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Department of Family Services

## Children, Youth and Families Division

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Fairfax County is home to over 250,000 children. Those under age 20 account for over 25 percent of the county's population. That percentage is projected to remain steady through the year 2025. Children in Fairfax County are more likely to live in poverty than adults. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, since 1980, poverty rates for children have tended to be higher than those for all persons. Fairfax County's children are also more racially and ethnically diverse than the population as whole. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2003 American Community Survey, 38.2 percent of Fairfax County's total population were racial or ethnic minorities while 45.1 percent of those under age 20 were racial or ethnic minorities.

The Children, Youth, and Families Division provides the following services to children and their families:

- Child Protective Services.
- Foster Care and Adoption Services.
- Family Preservation Services, including services to homeless individuals and families.
- Child Abuse Prevention Services.

The goals of these services are to protect children from harm and prevent abuse and neglect; support and enhance parents' and families' capacity to safely care for and nurture their children; and ensure the normal development and long-term emotional and physical health of children by supporting families.

The Children, Youth and Families Division strives to serve children and families in the most effective ways possible by incorporating best practices into daily service delivery, evaluating results, and implementing identified process improvements.

To assure accessibility, flexibility and responsiveness to the community, services are provided to families in each of the county's four regional human services offices (Fairfax, Falls Church, North County and South County), as well as in multiple smaller community-based sites.

The Fairfax region includes the central and western areas of Fairfax County, including the City of Fairfax, Centreville, Burke, and parts of Chantilly. Among the initiatives developed by CYF in this region is the Village Improvement Team for the London Towne area. This team of social workers is working in partnership with the London Towne Elementary School staff to bring human services information and services to families in the neighborhoods served by the school. The social workers attend school events and activities to get to know the families and better understand their needs. A survey has been developed that will be distributed to all families to get their feedback on this outreach effort, the goal of which is to make meaningful connections with families. These connections will help families in need seek support and services before their situations become more serious.

The Falls Church region includes the eastern border of the county, including McLean, Annandale, and the City of Falls Church. A major child welfare issue facing this region is

meeting the needs of a diverse population. A significant effort in the Falls Church region in the past year included expanded programming at the Culmore Family Resource Center, including:

- Spanish literacy classes (in partnership with George Mason University and Tenant and Workers United).
- Computer classes for adults (in partnership with St. Anthony's Catholic Church and the county's Office of Partnerships).
- Healthy Relationships Program (in partnership with the Granato Group).
- Girls Scout Leadership Program (in partnership with Hispanics Against Child Abuse and Neglect).
- A new community children's chorus in partnership with the World Children's Choir.
- The Milagros Group, teaching youth jewelry making and sewing skills.

This work is supported by a renewed partnership group including more than 40 nonprofit, faith and community members who meet monthly to guide the center's efforts..

The North County region includes the northern part of Fairfax County, including Reston, Herndon, Great Falls, and parts of Chantilly. Initiatives in the Reston region last year include:

- Family and Community Connections – The Neighborhood Networks staff in the North County region designed an approach for working with families and their communities that was presented at the Prevention Comes First Conference, sponsored by the Governor's Office for Substance Abuse Prevention. This practice model formalizes the process of bringing together the family and all members of the support network developed through the family's participation in the Neighborhood Networks Program. It allows all the members of the family's community support network to meet each other and talk about how they, along with the family, will work to keep the family stable and the children safe even after DFS involvement ends.
- African-American Young Men's Group – This group was initiated by and is led by African-American male staff from the North County region and the Early Intervention Strategy Team (EIST). The group provides a safe and supportive opportunity for young African-American men attending South Lakes High School to practice decision-making skills with male role models.

The South County region includes the southern portion of the county, including the Route 1 corridor, Fort Belvoir, Springfield, and Lorton. Some initiatives in the South County region last year include:

- Parent Support Groups at Riverside, Woodlawn and Woodley Hills - A four-week parent support curriculum was developed that provides information and guidance to help parents better understand and support the educational system. This curriculum also helps parents navigate the human services system.
- Juvenile Court Evening Reporting Center – The Children, Youth and Families Division has engaged in a partnership with Juvenile Domestic Relations Court to operate a reporting center in the South County region during evening hours for children on probation and their parents. CYF provides a parent and adolescent curriculum designed to enhance overall relationships to include effective communications, conflict resolution, and stress management.

## **ISSUES/TRENDS**

Several overarching issues and trends in our community influence services provided by and initiatives undertaken by the Children, Youth and Families Division.

### **Child Welfare Reform**

Several efforts are underway at the national, state and local levels to enhance child welfare services. Virginia has embarked on a major reform effort to improve the lives of many of its most vulnerable children and families and to make the Commonwealth a leader in the field of children's services. A Council on Reform, or CORE Team, has been created to develop a vision for children's services, evaluate services to children and families, and help inform state policy and practice to implement appropriate reforms. Fairfax County is represented on the CORE Team by the deputy county executive, the director of the Department of Family Services and the director of the DFS Children, Youth and Families Division.

The First Lady of Virginia Anne Holton began the "For Keeps" initiative to hear from youth in foster care and from foster parents to find ways to better meet their needs, to find permanent families and family connections for children who are in foster care or are at risk of entering care, and to champion efforts to improve family and community supports for all children. Through a partnership with the Casey Strategic Consulting Group, a number of recommendations have been made to strengthen children's services in many human services agencies in Virginia. Many of the "For Keeps" recommendations are being incorporated into the CORE Team's work. The Fairfax County Department of Family Services is a key participant in these efforts at the state level.

The Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has begun the second round of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Virginia's review will be in the summer of 2009. As the largest metropolitan area in the state, Fairfax will be one of the localities reviewed, as it was in 2003. To support the continued improvement of services to children and families and to help prepare for the review, the CYF Division implemented internal quality assurance case reviews. These internal reviews use the same instrument the federal government uses and focus on system performance by evaluating our progress toward achieving better outcomes for children.

### **Addressing the Disproportionality of Minority Children in Foster Care**

Nationwide, there is an issue of a disproportionate number of African-American children in the foster care system, and Fairfax County is no exception. While about 10 percent of the children in Fairfax County are African-American, 41 percent of the children in foster care are African-American. Additionally, in recent years a disproportionate number of Hispanic children have entered foster care. While about 17 percent of Fairfax County's children are Hispanic, 24 percent of the children who entered foster care in FY 2007 were Hispanic.

The Community Collaborative, sponsored by Deputy County Executive Verdiana L. Haywood, brings together government and community members with a strong interest in reducing the overrepresentation of African-American children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and improving school readiness and performance. In 2007, the Community

Collaborative sponsored a “Day of Learning” for human services leadership staff. As a group, they viewed the PBS video series, “Race: The Power of an Illusion” and discussed ways they could impact the issue of disproportionality. The Children, Youth and Families Division is continuing this effort and is also holding sessions in 2008 for all division staff to watch and discuss the videos. Ongoing education and changes in practice and policy to address this issue will continue.

A significant focus of the CYF Division is finding permanent families for children in foster care and recruiting foster and adoptive families who reflect the cultural diversity of the children in foster care. The Fairfax Families4Kids initiative enables children waiting for adoptive families to meet prospective adoptive parents and mentors. Since the majority of the Fairfax County children waiting for permanent families are African-American, efforts to engage community members are focused primarily toward the African-American community. Partnerships with community organizations and businesses are an important aspect of this effort. Additionally, 10 foster parents have been trained as ambassadors from the foster care program to make educational presentations in the community about the needs of children in foster care and the need for foster and adoptive parents. The ambassadors often reach out to their personal networks to accomplish this.

Kinship care is a vital component in addressing the issue of the high numbers of African-American children in foster care, because it shares the family-centered philosophy of the African-American culture and provides support to family members who provide primary care for children. In 2007, the Department of Family Services and its partners sponsored two series of support groups for grandparents and other relatives raising children, as well as regular respite Saturdays for caregivers. The department also developed and published a *Kinship Care Resource Guide for Family Caregivers* which can be found online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfsfactsheets/kinship\\_care\\_guide.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfsfactsheets/kinship_care_guide.htm).

In 2007, the Nurturing Parenting Program offered two classes using a new version of its curriculum specifically designed to be culturally appropriate for parents of African-American children. In addition, three groups using the standard curriculum were conducted in Spanish. Neighborhood Networks, a school-based parent networking initiative, involved 30 families, almost half whom were African-American. The Early Intervention Strategy Team (EIST) continued its work to provide community-wide public awareness and education about this issue through a series of dialogue groups with community service providers.

### **Meeting the Needs of a Diverse Population**

Since Fairfax County is so large and diverse, local government agencies face significant service delivery challenges including recruiting social workers and foster/adoptive families who reflect the cultural composition of the population we serve. This is critical, not only because of the language capacity, but also for specific cultural understanding and relationship building. CYF continues to develop strategies for recruiting social workers, as well as foster and adoptive families and volunteers to ensure diverse representation. The Children, Youth and Families Division has a regional community-based model of service delivery which integrates public, private, community-based organizations and faith communities. This approach allows families and children to be served within the context of their own community and culture.

### **Achieving Permanency for Older Children**

Fifty percent of the children in foster care at the end of FY 2007 were over the age of 13. There is a growing need for more services for older youth in foster care.

The department has undertaken several efforts to increase permanency for children. The Fairfax Families4Kids initiative focuses on placing children ages nine and older for adoption. These children awaiting adoption are now featured on the Fairfax County Web site. Fairfax County also participates in a partnership with the Washington Area Council of Governments and the Freddie Mac Foundation called The Heart Gallery, a traveling display of photographic portraits of children from the metropolitan area and elsewhere awaiting adoption. The partnership also produces the weekly television show, "Wednesday's Child," which has featured several Fairfax County children who need adoptive homes.

### **Prevention of Homelessness and Support for Homeless Families**

The lack of affordable housing in Fairfax County remains a serious problem and a significant stressor on low-income families, making it difficult for them to remain stable and meet the needs of their children. There are significant waiting lists for Housing Choice (Section 8) vouchers and public housing, permanent supportive housing and other support services programs.

The Katherine K. Hanley Shelter, opened in summer 2007, has space for 20 families and offers an opportunity to intervene in the cycle of homelessness that many families experience. In addition to overseeing the county's six homeless shelters, the department manages the Partnership for Permanent Housing in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development.

### **Managing an Increasing Workload**

In 2004, the Commonwealth of Virginia expanded Structured Decision-Making (SDM) to 27 pilot agencies including Fairfax County. This model, which is being piloted across the CYF Division, provides a framework for more efficient, consistent, and valid decision-making for child welfare agencies. It uses different criteria at each decision point to address the issues at each stage of a case. The use of this model requires additional social worker time for completing various assessments, conducting additional visits with families, and for additional supervisory review.

In March 2006, the State Board of Social Services policy increased the minimum frequency of face-to-face, in-home visits between social workers and children in foster care from quarterly to monthly. This change is congruent with the direction being taken by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families in the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006. These visits must occur regardless of where the child lives – within Fairfax County, elsewhere in the state, or out of state.

The Virginia Department of Social Services has issued proposed regulations regarding the review of foster and adoptive homes. If the regulations are approved as written, the in-home review of foster and adoptive homes will increase from once every two years to once every six months.

All of the changes indicated above are supported by CYF and local implementation is underway. However, this puts significant pressure on current staff resources.

## **Children, Youth and Families Division**

# **Child Protective Services**

The Child Protective Services (CPS) program is designed to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Child Protective Services social workers assess child and family strengths and needs and provide services and support to families, such as counseling, referral to parenting programs, child care and other supports to enable children to remain safe in their own homes.

## **INITIATIVES/PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

**The Family Intervention, Resource and Engagement (FIRE) Program** – The FIRE Program offers families intensive, short-term crisis intervention and family education services in their home for six to eight weeks. The program goals include preventing out-of-home placement of children, assuring the safety and well-being of children, improving family functioning, collaborating with the family to develop a service plan based on their strengths and competencies, providing culturally competent and community-based services and engaging the extended family and community resources to provide support to the family. Staff is available and accessible to the family 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In 2007, the third year of this program, 63 families received services.

**Childhelp USA Children's Center of Virginia** - The Childhelp USA Children's Center of Virginia, supported by a public-private partnership, provides a child-friendly facility where victims of sexual abuse receive the continuum of services needed to interrupt the abuse and treat its effects. In 2007, its fifth year of operation, the center served 653 children from infants through age 17, and 469 non-abusing parents or guardians with assessments, investigations, intervention and treatment services.

With funding by a grant from the Victims of Crime Act, Childhelp has begun providing individual and group therapeutic services to sexual abuse victims at the center. During FY 2007, CPS social workers and other partners provided individual and group therapeutic services to 536 sexual abuse victims at the center. Additional therapeutic services are available as a result of a partnership between CPS, Childhelp, the Multicultural Clinical Center and Inova Kellar Center for families impacted by sexual abuse.

## **PROGRAM STATISTICS**

### **Child Protective Services Hotline**

Hotline social workers receive reports of alleged abuse or neglect and assess the information. If the situation meets Virginia's definition of abuse or neglect, the complaint is assigned to a CPS

social worker for investigation or assessment. The hotline is also a helpline since many calls are from people seeking information.

<b>TELEPHONE CALLS TO THE CPS HOTLINE/HELPLINE</b>					
<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
30,879	31,749	35,430	31,388	27,790	29,684

### **CPS Investigations and Assessments**

Social workers in CPS are responsible for investigating or assessing allegations of child abuse and neglect and providing short-term services when needed.

<b>CPS COMPLAINTS PER YEAR</b>					
<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
2,302	2,022	2,310	2,071	1,884	2,084

\* Of the 2,084 complaints made to the hotline in FY 2007, 23% (488) were investigations; 74% (1,532) were family assessments; and 3% (64) were courtesy interviews for other child protective service agencies.

### **Ongoing Treatment Services**

CPS ongoing treatment social workers are responsible for providing continuing services in serious situations where the child remains in the home and may be at risk for future abuse or neglect, including court-ordered monitoring. Many of these families are involved with multiple service providers addressing a variety of needs. CPS ongoing treatment social workers collaborate with the family and service providers to develop specific interventions to address the needs and goals of the family and to reduce risk and increase safety for the child.

<b>MONTHLY AVERAGE OF FAMILIES RECEIVING ONGOING TREATMENT SERVICES</b>					
<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
292	225	219	196	154	144

The monthly average number of families receiving ongoing treatment services has dropped by over 50 percent over the past five years. One factor contributing to the decline was a realignment of responsibilities within the Children, Youth and Families Division to improve services and supports for families. The reduction in child abuse neglect complaints reported and ongoing treatment cases also reflects the increasing availability and effectiveness of prevention services available both within the department and in schools and community-based services.

### **Children, Youth and Families Division**

## **Foster Care and Adoption**

Foster care is the provision of substitute care and rehabilitative services for children temporarily separated from their parents. Foster care can be provided until a child is returned to the family or placed in an adoptive home or other permanent living arrangement. Children may be placed in a

variety of settings including foster homes, group homes, hospitals and residential treatment facilities.

Adoption services include counseling to birth parents and preparing for and placing a child into an adoptive home when efforts to reunite the child with his or her birth family are unsuccessful. Support in the form of subsidy payments, therapy and other social services is provided to adoptees and adoptive parents before and after an adoption is finalized.

## INITIATIVES/PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Foster Care

#### Number of Children in Foster Care

The following charts show the number of children entering foster care and the monthly average number of children in foster care over the past six years:

MONTHLY AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE					
FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
496	475	479	447	437	464

NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE					
FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
186	177	202	164	210	209

At the end of FY 2007, African-Americans comprised 41 percent of the county's foster care population. The African-American population in foster care has decreased nine percent since FY 2003.

The fastest growing group of children in foster care is the teen population. Nearly one-third (29 percent) of the children who entered foster care in FY 2007 were age 13-17. The average age of children in foster care at the end of FY 2007 was 11.43.

AVERAGE AGE (in years) OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE AS OF JUNE 30					
FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
11.91	12.18	12.23	12.48	12.18	11.43

Of the 184 children who exited foster care during FY 2007:

- 36 percent were returned home.
- 19 percent were placed in the custody of relatives.
- 19 percent were placed for adoption.

The remaining 26 percent exited for reasons such as turning 21 years old or refusing to remain in foster care after turning 18. The median length of stay for all children in foster care in FY 2007 is 1.42 years, reflecting a steady decline from 2.71 years in FY 2000.

### **Independent Living Services**

In FY 2007, 239 (50 percent) of the children in foster care were age 13 or older. The department continues to enhance placement and independent living resources to serve older children. Older youth in foster care often have severe emotional or behavioral difficulties requiring expensive, long-term residential treatment. Adolescents, especially those who are in care for a number of years, face numerous challenges in becoming self-sufficient adults once they leave the foster care system. Without proper services, these youth are at risk of homelessness, unemployment, incomplete education and untreated illnesses. All youth in foster care between ages 16 and 21 must receive a range of services to help them transition to independent living. The department operates a mentor program for teens and provides mentor foster homes for those older, more responsible youth who need support rather than parenting. Youth are encouraged to remain in foster care past their 18th birthday so they may continue to receive the services necessary to obtain an education, finish treatment programs, and establish a support network. The department received grant funding for the past three years from the state to implement a program, "Choices for Success," customized specifically for teens and young adults who are close to transitioning out of foster care services. The department's foster care and employment/training programs are partnering to deliver intensive services including educational workshops about job readiness skills, career assessments, paid and unpaid work experiences, assistance with finding financial aid, and other supportive services to help these young people achieve their goals for living independently.

### **Foster and Adoptive Home Recruitment and Training**

- **Ongoing Recruitment and Retention Efforts** – Ongoing recruitment and retention of foster/adoptive families is critical. This area remains a challenge, both locally and nationally. Despite significant efforts, the Fairfax County pool of foster parents continues to need expansion.

The department approved 21 families as adoptive families during FY 2007. As of January 1, 2008, the department had 20 children waiting for identification of an adoptive home. The children who wait the longest for adoptive placement tend to be African-American, male and school-aged. They may have educational delays, behavioral or psychiatric problems, a history of sexual abuse and/or medication needs. Recruitment efforts on behalf of children awaiting adoptive placements include presentations at community fairs, town meetings, churches, businesses and social organizations. Partnerships established with faith-based organizations in all regions of the county enable the department to conduct orientations and training in the community and to participate in events hosted by those organizations to raise awareness about adoption.

The racial/ethnic balance of the department's 170 foster homes remained the same during 2007. Caucasian families make up the majority of foster homes (68%). Twenty-two percent of DFS foster homes are African-American, six percent are multi-racial and two percent are Hispanic. The remaining two percent are American Indian and Pacific Islander. The

department works to increase the cultural diversity of foster homes through culturally sensitive recruitment efforts and partnerships with community organizations, businesses and faith communities. The department has developed a strategic recruitment plan that targets certain neighborhoods and media channels for reaching minority foster/adoptive families. As part of this effort, the Foster Care and Adoption Ambassador Program was implemented. Ten foster and adoptive parents are currently trained to speak publicly on behalf of the department to educate residents about the needs of children in foster care. They utilize their personal networks to carry out this community education.

For additional information on Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment, please refer to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childreneyouth/fostercare.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childreneyouth/fostercare.htm) (“Becoming a Foster Parent”).

- Fairfax Initiative to Increase Adoptive Homes for Hard-to-Place Children** – The Fairfax Families4Kids initiative strives to find permanent families and lifelong connections for children in foster care age 9 and over, the majority of whom are male and African-American. The children and youth take part in monthly activities that provide them with an opportunity to interact with other children who need homes and to meet potential adoptive parents and mentors. Through this experience the children gain self-confidence, develop poise, and actively participate in the recruitment process on their own behalf. In FY 2007, 44 children and youth were served through Fairfax Families4Kids. Twenty-eight community based organizations partnered with the department in this initiative. A professional photographer volunteers her services to photograph many of the children and events. In 2007, six children were featured in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government’s Heart Gallery, sponsored by the Freddie Mac Foundation, a photo display that lets the community know about the children who need permanent families.

## Adoption

### Finalized Adoptions

As of December 31, 2007, 19 percent (90) of the children in foster care had the goal of adoption. The 35 finalized adoptions during FY 2007 represent 19 percent of the children who exited foster care during the year.

FINALIZED ADOPTIONS - FAIRFAX COUNTY FOSTER CARE YOUTH					
FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
46	27	43	30	40	35

### Children Receiving Subsidized Adoption Services

Families who adopt children with special mental, emotional and medical needs are entitled to receive ongoing casework support from the department, as well as federal and state financial assistance to enable the permanent placement of these children. Support includes home-based services, counseling and treatment, child care, health and education services, respite care, transportation services, and quality assurance for services received. The number of post-final order subsidy cases continues to grow as the adoptions of children are finalized, because most children are eligible to receive assistance until age 21. This growth in the number of post-final

order subsidy cases was offset in FY 2007 by the unusually large number (46) of young people who turned 21 during that year, reaching the age limit for eligibility for the subsidy.

<b>ACTIVE ADOPTION SUBSIDY CASES (POST-FINAL ORDER)</b>					
<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
520	522	551	563	592	595

Note: Numbers are the total at the close of each fiscal year.

## **Children, Youth and Families Division**

# **Family Preservation Services**

Family Preservation Services are designed to improve family functioning and increase self-sufficiency in families who are at moderate to high risk of child abuse, neglect or family dissolution. These families may struggle with a number of complex issues that destabilize the family structure, such as family violence, poor parenting, substance abuse, mental or physical illness, and/or homelessness. This program area also oversees the department’s efforts to prevent homelessness and to provide short-term shelter and transitional housing support to move families into more permanent housing.

## **INITIATIVES/PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Intensive Services**

Family Preservation Services staff works with families referred to them by Child Protective Services (CPS) and Foster Care; Fairfax County Public Schools; Department of Systems Management for Human Services — Coordinated Services Planning (CSP); Fairfax Area Christian Emergency and Transition Services (FACETS) and other local human services providers.

Social workers provide an array of services to families: comprehensive assessment; case management; counseling; parent training and education; linkage to other services; monitoring of purchased services; life skills training; court-ordered home studies; and court-ordered protective supervision.

The Domestic Violence staff continued to provide specialized direct services (safety planning, court accompaniment, education and referral) to families impacted by domestic violence. They are a significant presence on workgroups, most notably the Fairfax County Domestic Violence Service Operations Transition and Redesign Project and the Domestic Violence Prevention, Policy and Coordinating Council, both of which seek to enhance services to victims and their families through improvement, alignment and integration of services.

The Family Group Conference coordinators continued to organize and facilitate conferences for families at risk of abusing or neglecting their children, focusing their efforts on locating and

engaging relatives to provide support to the families. They also provided numerous trainings and consultations to county staff, as well as other agencies that are developing programs.

In 2007, 66 percent of the families served by Family Preservation Services social workers demonstrated improvement in family functioning and well-being after receiving intensive services.

<b>FAMILIES SERVED BY THE FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES PROGRAM</b>						
<b>Monthly Average:</b>	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
<b>Number of Families Served</b>	245	297*	333	344	331	386
<b>Number of Children in Families</b>	544	632	703	737	659	735

Note: In 2007, almost 38% of the families served spoke a language other than English in the home; approximately 66% of those families spoke Spanish. In FY07, the FPS program served a total of 672 families, an unduplicated count.

### **Services to Prevent Homelessness and Serve Homeless Families and Individuals**

Although the results of the *2007 Point in Time Survey* had not been released to the public in time to be included in this report, we know from past estimates that at any given time approximately 2,000 people in the Fairfax-Falls Church community – including nearly 700 children – are homeless. Some live in shelters, motels, transitional housing or “doubled up” with other families awaiting shelter placement. The Department of Family Services oversees the county’s six emergency shelters and hypothermia programs and contracts with several nonprofit organizations to operate the shelters.

**Shelters** – In FY 2007 a total of 2,071 persons were served in the full-service emergency shelter program, receiving shelter, meals and case management services. Of those individuals, 1,609 were adults without children, and 462 were members of 130 families with children. An additional 561 single adults were served as part of the program’s overflow and hypothermia prevention programs, many of whom may have received services as part of the full-service program at another time during the year, and therefore do not represent an unduplicated count.

Reston Interfaith operates the Embry Rucker Shelter, which serves both individuals and families. New Hope Housing operates Eleanor Kennedy (adults) and Mondloch II (families). Volunteers of America operates the Bailey’s Shelter (adults). Shelter House, Inc., operates two county family shelters: Shelter House and the Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter.

<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF HOMELESS PERSONS SERVED IN THE EMERGENCY SHELTER SYSTEM</b>						
	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
<b>Individuals (duplicated)</b>	1,916	1,788	2,194	1,861	2,260	2,170
<b>Persons in Families</b>	510	498	382	440	454	462
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,426</b>	<b>2,286</b>	<b>2,576</b>	<b>2,301</b>	<b>2,714</b>	<b>2,632</b>

Note: Does not include 561 single adults served in the winter hypothermia program.

## Services for Families and Children

**Emergency Assistance** – Emergency assistance provides eligible families and individuals with a grant or loan to help with rent or mortgage, security deposits, utility payments, and storage or moving expenses. The Department of Family Services and the Department of Systems Management for Human Services (DSMHS) work together to provide emergency assistance. Expenditures increased 39 percent from FY 2006 to FY 2007.

EMERGENCY HOUSING ASSISTANCE EXPENDITURES (FY 2003 - FY 2007 COMPARISON)					
	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
<b>Total</b>	\$203,215	\$219,822	\$210,374	\$254,728	\$354,593
<b>Number of Households Served</b>	not counted	not counted	352	427	561

**Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter** –Construction of the Katherine K. Hanley Family Shelter was completed on schedule in July 2007 and the opening ceremony was held on August 4, 2007. Shelter House, Inc., was selected to conduct the day-to-day operations of the shelter, with oversight and management provided by DFS. The shelter began receiving families in mid-August, and reached full capacity of 20 families in October.

The shelter and county staff have created a model of service delivery which supports the “housing first” concept articulated in Fairfax County’s “Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness.” Shelter staff works closely with county service providers including DFS - Office for Children, DFS Employment Services, Health Department nurses, and the Homeless Liaison for Fairfax County Public Schools to prepare families for moving out of the shelter to permanent housing. Volunteers supplement these services with recreation, tutoring and other activities. The Hanley Shelter serves as a model for the other family shelters to emulate as new strategies for serving homeless families are adopted.

Katherine Hanley, the former Fairfax County supervisor for whom the shelter is named, has agreed to be the honorary chair of the Shelter Advisory Board which held its first meeting on September 25, 2007. The board includes representatives from the business and faith communities, service and homeless organizations, neighborhood representatives, and DFS. The purpose of the board is two-fold: to facilitate good communication between the shelter and the surrounding residential and business community, and to assist Fairfax County and the shelter operator in identifying and developing resources for the families.

**Motels** - When space is not available at the family shelters and no other housing alternatives exist, homeless families with children may be placed in motels. The department works with community partners to provide services to families while they await placement in the shelter. Since FY 2005, the number of families served has gradually decreased; our partners have suggested that the families are larger, and therefore are waiting longer for appropriate shelter space to accommodate them.

<b>HOMELESS PERSONS IN MOTELS</b>						
	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
<b>Number of Families</b>	180	134	134	122	94	83
<b>Number of Persons</b>	647	465	415	399	346	324

**Transitional Housing** - The department continued to administer two federally funded transitional housing grant programs – the Community Housing Resource Program (CHRP III) and Reaching Independence through Support and Education (RISE). The department’s nonprofit partners (Northern Virginia Family Service, Reston Interfaith, Shelter House, United Community Ministries and New Hope Housing) operated these programs, which provide support services to high-risk, formerly homeless families in scattered-site, community-based housing. In FY 2007, 82 families received services in these programs.

**Partnership for Permanent Housing - Permanent Housing Initiative** – During 2007, 25 families entered the program and are currently working with their case managers in preparation to purchase their first homes. The families receive supportive services and case management from nonprofit organizations, and participate in ongoing training on money management, credit restoration, banking services, savings programs and homeownership seminars.

### **Services for Individuals**

**Medical Respite** – Eighty-seven percent of homeless individuals are either mentally ill, chronic substance abusers or have a dual diagnosis of mental illness and substance abuse; approximately 31 percent have chronic health problems. This year, DFS in partnership with the Fairfax County Health Department and Reston Interfaith, continued the Medical Respite program for homeless persons living in shelters. The program provides a temporary stay, combined with nursing and supportive services, for homeless persons recovering from more intensive illnesses and/or injuries.

**Hypothermia Prevention** – There is a continuing need in the county for hypothermia prevention services for persons who do not stay in the county’s emergency shelters. For the winter of 2007 – 2008, the county partnered with homeless service providers (New Hope Housing, Reston Interfaith, Volunteers of America, FACETS) and the faith community to provide hypothermia prevention services in various parts of the county. The many partners in this effort, including 2,300 volunteers from 63 faith communities have a shared understanding that temporary shelter is a very limited solution and that attaining permanent housing for homeless people is the desired solution.

Faith communities in southern Fairfax County united to provide hypothermia prevention services for the last two years and are providing the service again this winter. Another hypothermia prevention site that opened last year in Reston is continuing this winter to provide shelter in the northern part of the county.

## Children, Youth and Families Division

# Child Abuse Prevention Services

Throughout the Children, Youth and Families Division, services are focused on strengthening families and preventing abuse and neglect. The Child Abuse Prevention program area was developed to enhance the division's prevention efforts. Child Abuse Prevention Services support families, particularly those at risk of child abuse or neglect, through community-based, family-focused prevention and early intervention services.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Five strategies are utilized in Child Abuse Prevention Services: one-to-one education of family members; group-based parenting education conducted at community sites; drop-in, neighborhood-based service delivery and coalition building to improve family and community conditions; community-wide public education and awareness initiatives; and engaging the community by involving volunteers and donors in child welfare programs.

### One-to-One Education and Support of Families

The Healthy Families Fairfax and mentoring programs provide one-to-one education and support of families.

**Healthy Families Fairfax** is a home-based early intervention and prevention program offering first-time parents at risk of maltreating their child an opportunity to learn parenting skills and receive emotional support and case management services. It is supported through a partnership among DFS, the Fairfax County Health Department and three nonprofit organizations – Northern Virginia Family Service, UCM-Community Solutions and Reston Interfaith.

HEALTHY FAMILIES FAIRFAX						
	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
<b>Number of Families Served</b>	604	649	671	650	684	638
<b>Number of Children Served</b>	391	449	707*	615	630	563

\* Until FY 2004, the number of children served was tabulated differently than the number of families. In FY 2004, a more accurate method of calculating children served was established capturing the number of children served throughout the year.

**Mentoring** - Children and parents who are clients of DFS, and would benefit from one-to-one mentoring, are referred to receive four to eight hours per month of mentoring by trained volunteers. Through the BeFriend-A-Child (BAC) and BeFriend-A-Parent (BAP) mentoring programs, volunteers provide role modeling, companionship, support, guidance and advocacy. Mentors help children develop the protective capabilities that come from having positive self-esteem, hobbies and interests, good decision-making skills, and a sense of responsibility. BeFriend-A-Parent goals include increasing parent self-esteem, decreasing stress and isolation, and helping parents rely less on their children

to meet their emotional needs. Sixty-six children were served in the BeFriend-A-Child program, and 17 parents were served in the BeFriend-A-Parent program in FY 2007.

**Group-Based Education and Support**

The CYF Division offers two group-based education/support programs: the Nurturing Parenting Program and Good Touch, Bad Touch®.

**The Nurturing Parenting Program** is a structured educational experience for parents and children including adolescent children. In FY 2007, the Nurturing Parenting Program conducted a total of 17 groups, including three groups using the Spanish curriculum, two groups using the curriculum designed to be culturally appropriate for parents of African-American children, and three adolescent groups.

<b>NURTURING PARENTING PROGRAM</b>						
	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
<b>Number of Families Served</b>	145	152	197	231	195	174
<b>Number of Parents Served</b>	194	199	265	321	267	240
<b>Number of Children Served*</b>	229	226	335	392	310	252
<b>Number of Groups Held**</b>	15	15	19	23	18	17

\* Number of children served includes young children and adolescents.

\*\* Four groups were held in Spanish in FY 2002, three in FY 2003, five in FY 2004, six in FY 2005, four in FY 2006 and three in FY 2007. All others were in English.

**Good Touch, Bad Touch®** is a comprehensive child abuse prevention curriculum to teach students in preschool through 6th grade the skills that play a major role in preventing or interrupting child abuse/sexual abuse in their own lives. Based on pre- and post-tests, participating children showed a marked increase in their understanding about how to protect themselves from harm. In FY 2007, 371 children participated in 47 Good Touch, Bad Touch® groups.

Information about the Nurturing Parenting Program and the Good Touch, Bad Touch® Program, as well as other parenting resources, is available to the public on the DFS parenting resource Web page at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/ParentingResource/default.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/ParentingResource/default.htm).

**Neighborhood-Based Organizing and Coalition Building to Improve Family and Community Conditions**

**Family Resource Centers** offer culturally sensitive, prevention-focused programs. The primary goal is to strengthen families in their own neighborhoods by providing parents with opportunities to learn and improve their skills in raising and nurturing their children. The department operates two centers: the Culmore Family Resource Center and the Springfield/Franconia Family Resource Center. Family Services provides financial support for several other centers. A total of 26,344 visitors (duplicated count) dropped in and/or participated in programs at the centers in FY 2007.

**Neighborhood Networks (NN)** is a collaboration between DFS and Fairfax County Public Schools focused on educating and connecting families to support systems. Families nominated by the schools for this program are families who are committed to good parenting and stability and encourage their children to work for a better life. Neighborhood Networks partners with schools in each region. In the North County region, the schools are: Forest Edge Elementary, Dogwood Elementary, Terraset Elementary and McNair Elementary. In the Fairfax region, the new partner school for 2008 is London Towne Elementary. In the Falls Church region, the partner school is Annandale Terrace Elementary. In the South County region, the partner schools are Riverside Elementary, Woodlawn Elementary, and Woodley Hills Elementary.

<b>NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS</b>						
	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
<b>Number of Children Served</b>	58	69	101	113	113	104
<b>Number of Families Served</b>	16	21	28	33	33	30
<b>Number of Partner Schools</b>	3	5	6	6	8	8

\* Numbers include children and families served across multiple years.

### **Engaging the Community through Public Awareness and Education**

The Early Intervention Strategy Team and the Blue Ribbon Campaign Committee educate professionals and the public about child abuse and neglect prevention.

**The Early Intervention Strategy Team (EIST)** was established in November 1996 to address the disproportionate representation of African-American children in the Fairfax-Falls Church area needing out-of-home services. The team was charged with identifying reasons for this disproportionate representation and to develop individual, family, school and community early intervention strategies for working with at-risk African-American children and their families. The EIST uses small group dialogue to engage frontline workers in learning from their own and others' experiences. The goal is to have service providers integrate awareness of the African-American culture and early intervention philosophy into their service delivery.

### **Blue Ribbon Campaign to Prevent Child Abuse**

As part of a larger national Blue Ribbon Campaign focusing on preventing child abuse, the department's local campaign continues to assume greater responsibility for educating the Fairfax community on child abuse prevention. Blue Ribbon outreach efforts are supported by various public and private organizations and corporations.

Outreach and education efforts for 2007 include:

- 79,000 Blue Ribbon Campaign items were distributed at events held in April.
- 109,000 additional Blue Ribbon Campaign items were distributed throughout the year, including:
  - Blue Ribbon business card magnets with phone numbers for CPS Help/Hotline.
  - Blue Ribbon notepads with phone numbers for CPS Help/Hotline.
  - Bookmark cards, "10 Tips for Keeping Kids Safe."

- Blue Ribbon Pencils “Keeping Kids Safe in Fairfax County.”
- Stickers, pencils, and “Words that Help Kids” posters.
- 92,000 copies of “Understanding and Guiding Children as They Grow and Develop” were distributed in English and Spanish.
- 25,000 pocket-size “Child Supervision Guidelines” were distributed in English, Farsi, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese languages.

The materials produced and distributed by the Blue Ribbon Campaign can be accessed at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childreneyouth/blue\\_ribbon\\_campaign.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childreneyouth/blue_ribbon_campaign.htm).

### **Engaging the Community by Involving Volunteers and Donors in Child Welfare Programs**

The Volunteer Services Program recruits, trains and supports volunteers to work with the division’s programs and the families they serve. The CYF Family Donor Program accepts donations from businesses, community organizations and individuals for children and families in child welfare programs who need clothes and other essentials.

<b>VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT</b>						
	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
<b>Total Unduplicated Volunteers*</b> does not include group or special event volunteers	N/A	N/A	N/A	147	149	128
<b>Total Unduplicated Volunteer Hours</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	9,808	10,422	9,191
<b>Value of Volunteer Hours</b> FY 2006: \$18.04      FY 2007: \$18.40	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$174,484	\$188,013	\$169,114

\* A new volunteer database tracking system was created during FY 2005.

<b>DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS</b>						
	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
<b>Value of Donations</b>	\$283,426	\$252,404	\$299,051	\$287,670	\$329,833	\$123,827
<b>Total Number of Donors</b>	153	194	213	290	290	118

\* Beginning in FY 2007 holiday donations for children in foster care are managed by the Foster Care and Adoption program area instead of Child Abuse Prevention.