistance standard of need, which for a household of one is $336. The eligibility standard was increased to the Federal Poverty Level, which for a household of one is $850. This was more reflective of the standards already in place by the Veterans Agency.

The third change was in the application form. The department created, and had approved by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, a one page burial application that is specific to the burial determination. This application replaces the 14-page standard state application.

Forty-five burial applications were taken in 2007. Of these, three were denied for various reasons, including being referred to the Veterans agency. The

total amount paid for these burials was $96,337. Below is the amount paid to our local funeral homes:

Funeral Home Payments

Ayer & Zimmer Funeral Home, Cazenovia	$ 1,974
Burgess and Tedesco, Hamilton	15,436
Campbell Dean, Oneida	17,100
Coolican-McSweeney, Oneida	10,519
Ironside Funeral Home, Oneida	5,347
J. Homer Ball, Canastota	18,628
Paul Funeral Home, Madison	2,539
Smith Funeral Home, DeRuyter	2,596
Zimmer GF Funeral Home, Chittenango	2,631
All Others	19,.567
Total	**$96,337**

Submitted by Diane Myers, Director of Staff Development/IT

AID TO DISABILITY DETERMINATIONS

One of the most successful ways of securing money for the agency is through the disability review process. This involves identifying those clients with long-term ailments, interviewing them, and collecting medical records from their doctors and from any inpatient hospital stays. Once all the information is collected, a packet is sent to a New York State Review Team for a disability determination. If the client is determined to be disabled, then we are able to claim federal reimbursement for a portion of the monies paid out for this individual. In 2007, out of 38 disability packets submitted, we were successful in getting a determination of disability on 21 of them or 55 percent. Six reviews are pending a final determination.

Submitted by Diane Myers, Director of Staff Development/IT

HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP)

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) assists households with the cost of heat and energy-related expenses. Recipients receive a one-time regular benefit payable to their fuel dealer. For the 2006/2007 HEAP season, the regular benefit increased from a maximum of $400 to a maximum of $440. Households may also qualify for a one-time emergency benefit, which increased from $400 to $500. Another component of the HEAP program is assistance with furnace repairs or replacements.

The HEAP season officially opens on November 1 of each year; however, we can start processing cases as early as the end of August under our early outreach initiative. Under this initiative, applications are mailed out to recipients who received a HEAP benefit the previous year and who are either over the age of 60 or are considered to be a vulnerable household. Even though cases are authorized early, no benefits can be issued until after the official start of the season.

This was the first full heating season that Madison County participated in the MOR OIL project. This project allows recipients of HEAP benefits to purchase more fuel oil at a lower price. The state and local counties were able, based on combined consumption, to ensure that low-income families were offered the "best price" for their fuel oil deliveries. In the first year, we saw an increase of eight percent in the amount of fuel oil seniors and working families could purchase with their HEAP benefits.

2006/2007 HEAP SEASON ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The three HEAP workers (two fulltime and one part-time) processed 3,062 applications. Madison County issued $1,276,230 in the form of regular HEAP grants and

$647,210 in the form of emergency grants. Under the weatherization program, contracted through Stoneleigh Housing, Inc., there were 35 furnaces repaired at a cost of $12,609.13 and 28 furnaces replaced at a cost of $57,847.

OUTREACH:

It is the local district's responsibility to inform the general public about the availability of the HEAP program and benefits. For the second year, the HEAP workers attended Oneida-Madison Electric Co-op's annual meeting and provided their members with information regarding the HEAP program. The HEAP workers also attended the Mohawk Valley Perinatal Network-sponsored Family Health Event held in Hamilton in October. In addition to the aforementioned efforts, the supervisor of the unit created a heating and energy informational newsletter with articles submitted from various local agencies. This newsletter was then distributed to the local agencies so that they would have information available to assist the families they serve with their energy needs.

The 2007/2008 HEAP year will see a change in the way payments are made to the vendors. The payments to fuel companies will be made directly from the State Comptroller's Office instead of being produced locally.

Submitted by Tammy Hayes, Senior Social Welfare Examiner

TRANSPORTATION

Madison County is responsible to pay the cost of transportation to and from medical appointments for our Medicaid recipients in hardship situations. First Transit, Inc., is responsible for coordinating all non-emergency medical transportation requests from our Medicaid-eligible clientele. We have one Office Assistant II who is responsible for assuring payment for all prior-approved medical transports. This is done either by issuing a voucher to reimburse the client or by entering prior approvals on the state's eMedNY system.

The year 2007 proved to be a very challenging year for Madison County's medical transportation program. Our first challenge came about as the result of numerous staff changes at First Transit, Inc. This resulted in numerous complaint calls from the public citing problems such as being unable to get through on the phones to anyone at First Transit or missing appointments when no one showed up at the scheduled time to transport them. There was also a delay of several months in getting the prior approval forms sent to us. We had to make some adjustments locally to allow our transportation providers to continue to get paid. We had to implement an element of trust in order to get our local providers paid in a timely manner. In return, they agreed to continue to service our clients. Things started settling down and getting back to normal after about six months.

Another challenge came about when the Office Assistant II who handles our end of the transportation process took a promotion to another job in a different part of the agency. It took a few weeks to get a new person on board and fully trained.

In 2006, we lost a taxicab provider based in Canastota. As luck would have it, in 2007, Delano Taxi started doing business in Canastota and was approved to do Medicaid transports. This was a welcome addition to our group of transportation providers.

Several cost-savings measures were implemented in 2007. Our Medicaid customers are encouraged to drive themselves to their medical appointments and to be reimbursed for their mileage at the American Automobile Association (AAA) mileage rate. In 2007, the reimbursement rate decreased from $0.16 to $0.15/mile. In addition, we were given state approval to eliminate mileage reimbursement for travel of less than ten miles round trip.

One vendor strictly provides rides home from the Oneida Healthcare Center. We had been paying a flat rate for these trips. It was intended that these were just after-hour transports; however, the center would routinely call for this service, even during the workday. We were able to agree on paying our lower taxicab rate for rides that originated during regular hours rather than the higher after-hour rate.

The year ahead sees us finalizing our formal non-emergency Medicaid transportation policy. It will also see us considering a rate increase for our taxi drivers. It is also time to renegotiate for the county's transportation contract, which may impact our dealings with First Transit, Inc.

The following page gives the break down of the amount of money expended during 2007 for medical transportation.

2007 Medical Transportation Expenses Paid

Ambulance	# of Trips	Amount Paid
Vineall Ambulance, Inc., Oneida	894	$ 94,242
Eastern Paramedics (Rural Metro), Syracuse	489	36,236
Greater Lenox Ambulance Service, Canastota	268	19,561

Cazenovia Area Volunteer Ambualnce (CAVAC)	160	12,734
Amcare Ambulance Service, Inc., Rome	101	7,042
Kunkel Ambulance Service, Utica	112	5,961
Edwards Ambulance Service, Chadwicks	97	5,594
Southern Madison County Volunteer, Hamilton	100	5,365
Village of Madison, Madison	53	4,459
Smithfield/Eaton Volunteer, Morrisville	70	3,979
Georgetown Emergency Squad	14	1,560
All others	312	27,064
Total Ambulance	**2,670**	**$223,797**
Invalid Coach (Wheelchair Van, etc.)		
Suburban, East Syracuse	2,221	$118,605
Speedy Medical Transport, Syracuse	313	24,878
Julie Jean Taddeo (Affordable), Syracuse	208	20,976
TLC Medical Transport, Syracuse	227	15,060
Kunkel Limousine Service, Utica	173	11,468
Birnie Bus Service, Rome	52	5,176
Rzan Medical Transportation, Syracuse	6	3,935
Katherine/Martin Luther Nursing Home, Clinton	61	3,951
Able Medical Transport, Syracuse	45	1,533
All Others	21	3,812
Total Invalid Coach	**3,327**	**$209,394**
Taxi		
Oneida Taxi, Oneida	1,507	$100,201
RB Transport, Mattydale	795	98,011
First Transit, Inc., Norwich	3,196	89,519
Collegiate Hotel, Inc; Hamilton	527	60,999
Suburban, East Syracuse	634	55,520
D.A.D.'s Taxi, Oneida	445	32,308
Delano Taxi, Canastota	286	18,232
Fiore Funeral Home, Oneida	163	4,820
All Others	22	1,564
Total Taxi	**7,575**	**$461,174**
Day Treatment Transportation		
Gregory P. Collis, Hubbardsville Manor	**1,355**	**$ 45,739**
Reimbursed through Voucher System		**$14,617**
Office for the Aging		
Reimbursed at $5/trip + .75/mile + tolls & parking	**218**	**$ 4,310**

Submitted by Diane Myers, Director of Staff Development/IT

SYSTEMS

The Systems staff is responsible for the management and functioning of all local and state computer systems, including the Welfare Management System (WMS). Our functions include planning and coordinating the installation of new systems, upgrading and maintaining existing systems, performing daily computer operations such as data entry, registering cases, assigning case numbers, and providing technical and end user support. This unit is also responsible for the Benefit Issuance and Control System (BICS) operations, providing training, and administering system security and access. It is our job to be sure that all computer equipment is in place and functioning correctly.

One of our challenges this year came about when our lone Computer Programmer retired in September. After much consideration, the Computer Programmer position was given up at DSS in order to create an additional computer support position in the county's Information Technology Department.

It was a busy year for Systems staff in 2007! Our accomplishments include the following:

- Obtained six personal computers with 21" flat screen monitors from New York State OTDA to replace six of our local PCs.

- Obtained two eMedNY PCs from the New York State Department of Heath for use with Medicaid transportation prior approvals and the state's medical billing system.

- Obtained four additional EEDSS (Electronic Eligibility Determination Support System) PCs to be used by our Medicaid workers. These additional PCs will help in our quest to provide more computer access in the interview area.

- Obtained three additional PCs to be used with the CONNECTIONS program. CONNECTIONS is a state program used by our Children and Family Services workers.

- Eighty-one employees participated in state-sponsored computer skills training covering such MicroSoft office topics as file management and calendaring.

- Obtained two additional scanning stations to be used by eligibility staff.

- Systems staff registered 5891 applications in 2007.

- New case numbers issued totaled 1301.

- The BICS operator printed 5948 checks in 2006.

- Policies and procedures were developed by the Imaging Workgroup to help with the agency-wide implementation of voicemail.

- With the start of the 2007/2008 HEAP season, the majority of the HEAP benefit checks were printed at the state level instead of at the local level.

Below is a list of the computer systems currently supported at Madison County Department of Social Services and the number of PCs associated with each system:

State Systems

2	Accounting
1	AFIS (Automated Finger Imaging)
14	ASSETS (Child Support)
1	BICS (Benefit Issuance Control System)
1	CCFS (Child Care Facility System)
1	COMM (Commissioner's)
1	COMM (laptop)
28	CONNECTIONS + 6 laptops
3	EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer)
19	EEDSS (Medicaid eligibility)
2	eMedNY (Medicaid billing)
1	STARS (Statewide Training Automated Registration System)
10	WMS (Welfare Management System) these are "dummy" terminals
48	WTW (Welfare-to-Work)
4	Local PCs imaged to state system for use with CONNECTIONS

Local Systems

4	PCs connected to our LAN + 2 laptops
7	CONNECTIONS terminals
5	Scanning stations with PCs

Submitted by Diane Myers, Director of Staff Development/IT

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Children's Services is always very busy and vibrant, whether you are referring to the field of practice or to our actual area of the building. In the following pages, you will read how, yet again, we have had a record number of child abuse and maltreatment reports assigned to us for investigation by the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Registry. You will learn how our first complete year as the designated PINS Diversion agency has progressed. You will be provided with all types of statistics, including the fact that our number of foster care placements for older children, usually in higher levels of care, is down, but our number of placements for younger children has had a moderate increase. You will gain knowledge of all manner of other interesting details. In this introductory section, you will be provided with some of the "big picture" events that have shaped the life of Children's Services this past year.

A constant source for change in Children's Services, it seems, is new legislation or regulations, although the changes in 2007 were not as broad or extensive as some have been in years past. Our first legislative change required increased training for individuals who act in a supervisory capacity for child abuse or maltreatment cases. Due to our organizational structure, any supervisor or Senior Caseworker, as well as the Deputy Commissioner for Family Services, could act in that capacity, which meant that all of these individuals had to comply with the training requirements. Some individuals had already received portions of the training when it was optional, and seven people completed the training requirements with a total of 70 days of training. In general, the supervisory staff felt the training had useful components, which will be incorporated into everyday practice, and we are now in full compliance with the training requirement.

Also new in 2007 were changes to Chapters 193 and 513 of the Laws of 2007 regarding mandated reporting. Chapter 193 clarified that institutional settings, such as hospitals or schools, could not have any policy that required staff members to report to an administrator prior to making a Child Protective report. Instead, the staff member with firsthand knowledge of the information was the individual required to make the report. It also more clearly defined individuals who are required to make a report. In the past, the list of mandated reporters had stated "school official" and now it states schoolteachers, school nurses, school social workers, etc. Although this legislation was not directed at Children's Services, it did have an impact. There was an increased request for presentations conducted by Children's Services staff regarding mandated reporting rules and regulations. Training sessions were conducted for seven school districts and Head Start.

Chapter 513 changed the role of "social services workers" as mandated reporters. Previously, all mandated reporters were only required to report information that gave them reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment if the child or parent came before them in their professional capacity. This meant that secondhand information, provided by a neighbor, family member or bystander, did not need to be reported by the social services worker. Now, social services workers are the only mandated reporters who must report incidents from secondhand information. This information does not have to come from the parent or abused child – it can be information from someone with "personal knowledge" of abuse or maltreatment. The term "social services worker" is being defined as anyone who works for a local Department of Social Services in a professional capacity, as well as for any agency that contracts with a local department for

preventive, foster care or adoption services. We have seen a slight increase in the number of reports made by social services personnel since the enactment of this legislation, but it is too early to tell just how much of an impact it will have.

Finally, the last major legislative change relates to contracts entered into between the local Department of Social Services and any other agency for the provision of preventive services. Now, all contracts for preventive services must have clearly defined and measurable outcomes as part of the contract package or the department is not eligible for state reimbursement funds for those programs. Fortunately, all of our preventive services contracts already stated measurable outcomes, but we will continue to evaluate these contracts to make sure the outcomes listed are appropriate and pertinent to the services being provided.

One new initiative for Children's Services this year was to take part in the "Pinwheels for Prevention" campaign sponsored by the Madison County Priorities Council. This event was held in April to help bring attention to National Child Abuse and Prevention Month, as well as the fact that child abuse is a community issue that needs a community response. Children's Services was able to obtain, free of charge, educational booklets to be distributed throughout the county that had suggestions for what people in the general public could do to help reduce child abuse and maltreatment. Fourteen hundred booklets were distributed. With the help of the Community Action Partnership, nearly 1,200 pinwheels were put on display at the intersection of Routes 5 and 365A in front of the Wal-Mart plaza – one for every report of child abuse and maltreatment received in Madison County in the year 2006. This public campaign was to

help draw attention to this very important issue and that Child Protective Services needs the help of everyone in the community to address this issue.

In closing, a few tidbits of information for 2007 are that Children's Services applied for and obtained $44,400 in state funding for PINS diversion services. We had 75 fewer hours of overtime from the year before in spite of a record number of CPS reports, and for the third year in a row, a less than 10 percent turnover rate in casework staff.

For 2008, we already have a few initiatives started that we are excited about and looking forward to implementing. We will be contracting with Madison County Mental Health, instead of with a private not-for-profit agency, for treatment services to Children's Services clients. This contract will allow us to provide the same excellent care, with some additional services for psychiatric care, at a substantial financial savings to the County. Second, we have had some training on the "Getting To Outcomes" program to help us evaluate service provision. We will continue in this training program and evaluating not only our preventive services contracts, but also our own DSS Caseworkers. Last but not least, all of our casework and supervisory staff will complete a training program offered by the State Regional Office entitled "Supervising Concurrent Planning." This program focuses on the skills and techniques needed for "best practice" in child welfare services and is designed to help us enhance our service provision to the children and families of Madison County.

Submitted by Melissa Maine, Deputy Commissioner for Family Services

FOSTER CARE AND INSTITUTION PLACEMENTS

During 2007, a total of 79 children were placed in Department of Social Services (DSS) custody. Along with 71 children that were discharged from custody, we ended the year with a total of 76 children in foster care. Forty-seven of these were in Madison County foster homes and 29 were in higher levels of care, such as therapeutic foster care, group home, or a residential treatment center. This year, we also had four young adults attending college and one in the Marine Corps.

These numbers represent a continued decline in placements in higher levels of care, which can be reflective of two factors. The first is the continuing trend of decreased placements of older children following the change in the PINS laws requiring mandated diversion services. This population often required higher levels of placements in more structured facilities to assist these children with their assorted problems. The reduction in the PINS petitions indicates that mandated interventions in the community are showing positive outcomes in the families in which they are implemented. More information on PINS and PINS Diversion Services can be found elsewhere in this report. The second factor is that the majority of placements that occurred in 2007 were of younger children.

The story of one of the families that we have worked with over the past year is illustrative of how working in collaboration – families, service providers, foster parents and DSS caseworkers – can achieve positive outcomes regarding permanency for children. The story involves three children: Arnie, age 15; Lorna, age 12; and Joel, age 11. They had been in the custody of their paternal grandmother for a number of years. Their biological parents, although living in the area, were unable to care for them for a number of reasons. After living with their grandmother for approximately six years or so,

Lorna disclosed being inappropriately touched by a friend of her grandmother who frequented the home. The grandmother initially took the proper steps to protect the children. She cooperated with Child Protective Services and law enforcement during the investigation of the allegations and complied with an order of protection prohibiting contact between the friend and all three children. The perpetrator was convicted in Criminal Court and in Family Court was found to have neglected the children. Although the grandmother continued her relationship with her friend, she did not allow him to have contact with the children. The children received supportive services in the form of counseling through Madison County Mental Health and Consumer Services (a mental health intensive case management program), along with DSS case management. In addition, the grandmother received Parent Aide services from DSS. In spite of all these supports, and following a disclosure that another friend of the grandmother similarly touched Lorna inappropriately, the grandmother decided she could not continue to care for the children. The biological parents were still not in a position to care for them and no other appropriate family resources could be identified. The children were then voluntarily placed in DSS custody.

As no foster home was available to take all three children – Arnie and Joel were placed in one home and Lorna was placed in another. A visitation plan was immediately put into place to allow visits among the siblings, the grandmother, and the parents. At this time, the focus of case planning changed from the grandmother to the mother. The mother found an apartment for the family. She participated in counseling, completed a parenting class, and worked one on one with a Parent Aide. The children's supportive services continued in foster care and, within five months time, the mother was ready for

and received custody of her children. Through the hard work of the family, in concert with the DSS Caseworker, the foster parents, and other services providers, the time these children spent in out-of-home placement was shortened and the goal of permanency was achieved. The family participated in voluntary aftercare services to help ensure that the progress all family members had made during the reunification process would continue.

Of the rest of children placed in foster care, Madison County foster homes utilized DSS funds as well as their own to provide for the needs of the children in DSS care. As a result, they helped support the local economy by making clothing and other essential purchases through businesses here in Central New York.

For year 2008, DSS began contracting with Madison County Department of Mental Health to provide clinical counseling services for the families with whom we work. Through this program, MCMH has three staff persons, two fulltime therapists and a supervisor, who provide assessments and treatment for families that have open Preventive or Foster Care cases with the department. They are based in the DSS building in Wampsville. These services are provided free of charge to the families we work with and being an exclusive contract between DSS and Madison County Mental Health, it will allow families in need to access mental health services in a much more timely manner. It will also result in clearer and more efficient communication between the Caseworkers and therapists for improved service delivery for our families.

All in all, the DSS Children and Family Services Foster Care/Preventive unit has continued its commitment to provide quality case management services to families in need of them and to keep children safe. We have worked hard to help families resolve their respective issues that have placed their children at risk and, where possible, reunite

them so that they can provide a safe and nurturing environment in which their children can not only grow to adulthood, but to also thrive on the way there.

Submitted by Timothy Brown, Case Supervisor Grade B

ADOPTIONS

The Adoptions Caseworker is responsible for the planning and implementation of adoption placements. The children served in this program come from the Foster Care/Preventive unit. They are transferred to an Adoptions Caseworker once their birth parents rights have been legally terminated.

Foster families often adopt the children they are caring for when the children's birth parents' rights are terminated. When foster parents choose not to adopt, the Caseworker must seek out adoptive families for those children. The worker utilizes New York State's Adoption Services (NYSAS) photo listing program and/or networks with other agencies. The families chosen must be a certified foster/adoptive home and must meet all agency and state regulations. The Caseworker narrows down the families to the ones they feel will best meet the children's needs and then the placement process begins.

In 2007…

Four children were photo listed with the New York State Adoption Services. Three children continue to await a permanent resource and one child was adopted.

Seven children were adopted. Five of these children were adopted by their foster parents while one child was placed directly into the adoptive home as an infant. One was placed with a family who learned about the child's need for an adoptive family through the Foster/Adoptive Parent Certification Program. The family visited for several months before the child moved into the adoptive home. Once the family and child decided that it was a good placement, they finalized the adoption.

At the end of 2007…

Three children were awaiting adoptive placements. Three children were in adoptive placements waiting for necessary paperwork to be completed.

Submitted by Jennifer Mastrangelo, Caseworker

HOMEFINDING

The Homefinding unit is responsible for recruiting and certifying foster and adoptive families for children in Madison County. We are, therefore, responsible for retaining and maintaining these foster/adoptive homes in regard to safety and compliance with agency and state regulations. Focus is also brought to the well-being of the family and their ability to care for children in their home. This is accomplished through regular contact with the family and through training and in-service programs.

In 2007, the unit certified 17 families as foster/adoptive homes. Five of the homes certified were opened as child-specific or relative homes. One was opened as a result of a request through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. The one home that was closed during 2007 was the Agency Operated Boarding Home. The home closed as a result of an agreement between Madison County Department of Social Services and Community Action Program.

Throughout the year, the Homefinding unit has struggled from time to time with the availability of families willing to take on the responsibility of foster parenting sibling groups and children with specialized care needs. This concern resulted in the agency's looking beyond our own program for beds. We continue our focus in recruiting new families to fulfill the ongoing need for placements. In addition, support is provided to the foster adoptive homes that are currently certified in attempts to retain those homes that are essential in providing care to our children.

Relative Foster Parents

Five relative and/or child-specific foster families were approved this year, therefore providing homes to eight children, while at the same time maintaining valuable connections in their lives. We continue to work with relatives as more and more resource families opt to become relative foster care providers instead of taking custody of the children. We welcome relatives as resources for our children who need temporary and permanent homes.

Custody and Courtesy Home Studies

The Homefinding unit is responsible for completing home studies for families applying for custody of children in foster care, as well as for counties across the state who need our assistance. This year Madison County assisted a number of neighboring counties with home studies and contacts for families residing in Madison County.

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) consists of laws and procedures that help children move across state lines while residing in foster care. When an ICPC is requested by another state, the Department is responsible for investigating the proposed family for the child. In 2007, the Homefinding unit completed six ICPC home studies and provided supervision to those families. The Department currently has three open ICPC cases.

Agency Operated Foster Home

December 2007 saw the close of our Agency Operated Foster Home. The Homefinding unit identified resources and foster families for each of the boys placed in the home. The Homefinding unit and other agency staff worked together with the staff of Community Action Program to assure the smoothest transition possible for the children.

Christmas and Beyond

This year, we are pleased to report a total of $ 2,809.47 in donations to our Christmas and Beyond fund. Donations were acquired through community agencies, individuals in the community, and Madison County employees. The donations received go toward Christmas gifts and special activities for foster children throughout the year.

In addition to monetary donations, the Department worked with several community agencies, churches, and individuals who helped purchase Christmas gifts for the children. Because of the tremendous outreach from the community this year, we were able to provide several gifts to each child in foster care.

Recruitment and Retention

In 2007, the Homefinding unit continued its efforts to recruit foster and adoptive families. These ongoing efforts bring steady inquiries to Madison County Department of Social Services. At the close of 2007, our inquiry list contains 64 families interested in foster care and/or adoption.

We look positively forward to 2008 with the anticipation of recruiting, certifying, and approving additional resource homes. In addition, our efforts will continue to focus on retaining the valuable resources that we currently have.

Submitted by Theresa Snyder, Caseworker

PREVENTIVE SERVICES

Preventive Services Caseworkers work with families who have been identified as needing Child Welfare services to prevent children from being placed outside the home. They are also responsible for helping families to transition children back into their homes when they are returned from a foster care or kinship care placement. Eleven Caseworkers work with these types of families to establish a professional helping relationship. In 2007, this unit worked with an average of 95 families involving an average of 181 children per month.

Preventive Caseworkers also handle Foster Care cases. Please refer to the Foster Care annual report for further information on Foster Care services provided by this unit. Two Parent Aides, a Casework Assistant and four clerical staff assist these workers. Please refer to a separate report regarding the work that the Parent Aides contribute. The clerical staff assists the entire Children and Family Services staff.

The Casework Assistant performs many invaluable assignments for Madison County families. He supervises visitation between parents and their children, provides transportation, acts as a second person on home visits, etc.

One example of how preventive services benefit Madison County is the case of a family with two boys, ages 12 and 4 years old. The presenting concerns were inadequate food, clothing, and shelter for the children in an extremely unsafe physical environment. The mother and father admitted to the conditions. The mother was able to take the children to a safe place. During our supervision she completed a parenting class, mental

health treatment, and maintained clean and stable housing. She and the father separated and he left the state.

Liberty Resources continued to provide contracted preventive services to Madison County families in 2007. We continued to use our in-house counseling service for many mental health or relationship issues.

Partners in Prevention (PIP), a school-based preventive service, continues under contract with Liberty Resources and is jointly funded by this agency and other community programs. The Partners in Prevention program works with elementary children in the Cazenovia, Chittenango, Hamilton, and Oneida School Districts, and with the middle school and high school-aged youth in Oneida. The children served through the PIP program are experiencing difficulty at school with academics, attendance, or behavior. The intent is for the child and family to address the non-academic barriers to school success that, left unaddressed, could lead to involvement with other more intrusive systems, such as probation or social services. Ultimately, the goal is for the child to succeed academically, as school success is a protective factor in preventing at-risk behaviors.

The Family Reunification and Placement Diversion programs are contracted preventive services through Liberty Resources, Inc. Five Social Workers and one supervisor staff these programs.

Family Reunification served 12 children and their families in 2007. This program is designed to shorten children's time in higher-level placements and to smooth the transition back home. The total number of care days saved with this program in 2007

was 473. This figure was computed by counting the number of days from when a child came home from residential treatment to the end date of his/her order.

The goal of the Placement Diversion program is to prevent children from being placed into residential treatment centers or foster care due to a PINS petition. This program served 53 children and their families throughout the year. Liberty Resources counts each day of treatment as a prevented care day for a total of 7,243 days in 2007.

Submitted by Linda Khan, Case Supervisor Grade B

PINS DIVERSION PROGRAM

Madison County Department of Social Services provided our first full year of PINS diversion services in 2007. A Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) is a youth less then 18 years of age who does not attend school; is incorrigible, ungovernable or disobedient; or is alleged to be in possession of marijuana. A school district or a parent may file a PINS petition on a youth in Family Court, but prior to a PINS petition's being filed, the petitioner must prove that he/she has exhausted all services and resources to divert the PINS petition.

PINS Diversion is a voluntary program, but a necessary step prior to court involvement. It incorporates intensive and preventive services on a short-term basis. The goal of the PINS Diversion Program is to provide an immediate, efficient, and accurate assessment of a child and family's needs in an effort to prevent judicial intervention. Once the Department receives a PINS Diversion referral, the family is contacted immediately and requested to meet in person to discuss crisis intervention options and services available to meet the family and youth's needs. The PINS Diversion worker will meet with the children and the families regularly to assess the situations, gather information from all involved services providers, and make recommendations for further services and plans of action. Once it can be established that all diversion services have been exhausted and the behaviors in question have not improved, a parent or school may then attempt to file a PINS petition with the assistance of the PINS Diversion workers and the DSS Legal unit.

In 2007, there was an intake of 172 PINS Diversion referrals. The schools made 53 of these referrals and 119 came from parents. The average age of the youth referred to PINS Diversion was 14 years old. There were only 14 of these referrals that resulted in a PINS petition's being filed in Madison County Family Court with only two children being placed out of their home.

Initially, a Case Supervisor Grade B supervised the PINS Diversion Program with two Caseworkers doing the PINS Diversion case management. In September 2007, there was unit restructuring and a Senior Caseworker took over the supervision of the PINS Diversion Program with one Caseworker doing the PINS Diversion case management.

A big focus for PINS Diversion is partnership. There is a teamwork approach to servicing youths that encompasses a wide variety of services. The PINS Diversion workers work collaboratively with the schools, probation departments, and mental health providers, just to name a few. More specifically, Liberty Resources Placement Diversion Program, Madison County Mental Health Department and the Madison County Department of Social Services Social Worker are services very frequently referred to and used by the PINS Diversion case managers. The PINS Diversion Program Supervisor is also regularly in the schools meeting with administration, faculty, and students. Some of the diversion work is being done right in the classrooms.

One example of a youth who has benefited from PINS Diversion would be reflected in a PINS Diversion referral that came from a parent on his 11-year-old son who was acting out in the community resulting in law enforcement involvement. This youth was also being disobedient in the home. The parent was very concerned and discussed that his son had lost his mother to cancer in the last couple of years and then his

grandmother right after that. It was identified that this is when this youth's behaviors began to become out of control. The PINS Diversion case manager made a referral to the Madison County DSS Social Worker who subsequently opened the case for ongoing family therapy in the home. This youth is now learning to deal with his grief in more constructive ways both in and out of the home with a significant improvement in his behaviors. It is beneficial to this child and his family for him to remain in the home and in his community while learning to deal with his issues through home-based family therapy. The PINS Diversion Program has facilitated services for this family to address their needs and prevent a PINS petition from being filed, all with the success of diverting court involvement.

Submitted by Jesica Prievo, Senior Caseworker

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

The Madison County Child Protective Services (CPS) unit is responsible for investigating allegations of child abuse and maltreatment. The New York State Central Registry maintains a hotline from which CPS reports are generated and assigned to the county where the subject child resides. Often, multiple counties are involved in the same investigation. During 2007, the Madison CPS unit consisted of ten CPS investigators, one Senior Caseworker and one Case Supervisor Grade B.

Anyone concerned for the wellbeing of a person under the age of 18 may call the New York State Central Registry. If a report is accepted by the registry, it is transmitted via the Connections computer system to the county in which the child resides. Caseworkers must call the source of the report and interview all children and subjects listed. Most interviews with children are conducted in the school setting. This allows the children a neutral environment in which to speak freely.

The major role of CPS is to assess the safety of children. CPS Caseworkers must make an initial assessment of safety with in 24 hours. Continuous safety assessments are conducted both informally and in written form throughout the investigation. During the 60 days allotted for an investigation, additional information is often gathered through discussion with other agencies and the reviewing of any applicable records. The home environment of the children is also observed during each investigation.

All new Children and Family Services Caseworkers must attend 22 days of New York State mandated and administered training. Additionally, any Caseworker with Child Protective duties must attend an additional 10 days of Child Protective response training. All Madison County Children and Family Services Caseworkers attend this

training, as all are occasionally on call. All Caseworkers performing Child Protective duties are now required to attend six hours of state-approved training per year.

The same laws that mandate certain professionals to report possible child abuse and neglect also mandate that each county be able to respond to calls from the New York State Central Registry 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. On-call Caseworkers respond to any after-hours issues of child abuse and neglect. All Children and Family Services Caseworkers are responsible for on-call coverage three or four weeks per year. On-call Caseworkers respond to after-hours reports, often making the necessary initial assessments of safety. A total of 281 CPS reports were received by on-call workers during 2007. This is an increase of 37 reports from 2006.

Previously, Social Service Law required social services workers and other mandated reporters to report or cause a report to be made to the State Central Registry when they had reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them in their professional capacity was being abused or maltreated. In 2007, amendments to the above law were made. Social Services workers are now required to make a report not only when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or maltreated, but also when, in their professional capacity, a person states to them that a child may be abused or maltreated. Additionally, mandated reporters must be allowed to make a report of suspected abuse or neglect without prior approval from an administrator. They then must inform their administrator that a report was made. For example, many day care centers had policies in place requiring that a mandated reporter tell his or her supervisor of suspected abuse or neglect of a child. The administrator would then either make a report or direct one to be made, if he or she felt it necessary. This new legislation eliminates a need for such protocol.

The new legislation may have caused an increase in the receipt of Child Protective reports. In 2007, Madison County Child Protective Caseworkers investigated an all-time high of 1,228 reports of suspected abuse and neglect.

Of the 1,228 Child Protective reports received during 2007, 154 reports were investigated jointly with law enforcement by members of the Madison County Multidisciplinary Team. This team is comprised of specially trained members of Child Protective, law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office, legal, and mental health service providers. Specialized training is funded through grants as opposed to local budget money. The team meets monthly to discuss specific cases, overall techniques, and best practices. Cases designated as Multidisciplinary Team cases are those involving allegations of sexual abuse or severe physical injury to a child. Using a multidisciplinary approach assures that the most skilled professionals in each discipline work closely together to lessen the trauma to a child.

Child Protective Caseworkers consistently collaborate with other professionals to assess and maintain the safety of a child. Community agencies, such as Madison County Office of Housing and Urban Development, work with CPS Caseworkers to obtain housing when necessary to prevent children from being placed out of their homes. When an investigator encounters a family who may be in need of ongoing assistance, many referrals can be made to community agencies. The collaboration between these agencies and Madison County Child Protective helps assure the ongoing safety of the children of Madison County.

Submitted by Catherine Fowler, Case Supervisor Grade B

Monthly Child Protective Reports Sorted by Township

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	**Total**
Brookfield	3	4	5	4	3	2	0	1	2	4	1	8	**37**
Cazenovia	2	4	5	0	5	1	2	3	2	4	2	1	**31**
DeRuyter	2	1	3	0	2	1	0	3	0	2	1	0	**15**
Eaton	4	2	10	2	6	9	9	6	4	7	13	2	**74**
Fenner	2	2	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	**13**
Georgetown	1	0	1	4	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	**12**
Hamilton	5	11	4	7	11	16	0	2	2	4	4	3	**69**
Lebanon	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	**8**
Lenox	18	6	8	21	20	10	12	15	25	19	13	7	**174**
Lincoln	1	0	1	1	4	3	1	3	1	2	2	0	**19**
Madison	0	2	3	1	7	3	1	4	3	4	5	1	**34**
Nelson	1	4	3	2	2	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	**16**
Oneida	31	16	17	26	29	22	10	21	18	28	19	30	**267**
Smithfield	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	**5**
Stockbridge	0	3	2	2	5	1	1	2	4	6	2	2	**30**
Sullivan	23	15	22	20	17	18	10	11	24	21	17	17	**215**
Other Reports	22	21	22	13	16	9	14	17	22	21	17	15	**209**
Total	**118**	**91**	**109**	**104**	**132**	**99**	**63**	**88**	**109**	**125**	**103**	**87**	**1228**

CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL WORKER

The Children's Services Social Work Program continues to collaborate with the Madison County Adolescent Program for Sexual Behavior Problems (MCAP-SBP). This program works with children and adolescents in our community who have engaged in sexually inappropriate behaviors. MCAP is a comprehensive program that addresses all areas of functioning in order to foster healthy development and help youths address their acting out behaviors by providing sexual assessment, individual treatment, group therapy, and family and home-based treatment. The Children's Services Social Work Program has provided intensive home-based services to families that are involved with MCAP-SBP.

In the past year, the Children's Services Social Work Program has had the honor of working with numerous families, and all have stood out in their efforts to reach their desired goals.

In the year 2007, the Children's Services Social Work Program engaged six youth and their families (including siblings). Four of the six have remained at home while the last two youth returned home to their parents from foster care placements.

The cost savings of the Children's Services Social Work Program for the year 2007 was approximately $192,194.00.

Submitted by Debbie O'Connor, Child Welfare Social Worker

PARENT AIDES

During the year 2007, approximately 130 families received Parent Aide services in Madison County. This included providing in-home services to families, supervising visits between parents and their children, and teaching the Parenting Skills class four times a year. Madison County Department of Social Services currently has two Parent Aides, who work with parents on a variety of tasks, such as learning appropriate methods of discipline, helping to find appropriate housing, transporting family members to necessary appointments, and how to talk to school personnel and medical providers about their children. The Parent Aides complete these tasks while meeting with parents in the parents' homes. During these visits, they discuss everyday life situations and work on a variety of training materials. Visits are meant to be supportive and non-threatening instead of an authoritative figure simply telling parents what needs to be completed.

In 2007, the Parent Aides received 22 new referrals to work with families, with each Parent Aide working with 13 or 14 different families at a time. They conducted a total of 551 announced home visits with the families in Madison County who had been referred for in-home services. They also supervised 88 visits between children and their parents when supervised visits were required to keep children safe.

In 2007, the Parents Aides continued to teach a "Parenting Skills" class for parents who had been referred by Family Court or by a Caseworker. This program allows the Parent Aides to work with a more "hands-on" approach with the parents. The Parent Aides also taught a school age class and an early childhood class twice a year for eight weeks each session. A total of 77 parents were invited to participate in these classes, with a total of 35 parents attending the classes. Twelve parents received

certificates of completion, while another 12 received attendance certificates. The other 11 parents did not complete the program.

During 2007, the Parent Aides set up a food cupboard to be used by families in need on an emergency basis. The food cupboard helped approximately 20 families who were out of food.

The Parent Aides continued to coordinate with community agencies, including Frontier Communications, Gallinger Real Estate of Canastota, Madison County Mental Health, and the Care Net Pregnancy Center, to provide school supplies for 82 children and Christmas gifts for 109 children in Madison County. Without the Parent Aides' organizing the process, the less fortunate children in Madison County would not receive these little extras that make life a little better.

The Parent Aides continued to work closely with Caseworkers on Preventive Services and Foster Care cases. They have also accompanied Child Protective Caseworkers to meet with families and explain the benefits of Parent Aide services. One such family agreed to open a voluntary Preventive Services case with Parent Aide services. The Parent Aide provided parenting skills and ongoing support for this family. After receiving these services for eight months, the family's case was closed with much of the credit going to the services and support that the Parent Aide provided. The family received the help they needed before court intervention was necessary.

The information, support, and skills provided by the Parent Aides to Madison County families have led to many success stories.

Submitted by Karen Bright, Case Supervisor Grade B

TRANSPORTATION AIDES

The Children and Family Services Transportation unit last year employed two Transportation Aides – one fulltime position and one part-time position. These two Transportation Aides provided 985 transports in 2007, transporting foster care children and their families to appointments for visitation with family members, counseling or other various destinations. The Transportation Aides traveled a total of 39,230 miles in 2007 for a total cost savings of $21,957.00.

These Transportation Aides are, at times, faced with some difficult situations. One such situation occurred involving a four-year-old child being transported from an appointment for visitation with a parent – the child vomited four times in the back seat of the Transportation Aide's vehicle. The Transportation Aide handled the situation very calmly and professionally by providing comfort and reassurance to that child and trying to make the best of a very difficult situation.

Submitted by Dawn Hewitt, Principal Account Clerk

SCHOOL SERVICES PROGRAM

The School Services Program is a single point of contact for county schools needing assistance accessing or coordinating services for children and their families facing difficulties in and out of school. The School Services Program Coordinator acts as a liaison among the school, family, and service agencies. Referrals may be made to the program by all school staff, community agencies, all Madison County departments, and self-referrals from families. The only requirement is that the child needing assistance must reside within Madison County's borders.

The objective is to provide those involved with youth with a better opportunity to gain assistance in identifying available service options. By combining school supports with additional services directed at the home, a better chance exists of addressing the comprehensive needs of the child and family. The School Services Program works to prevent neglect, abuse, and teenaged delinquent behavior.

In the year 2007, this program received 105 referrals. The following is a breakdown of the referral sources:

4 - Superintendents
8 - Principals
11 - School social workers
21 - Guidance counselors
1 - Nurses
23 - Madison County Departments
PH, DSS, MH, or Probation
1- Public Assistance/ OTG

5 - Liberty Resources PIP counselors
3- BOCES Alternative Middle School
4 - BOCES Alternative High School
3 - BOCES Pre-K
9 - Family/child self-referral
11 - Other services
1- Committee on Special Ed.

The referrals reflected a variety of needs. Each referral usually consisted of several identified areas of need. The following is a breakdown of the number of times services were requested for certain areas of need:

17- Individual/group counseling
2- Psychiatric services
11- Health/medical/medication
8- Education: academic
10- Education: social
2- Legal issues
8- Parenting skills/support
4- Food
4- Shelter
13- Financial/employment
12- PINS/JD type behaviors
7- PINS Diversion Services
1- Summer youth activities
5- Mentoring services
7- Attendance issues/truancy
10- Homeless family/teenager
12- Physical safety
2- Teenage parent
12- Assistance accessing services

The 105 referrals broken down into the following age groups:

(Ages 0 - 5) - 9
(Ages 6 - 9) - 26
(Ages 10 - 13) - 20
(Ages 14 - 16) - 36
(Ages 17 - 18) - 14

Home visits and school-based contacts were made in order to develop a plan to address goals identified by the family and/or school. Once goals were identified, referrals could be made to public and private service agencies. The coordinator was able to support families and service providers at an early point to prevent escalating difficulties or conflicts in the classroom and home. For example, one mother came to me for assistance working with the school in order to get her son into a proper classroom setting for his autism. The school did not have all of the proper documentation regarding the boy's developmental delay and his diagnosis of autism. As a result, they were not able to accommodate the child in the setting the mother was requesting. I assisted the mother by obtaining the medical reports from the child's most recent exams and tests done by a specialist outside of the school. I was a liaison between the school and the mother regarding issues such as the needed documentation and the upcoming school meeting regarding her son. After all lines of communication were open and the school

had what they needed to prove the child was autistic, they were then able to place him a special classroom to accommodate his many needs.

Community Action Program Intensive Mentoring Program 2007

The goal of the Community Action Mentoring Program is to link Madison County youth, ages 8 to 16, with an adult member of the community. With support from the mentoring program, the mentor and mentee work together to enhance the youth's social, personal, and educational growth. In 2007, there were eight intensive mentors, each with the maximum capacity caseload of four children. The children must be TANF eligible (200 percent federal poverty level) and/or have an open services case. Ten individual mentors were screened or on the payroll at separate times throughout the year. In 2007, 15 mentor/mentee matches were made. By the end of December 31, 2007, there were 20 active matches. The Mentoring Program enhances the Volunteer Mentoring Program, which had 18 volunteers by the end of December 31, 2007, and had 18 active mentor/mentee matches.

In 2007, the outcomes that were to be met as goals for the program appear to have been successful – none of the mentees became pregnant, there was no increased court or probation involvement, and there has been satisfactory school attendance and school achievement. The children enjoyed activities such as fishing, canoeing, hiking, pie baking, eating new foods, and fixing brakes on a car. One mentor and mentee went to the library and checked out books on Native Americans, learned about Native American background, made a scrap book, and went to a Native American museum. There were trips to zoos and museums, homework projects, and walks in the park. The youth overall seem to be more social, less withdrawn, and more connected to the community.

Life Skills Coaching – Dr. P. Scott Petosa 2007

This program focused on providing services to Madison County youth and their families who were "at risk" for a placement in non-secure or secure detention. The program has been designed to serve both male and female youth from 10-to-17 years of age. The program is designed to help youth who mirror the profile presently placed through the courts on Juvenile Delinquency (JD) and Persons In Need of Supervision (PINS) petitions. The youth may be at risk of having a PINS petition filed against him/her or may be facing JD charges or probation. The youth may be experiencing school truancy, disruptive or incorrigible behavior, running away, aggression, vandalism, and substance or alcohol abuse. The youth may also be experiencing strained or stressed family relationships, a chaotic home environment, or poor peer relationships.

The goals for families and youth involved in this program are to decrease the rate of delinquent or disruptive behaviors, increase educational success, and increase positive family interaction. This program seeks to build upon the youth's strengths. The candidates for this program will have strengths such as a desire to form healthy relationships, possessing a need to have a positive adult role model in their lives, and the potential to succeed academically with the appropriate support and guidance. This program is voluntary for families and youth and requires a level of commitment to the treatment program.

Dr. Petosa met with individuals at the local YMCA in Oneida. During sessions, he taught anger management, problem solving, and communication skills while incorporating various physical fitness and sporting techniques. Dr. Petosa also discussed

positive parenting skills with parents and the importance of a positive adult role model in a child's life.

In 2007, 15 youth were actively enrolled in the life skills program and five were closed by December 31, 2007. In addition to meeting with the children weekly at the YMCA, Dr. Petosa followed up on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, by telephone or home visits, to see how the children were doing at home and in school.

One example was an incredibly shy boy who had periodic episodes of relatively violent behaviors towards classmates and his parents. He related that he was often teased and bullied at school. The boy is also extremely intelligent and retains information remarkably well. They discussed relationship building and anger management strategies through the avenue of learning to play racquetball. He learned and applied strategies to improve his relationships and quickly realized that his perceptions about others and their behaviors allowed him to successfully curb his negative anger response behaviors. His parents have related that these positive response patterns have generalized to home as well.

The boy is very slight and has poor eye-hand coordination. He has had limited success participating in sport activities. By breaking the racquetball skills down and learning them in a progressive fashion, he has become a competent player. His ability to play racquetball successfully has boosted his confidence significantly and he has developed a deep trust and rapport with Dr. Petosa. The boy requested and received an entire racquetball outfit for Christmas. He also enjoys playing with his birth father – very special time of bonding between the two.

Dr. Petosa continually asked him about peers teasing him at school, and his response was always the same. He states that he perceives things differently now, that he understands that the peers just want attention and he does not give it to them. When he does not get upset at their teasing, they eventually stop. Time will tell if he can maintain this positive coping strategy, but to date, this academic year he has had zero behavioral referrals and earned a 94-plus grade point average.

Submitted by Tayah Beebe, School Services Program Coordinator

TEENAGE SERVICES ACT (TASA) PROGRAM

The Teenage Services Act (TASA) program is provided to any young person under the age of 20 years (at the time of intake) who is the recipient of public assistance or Medicaid and who is either pregnant, parenting, or at risk of pregnancy or parenting. Services are provided on a voluntary basis until the individual no longer wishes to participate or until he or she reaches 21 years of age. TASA provides case management services to help young people make appropriate use of their financial resources, reside in a healthy and safe environment, obtain appropriate health care, achieve education success, secure and maintain employment, and improve their overall life skills. In Madison County, TASA services are provided through a contract between Madison County Department of Social Services and Liberty Resources, Inc. TASA case management services are funded by Medicaid funds.

In 2007, TASA case management services worked with a total of 124 families from a variety of townships. There is a table on the following page to indicate which townships families who worked with this program resided in.

Some of the achievements by participants for this past year are: 78 percent (52 of 66) of the participants were eligible for employment secured either a full or part-time job; 85 percent (33 of 39) of the participants eligible met their goal of enrolling or returning to school; 87 percent (47 of 54) of TASA recipients who were already enrolled in school maintained school/educational program participation; 91 percent (64 of 70) of TASA recipients demonstrated increased knowledge and skills related to independent living; and 98 percent (78 of 79) of TASA participants did not become pregnant while receiving TASA services.

Breakdown of TASA Services Provided by Townships
2007

Township	Number Served
Brookfield	2
Cazenovia	3
DeRuyter	1
Earlville	0
Eaton	3
Georgetown	0
Hamilton	3
Lebanon	0
Lenox	36
Lincoln	0
Madison	7
Nelson	1
Oneida	45
Smithfield	3
Stockbridge	7
Sullivan	13

Submitted by Melissa Maine, Deputy Commissioner for Family Services

LEGAL

The Legal unit continued to be extremely busy during 2007, providing legal counsel as necessary to all units within the agency. The major caseload of the Legal unit is divided between the Children and Family Services and Support Collection units. The Paralegal of more than 21 years retired in June 2007, resulting in the hiring of a new Paralegal. Our current staff continues to consist of two Attorneys, one Paralegal and one Office Assistant II.

Children and Family Services

The Legal unit currently has approximately 110 active cases in Family Court that include child abuse and/or neglect proceedings, juvenile delinquent supervision and placement, PINS supervision and placement, and termination of parental rights proceedings. To that end, in 2007, we opened approximately 57 new cases, filed over 104 new petitions, and prepared approximately 238 court orders.

This unit has continued to actively work with Children and Family Services to ensure that the Department of Social Services is in compliance with all laws and regulations. We also work to assist the Caseworkers with questions and concerns regarding investigations of neglect and abuse and to ensure enforcement and compliance with all current Family Court Orders.

The two Attorneys meet regularly with Children and Family Services supervisors and Caseworkers on individual cases and for trial preparation. We prepared for over 27 trials in 2007. Legislation enacted in December 2005 requires that permanency hearings be held every six months for children residing in foster care. The Legal unit prepared for

and conducted 74 permanency hearings in 2007. In total, this unit made approximately 349 court appearances on a myriad of issues addressing the health and welfare of Madison County children.

In addition to the cases that are filed in Family Court, there are those cases that are reported as child neglect. These cases are investigated by Child Protective Services and a determination is made as to whether the allegations in the report should be indicated or unfounded. In other words, is there some credible evidence to support the allegations? The Legal unit often meets with the investigator to aid in making that determination. When a report is indicated and closed, there is often a request by the parent for a fair hearing seeking a determination from the State Office of Children and Family Services that the determination made by our local agency was correct. The Legal unit handled approximately 38 fair hearings during 2007.

Support Collection

The other major caseload for the Legal unit is in the area of establishing and enforcing support orders, establishing paternity when a child is in receipt of Medicaid or temporary assistance, seeking reimbursement for confinement expenditures related to the birth of a child in receipt of Medicaid, and establishing child support orders when a child is in receipt of temporary assistance or is placed in foster care. In 2007, the Department's Attorneys and Paralegal combined made approximately 975 court appearances on matters of support establishment and enforcement, paternity, and establishing medical support orders. This number includes approximately 420 initial appearances, 100 fact-finding hearings, and 17 referrals to the Family Court Judges on support cases where the

Department of Social Services was the recipient of the support. We also conducted 345 initial appearances, 110 fact-finding hearings and 36 referrals to the Family Court Judges in private support cases. Additionally, this office prepared and submitted approximately 418 orders to the Court. All cases required preparation by the Legal staff for each court appearance, whether on behalf of the Department of Social Services or for private support collection cases. Between July 2007 and December 2007, due to the retirement of the office Paralegal, the Support Investigators filled in for the Paralegal and attended all court appearances.

The legal issues presented to this unit regarding support matters include not only establishment and enforcement of orders, but also violations of support orders; referrals to the Family Court Judges on those violations; requests for warrants and incarceration, when necessary; and registration and enforcement of foreign (other states) support orders.

CCRS Legal Tracking

The Office Assistant II in the Legal unit is responsible for tracking all Madison County foster children and reporting the information to the state and federal governments. Accurate and timely entries are required to ensure that the Department of Social Services receives all state and federal reimbursements to which it is entitled. In 2007, there were 809 transactions entered in the CCRS system.

Other Areas

The Legal unit provides legal counsel for all other units within the agency as necessary. These areas include, but are not limited to, Adult Services, Medicaid,

Temporary Assistance, estate matters, bankruptcy, property liens, and foreclosures. Each day there are new legal issues presented to us for analysis and assistance. The Legal unit looks forward to achieving many new successes in the coming year and feels well equipped with the current staff to achieve these goals.

Submitted by Julie Jones, Supervising Social Services Attorney

MADISON COUNTY SHERIFF'S INVESTIGATIVE UNIT

The Madison County Sheriff's Office Investigative unit consists of two part-time Investigators that do background investigations and pistol permit investigations, three fulltime Investigators, one fulltime Sergeant and one fulltime Lieutenant. The Lieutenant also oversees the Transport unit, Court Security and Civil Department.

The unit is housed in the Department of Social Services Building and has the responsibility for the safety and security of the staff and clients in the building. Each day, an Investigator is assigned to "desk duty" during business hours and after business hours as requested by staff. Currently, we provide after-hours security for HEAP and parenting classes when they are in session. While on "desk duty," the Investigator is responsible for the security of the building, as well as answering phones and assisting the Social Services staff and clients with any issues that may arise.

The Investigative unit investigates major crimes, such as rape, arson, robbery, burglary, narcotics and homicide. The unit does internal investigations as directed by the Sheriff. We assist other local, state and federal agencies such as the Child Protective Services, Adult Protective unit and the Madison County District Attorney's Office.

The Investigative unit performs several other functions at the Social Services building as well. This includes investigating fraud complaints, completing validations (front-end detection) and assisting the Child Protective and Adult Protective units. In mid-2006, we began using revised methods for case tracking and cost savings – this was a state recommendation after an audit in 2005. As a result, we have more accurate case tracking and savings calculations for 2007.

The validation process consists of an Investigator reviewing a client's application for services and verifying that the information is correct. This is done by doing a home visit or using other techniques to verify the information. The validation process helps eliminate fraud, as well as create a savings if a case is denied. The Investigative unit completed 302 validations in 2007. This is up from 282 in 2006. In 2007, $145,661 was saved from being paid out as a result of validation denials. This is up from $105,042.00 in 2006.

Another area of savings is prison matches. If a client is found to be in jail, prison, or has an active warrant, his/her assistance case is closed. This is done primarily with computer checks. This resulted in a savings of $190,283.00 in 2007, a decrease from $257,091.00 in 2006.

The Investigative unit completed 112 fraud complaints in 2007, an increase from 103 in 2006. The fraud investigations were received through tips from the public, case screening, and leads developed in criminal investigations. As a result, eight persons were arrested on various criminal charges and the remaining cases were closed as unfounded or the clients signed repayment agreements. Fraud arrests and repayment agreements resulted in a savings of $32,452.

A Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) was formed in 2003 to investigate child abuse/sexual assaults. The purpose of the MDT is to minimize trauma to the victim and strengthen the prosecution of the defendant. The MDT cases are top priority for the Investigative unit and all of our Investigators continue to receive specialized training in this area. This unit of the Sheriff's Office is only one piece of the MDT. Other team members consist of law enforcement (other local and state agencies) Mental Health,

medical, District Attorney's Office, and Child Protective Services. The team meets once a month at the DSS building to review cases and share ideas on cases, training, etc.

Being located in the Social Services building has proven to be a great asset when investigating MDT cases. We have child friendly interview rooms, as well as areas to conduct multiple interviews at once. Our unit investigated 29 MDT cases in 2007 resulting in seven arrests on various charges. We investigated 29 MDT cases in 2006.

The Sheriff's Office transport team consists of four fulltime Corrections Officers that are assigned to juvenile transports, as well as adult transports. The transport team is currently operating with three Corrections Officers due to a vacancy that was created when one officer transferred to the Unified Court System. Interviews were conducted and a new Transport Officer has been selected. The new officer will be assigned to transports when vacancies in the jail are filled.

One officer is designated as the transport coordinator and is responsible for scheduling transports, scheduling officers, completing necessary paperwork and assisting with the transports. The transport coordinator is based at DSS and helps cover "desk duty" when not doing transports. This strategy was put into place to put an additional Investigator in the field. The transport team works flex hours to cover the transports when needed. The transport unit did 67 juvenile transports in 2007, which is down from 109 in 2006. This decrease is partially due to changes enacted in the PINS law. The transport team also transports county jail inmates to state prison, county court, local courts and medical and dental appointments. The transport team did 982 adult transports in 2007, which is up from 944 in 2006.

The Investigations unit received new offices and interview rooms in the DSS building in late 2007. Previously, the Investigators were located in a small office, sharing desks, computers and phones. The new office provides space for each Investigator to have his/her own desk and the addition of phone lines enables each Investigator to have his/her own phone and voicemail. The new interview rooms allow for multiple interviews to be conducted at the same time.

The Investigators continue to receive training in areas related to fraud, MDT and criminal investigations. In 2007, a third Investigator was trained in the use of the Computer Voice Stress Analyzer, also known as a CVSA. The six-day course is taught by instructors from the National Institute of Truth Verification and normally carries a cost of $1,500.00 per student. We were fortunate enough to sponsor this training in 2006 and 2007, which allowed us to train three Investigators at no cost. The CVSA has proven to be a useful tool in MDT, fraud, and criminal investigations.

The rules and regulations governing public assistance continue to change on what seems to be a monthly basis. Keeping up with the changes is a difficult task but the Investigations unit will continue to train and develop techniques to keep up with an ever-changing system.

Submitted by Lieutenant William Wilcox, Madison County Sheriff's Office