

UP-CLOSE

A Look At Children Services

Volume 18 JUNE 2011

“Things Look Very Good Here . . .”

How do you spell relief? One way certainly is hearing positive comments from the leader of the 2011 Head Start Triennial Federal Review team in the final meeting before the team departed from Chicago. The team of reviewers lead by Betty Ann Larkin visited Chicago from April 25th through May 5th to evaluate the DFSS Head Start program. The Federal Review has been described as, “A high stakes evaluation of programs where poor performance can have a negative political effect on the reputations of the grantee and the program.”



Betty Ann Larkin



Vanessa Rich

The visit began with an opening session on Monday with reviewers, DFSS staff and some delegate agency representatives. Vanessa Rich, Deputy

Commissioner for

DFSS, Children Services Division welcomed the group to Chicago and provided a brief overview about the city and the program. Her presentation also included cursory information about Chicago to help the out-of-towners understand the city, its personality, demographics and governmental structures. In addition, she presented a view of the organization, integrated systems and operations for the City and DFSS/CSD including some key points about the City’s

Head Start design and operations including, funding levels and program options.

Former Commissioner Mary Ellen Caron, Ph.D. extended a warm welcome to the team on behalf of former Mayor Richard M. Daley. The lively character Choosey (Be Choosey, Be Healthy) delighted the audience by getting them moving with easy stretch-break exercises at the session. Ms. Larkin gave remarks and presented the groundwork for the visit.

The review began Monday afternoon and was intense with between 60-70 reviewers in the city at one time. There were three teams including a CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) team which worked independently. They worked all day and into the evening each day with meetings until approximately 8:00 to 9:00 PM. They went to every single agency as well as, over 300 classrooms for CLASS. The review staff actually received only 25 hours off while they were here during their 10-day stay.

Vanessa Rich, comments, “This certainly wasn’t a cakewalk – they were very, very thorough. When I walked into the room on Saturday and I saw the HR people on the review team going through (page by page) and cross-checking everything in our big thick binders, I knew this was extremely serious. Also, schedules were changed at the last minute and our delegates had to be extremely flexible about the visits and the agencies came through with flying colors.”

The exit interview with the federal reviewers was held on May 5th and the preliminary



feedback was very encouraging, although final determinations are made in Washington, DC. The Reviewers discussed tentative issues in Fiscal, Programmatic and CLASS (education). They were quite complimentary about how pleasant and nice their visits had been and the wonderful cooperation of the DFSS/CSD delegate agencies. One noteworthy comment, **“Chicago’s doing things that could be modeled across the country. . .”**

This was an excellent opportunity for Chicago to successfully showcase how we put our motto into practice!

EVIDENCE BASED + REFLECTIVE PRACTICES = QUALITY

MEET – Commissioner Evelyn Diaz



Evelyn Diaz was appointed by Mayor Rahm Emanuel to lead the city's Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS). Prior to this appointment, Commissioner

Diaz served as CEO of the Chicago Workforce Investment Council (CWIC) where she was charged with ensuring the growth and success of an organization whose mission is to create a skilled and educated workforce to keep Chicago's economy thriving. In 2007, she was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff by former Mayor Richard M. Daley, serving as the Mayor's Office liaison to the city's human capital departments (aging, children and youth, domestic violence, human services, human relations, workforce development, people with disabilities, public health) and oversaw the Mayor's various initiatives related to poverty, jobs, and economic security.

Prior to working in the government sector, Ms. Diaz was Associate Director of the Chicago Jobs Council, an advocacy organization focused on improving policies and programs for low-income Chicagoans. Additionally, she coordinated *Opportunity Chicago*, a \$23 million citywide workforce development initiative involving the Chicago Housing Authority and numerous government and education agencies in a collaborative effort to assist thousands of public housing residents enter and succeed in employment.

She has also worked in Chicago's 46th Ward where she coordinated economic development initiatives and managed the alderman's homeless, childcare, and domestic violence projects.

Comm. Diaz comments, "I have dedicated my entire professional career to helping low-income individuals and families overcome obstacles to achieving economic stability. After college I spent a year teaching English to high school students in rural Costa Rica. Upon my return from Costa Rica, I managed a free health clinic in Elgin, worked as a crisis counselor at a homeless shelter for women and counseled victims of domestic violence in individual and group settings. Those were my years working 'on the frontlines', and I still count those jobs among the most rewarding work I've ever done."

The youngest of three children, the Commissioner was born in Chicago and attended public schools in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. Comm. Diaz received her undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame and a graduate degree from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration. She is married and has a nine year old daughter.

She remarks, "Despite the difficult economic and social circumstances we face, I believe we can turn DFSS into a national model for providing social services to urban residents."



JUNE IDHS/DCFS MILESTONES

- ❑ Submit April and May's supplemental billing by the end of the month
- ❑ Submit summer enrollment report grant to CSD and governance entities (board, pc, supervisors, etc.)
- ❑ Certify transition of children from HS/CC program to SA program
- ❑ Certify completion of 3456 COI's for children changing program models
- ❑ Certify summer only staff and students meet eligibility and qualifying criteria

Keep A Look
Out for
Exciting News
Concerning the
COPA
Website!



JUNE EDUCATION MILESTONES

- ❑ Complete Classroom Observation and provide feedback.
- ❑ Prepare final outcome report.
- ❑ Share outcome report with teaching and management staff.
- ❑ Program Year outcome analysis report due.
- ❑ Classroom inventories completed.
- ❑ Order new materials based on classroom inventories, self-assessment and outcomes.
- ❑ End of the Year Home visits Scheduled and completed.
- ❑ Review/update with teaching staff their individual staff development plans. Set schedule with staff for ongoing review and conversation about progress made.
- ❑ Begin to plan for pre-service training.
- ❑ Transition Activities implemented.
- ❑ Review "Rolling Out the GOLD Assessment/2010-2011" activities and/or training scheduled for the month of June

A Very Special Webinar

Each day during the Federal Review, CSD staff held a webinar at 5:00 PM to debrief and discuss what happened during the day with the visits to delegate agencies. There were many exciting and colorful reports and exchanges about what transpired during the review but one particular story captured everyone's attention. The following was shared by staff from Trinity UCC Inc.

That day the federal reviewer had made a home visit to a Trinity UCC participant and it was the first day the mother of two daughters was taking possession of her new two-bedroom apartment. The visit actually had to be shortened because the family had spent the night at a friend's apartment while waiting for the big move-in day. Everyone in the group was very emotional as the visit concluded and a taxi arrived to take the family to pick up the keys to their new apartment.

Shannon Stevenson, Family Services Coordinator at Trinity UCC describes the first

meeting with the family in the winter of 2009, "When we met the family they were living in the Inner Voice homeless shelter on the south side of Chicago. The mother originally from the Bahamas was recently divorced and without any family in Chicago. At that time, she was unable to work, attend school or support herself and children. We showed up as strangers to Inner Voice to recruit families for the ARRA program, which was then a new federal funding source through Head Start to reach families and children in need of support and resources to become self-sufficient. Upon meeting this particular family, we could see and feel that the mother was a fighter as she cautiously took to our program. The AARA program is filled with hope. Hope is what we instill in our parents and children while applauding them for keeping their families together through these rough and difficult times, to say the least. We teach them and encourage them to advocate for their children while

also becoming their children's first teachers.

Taking this family in, as part of our extended family, was a no brainer. The mother stayed motivated through constant reinforcement that giving up was not an option. Whatever it took – cab fare, public transportation, encouragement, workshops, training sessions, hand-holding, phone calls, it was done because we believed in her and she believed in us. We, as an agency delivered what we promised and she was no slouch when it came to keeping up her end of the bargain which was to SHOW UP and actively take part in the program. She is a shining example of what hard work, perseverance and defeating the odds are all about!"



VR's Corner

Welcome to our corner of the world. Onward and upward now that the Federal Review is over. We no longer have to wait to exhale and can continue moving forward with the many initiatives, projects and plans for the remainder of the year. It's almost incredulous that the year is just about half over.

The Federal Review certainly consumed a lot of our time but I'm hopeful the results will make every minute spent worthwhile. I'm so proud of the delegate agencies and DFSS/CSD staff and consultants. You all did a fantastic job of "rolling with" whatever came your way. Words are inadequate to express the thank you owed to all of you for your long hours, going way beyond the call of duty as well as, support and encouragement during the review process.

Throughout the review, things that were wrong never rose to the level of the grantee because we had a system in place to take care of small things immediately. Anything the reviewers found were handled before the next day – the problem was repaired

and in some cases we already had a plan in place to take care of anticipated problems before the reviewers got there. We have devoted quite a bit of space in this issue to give you information about the review, comments from a variety of CSD and delegate agency staff and a special story shared at one of our webinars.

We all wish Mary Ellen Caron, Ph.D. a wealth of success in her new position as President and CEO of the Hope Institute of Illinois. Founded in 1957, The Hope Institute for Children and Families is a Springfield-based nonprofit center providing educational, residential and health services to children ages 5-21 with multiple developmental disabilities, including Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Dr. Caron was named commissioner of the then new Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) in January of 2009 by Mayor Richard M. Daley. The new department was a consolidation of several of the City's former human service departments and was tasked to work to provide a continuum of support for Chi-

cago's vulnerable residents, beginning at birth through the senior years. Prior to that appointment she served from 2004 until December of 2008 as Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services, now part of FSS, which provided community-based services that promoted the well-being and successful development of Chicago's youngest residents.

We thank her for outstanding leadership, service to the City and again wish her success and happiness in her new position.

In closing, we should have our federal review results within the next three months – we'll certainly keep you posted and up-to-date. The rose is the flower for the month of June – a big bouquet or boutonniere of roses to you my friends.

Managing Editor

People Are Talking About . . .

Here's an array of comments, stories and anecdotes about the recently completed 2011 Chicago Triennial Federal Review from Children Services Division (CSD) staff as well as, delegate agency staff.

"I have been through many reviews, working on both sides as the reviewer and also working with the site being reviewed but I have to say that this was the most intense review I've experienced thus far. Fortunately for me, I had a very experienced and knowledgeable reviewer. Not only did she work me hard at visiting sites, reviewing grantee documents and data, data, data but we took the time to share lots of fond Head Start memories. All in all, my reviewer had a unique ability to press for excellence while remaining humble enough to respect management's normal, everyday work that does not stop during a review."

Bea Nickols

"I have been involved in the Head Start Program for over thirty-five years and have participated in Federal Reviews at all levels for over a period of 36 years. This current review was the most stressful one I have experienced. I contribute the stress to be a direct result of the new compliance requirements on grantees and delegates. Despite this stress as always, the Grantee and Delegates demonstrated their ability to implement quality Head Start Services throughout the Chicago Metropolitan area by communicating the how's, why's, and above all the results."

Wanda Doucet, Chicago Youth Centers

"This was my second federal review, but my first as an administrator. This change in role provided me with an interesting perspective on the review and was helpful in figuring out how to prepare my staff. The reviewers who visited Gads Hill were thorough, but fair and we appreciated their feedback. Although we were slightly disappointed that the reviewers didn't want to view our binders, we came to recognize the value of the binders as an opportunity for serious self-assessment and our programs are much stronger for having completed them. In addition, I am thankful for all of the support that we received from the staff at DFSS. We were prepared for what was going to take place, which enabled us to be confident in our responses and display the best that our programs have to offer."

Bryan Stokes, Gads Hill Center

"My impression of the review this time around was that we spent a lot more time drilling down into the details of how delegate agencies were handling certain issues than we have in the past, and while it was a lot of work, it ended up being worthwhile. By the time they arrived it did seem like everyone was singing from the same hymnal! It was great to see how our staff both at the grantee and delegate levels came together to resolve some of these issues beforehand, and I think going through that process has made us a better program, even if it has given me a few more gray hairs in the process."

Craig Zemke

"I want to acknowledge and thank everyone who worked around the clock and gave a tremendous team effort. Whether the contribution was big or small, it proved that we were all in this together during this "high stakes" Federal Review. You guys rock!"

Madeline Cancel-Hanick

"As the newest delegate agency for DFSS, we were highly motivated to do our very best in preparing for our first ever federal review for several reasons: 1) We believe in the benefits of the Early Head Start program for our parents and children 2) We wanted to ensure that through the success of the review process, our program would be sustained for the special population that we serve 3) We are committed to the partnership we have with DFSS and all the other delegate agencies in supporting Chicago families. Of course, we could not have done it without the support of all our DFSS services coordinators and our own dedicated EHS team. All in all, it was truly a team effort and a unique (and intense!) learning experience. We look forward to continued growth and success moving forward!"

Diane Mariani, Haymarket Center

"In preparation for and during the federal review, there was an exchange of operational learning taking place."

Elaine Millsap-Parker

"It was a high energy, intense and nerve wracking experience; yet, it was rewarding. We got to see our systems in action – from the brand new maternal and child health services to our more seasoned programs showcasing how they provide health services to children. The reviewers saw strengths in what we do and that our systems that are in place recognize weak areas and address them. We know what those areas are."

Paulette Mercurius

As the director, I had the longest interview and since I have been through this before and have sat through the review process, I said to myself 'a piece of cake'. But, as we began I found myself taking deep breaths and drinking lots of water because my mouth was so dry. Ninety minutes later the reviewer said, 'thank you and I think you've answered all of my questions.' That was the fastest ninety minutes of my life."

Louis Falk, Erie Neighborhood House

"Intense, learning process – delegates reflected our system. I feel there is sound vision in our leadership."

Earline Whitfield-Alexander

" 'How you are is as important as what you do' this hit home for me as we were going through the daily calls with the agencies as they were all letting us know how they 'felt' about the work they put into the review and how they 'felt' about it being over."

Loukisha Smart-Pennix

"It's my second Federal Review and they don't get any easier. Each evening during our daily webinar updates you could tell in people's voices how exhausted they were from how hard they were working. Everyone really understands how vital Head Start is to the City and the children and families we serve."

Victor Santiago

Dates to Remember



JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

- JUNE 9** All Roads Lead to Literacy
- JUNE 9** MDNMH Comm. Meetings
- JUNE 10** Disabilities Subcommittee Meeting
- JUNE 10** Family Partnerships in COPA
- JUNE 10** Health Records in COPA
- JUNE 15** State Licensing Requirements
- JUNE 16** Social Services/Parent Involvement Meeting
- JUNE 30** Storytelling: Family Tree

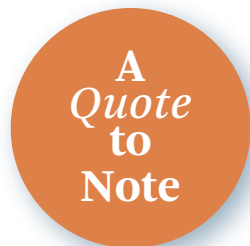
JULY

- JULY 1** Storytelling: Family Tree
- JULY 6** CPPC Executive Committee Meeting
- JULY 13, 14, 15** Nonprofit Boot Camp
- JULY 14, 15** ERSEA Institute
- JULY 21** ECD/HSAC Council Meeting
- JULY 22** Paraprofessional Training

GO TO COPA FOR INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION.

North Lawndale YMCA Receives Awesome Honor

A big round of applause and congratulations are extended to the staff, parents and of course the young participants of the North Lawndale YMCA School-Age Program. The YMCA program received the prestigious “**Best Practice Program Award**” which is an Illinois statewide recognition. The award was presented at the 25th Annual Illinois Afterschool Spring Conference in early May. Some of the proud participants of the program are shown in the following photos.



“Hugs can do great amounts of good – especially for children.”

- DIANA, PRINCESS OF WALES



JUNE

MANAGEMENT MILESTONES

- ❑ **GOVERNANCE:** Recruit former and current Head Start parents to serve on the Board (2QMtg)
- ❑ **GOVERNANCE:** Complete annual Board assessment
- ❑ **GOVERNANCE:** Submit to the Office of CSD the retention policy for Policy Committee members
- ❑ **GOVERNANCE:** Present independent audit findings and corrective action plan to the policy committee and Board
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Present program philosophy, long and short term goals and procedures for program planning to the policy committee and the Board for approval
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Certify proof of current liability insurance status, payment of federal and state taxes and fringe benefits payment and a copy of filed tax form 990 to Board and the Office of CSD (2QMtg)
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Present program planning procedures to staff, Policy Committee and Board for review and update (long and short term goals, agency philosophy, program planning schedule, program plans)
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Complete final revisions to program goals/objectives and submit them to the Office of CSD & governance entities (Board, pc, supervisors, etc.)
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Submit 10 month program PIR reports to the Office of CSD & governance entities (Board, pc, supervisors, etc.)
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Update management plans and submit to the policy committee and the Board for approval and to the Office of CSD
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Certify & justify spending rate if substantially over or under 95% to the Office of CSD & governance entities (Board, pc, supervisors, etc.)
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Certify completed evaluations, including professional development plans on all staff to the Office of CSD & governance entities (Board, pc, supervisors, etc.)
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE:** Submit possible/probable new sites/partners to the Office of CSD & governance entities (Board, pc, supervisors, etc.) for review and approval
- ❑ **MANAGEMENT:** Certify participation in PIR roundtable with the Office of CSD
- ❑ **SAFE ENVIRONMENTS:** Complete playground equipment safety check



JUNE

HEALTH SERVICES MILESTONES

- ❑ **MEDICAL/DENTAL/MENTAL HEALTH:** Update and submit an improvement plan based off third quarter PIR analysis for any area that is under the 100% compliance requirement.
- ❑ **MEDICAL/DENTAL:** Submit HSAC certification for the Program Year to CSD, governing bodies/management
- ❑ **MEDICAL/DENTAL/NUTRITION/MENTAL HEALTH:** Submit revised and updated management and training plans for the Program Year to CSD, governing bodies/management.
- ❑ **MEDICAL/DENTAL:** Replace toothbrushes
- ❑ **MEDICAL/DENTAL:** Ensure all dental exams are completed by the 45th day/schedule treatment/follow-up appointments.
- ❑ **MEDICAL/DENTAL/MENTAL HEALTH/NUTRITION:** Compile, complete, review and update Health Services Resource Information.
- ❑ **NUTRITION:** Document Go Slow Whoa implementation/IMIL and submit monthly reports to CSD.
- ❑ **MEDICAL/DENTAL/MENTAL HEALTH/NUTRITION:** Monitor Health services reports in COPA.



JUNE

SUPPORT SERVICES MILESTONES

- ❑ **FCP/DISABILITIES:** Submit revised and updated management and training plans for 2011 to CSD, governing bodies/management.
- ❑ **FCP:** Complete monthly report of family progress toward goal completion and submit to management
- ❑ **DISABILITIES:** Complete end of the year staffing (in collaboration with teachers) for children with disabilities/special needs for half-day programs.
- ❑ **DISABILITIES:** Complete CPS and CFC referral status report and submit to CSD, governing bodies/management.



USEFUL WEBSITES:

- Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC): www.eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov
- ChildCare Education Institute (CCEI): www.cceionline.com
- National Association for the Education of Young Children: www.naeyc.org
- Tap Training Center at the Hope Institute: www.theautismprogram.org
- Resource Center for Autism and Developmental Delays: www.uic.edu
- National Head Start: www.nhsa.org
- Illinois Head Start: www.ilheadstart.org
- Chicago Center for Early Education (CCEE): www.uic.edu
- Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS): www.state.il.us
- Illinois Action for Children: www.actforchildren.org
- Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRA): www.inccra.org
- Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov

WE'D LIKE TO "FOCUS ON" YOUR CENTER!

Since the first issue of *Up-Close* was published in November 2009, we have included feature stories in the "Focus On" section on the following delegate agencies: Northwestern University Settlement House, Better Boys Foundation, Chicago Commons, Home of Life, Albany Park, Henry Booth House, Centers for New Horizons, The Salvation Army, Gads Hill Center, Erie Neighborhood House, YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, Marcy-Newberry, Howard Area Community Center, El Valor and Onward House. Most agencies reported they have distributed their feature stories to staff, parents, community groups and their boards. Let us know if you'd like to see a story about your agency this year!

Good news, now you don't have to wait for copies of *Up-Close* to be delivered to your center or worry about having enough copies for staff and others. You can subscribe to *Up-Close* on-line. Plus, all of the 2011 previous issues of the newsletter are available for immediate download on the newly revised COPA website.

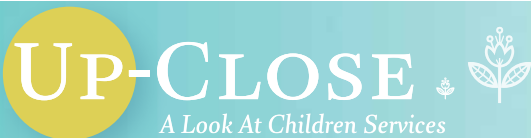
As always, we welcome and encourage your involvement in *Up-Close, A Look At Children Services!*

Please contact us at:

FSSCSD_upclose@cityofchicago.org

Include your name, organization, e-mail address along with your idea, photo or comments and a telephone number where you can be reached during business hours.

You can download this newsletter at COPA, the Children Services website: www.childrenserviceschicago.com



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