

Sushma Retires



Sushma Kohli, the Office for Children's budget, finance and operations manager, has retired after 32 years of county employment. After working in the Fairfax County Public Library, the Department of Vehicle Services, and the Department of Administration for Human Services, **Kohli** came to OFC in 1991.

Kohli was instrumental in developing many of OFC's innovative program models, including the Virginia

Preschool Initiative and Early Head Start in family child care. In addition to ensuring OFC's compliance with financial regulations, Kohli oversaw grants, contracts and facilities.

"**Sushma's** broad and deep knowledge of OFC and her ability to mentor and teach others has been greatly appreciated by her colleagues over the years. She is one of the most analytical thinkers and best problem solvers I've ever known, and she has been a true friend to many of us," says OFC Director **Anne-Marie Twohie**.

Recently **Kohli** led the effort to make sure OFC's office space is used efficiently and meets the needs of programs. This included a recent reorganization of offices and resources.

Becky McNair is OFC's human resources director. "I always found it a pleasure to work with **Sushma**," she says. "Her memory for detail is incredible. Plus, she is very kind-hearted and funny, so it was a joy to work with her."

Jennifer Branch, OFC's Head Start director, also mentioned **Kohli's** attention to detail. "She's truly a perfectionist, which goes along with the kind of work that she does." **Kohli** helped the Head Start program meet federal, state and local standards.

"Her ability to problem-solve and think creatively have been a tremendous asset to me and all of OFC," says **Stephanie Caccamo**, who works with the Head Start program. "I've been extremely lucky to have had the opportunity to work with **Sushma**."



Sushma with former OFC staff Gail Bjorklund, Barb Ensor, Maria Bray and Judith Rosen.



With Head Start Director **Jennifer Branch** (right) and former Fairfax Futures Executive Director Vera Steiner Blore.



OFC senior staff circa 2008 (Carol Keil and Beckie McNair not pictured).



VaCMS

The Virginia Department of Social Services is launching a new computer system, the Virginia Child Care Management System, which provides case management for families whose child care subsidies are funded by the state. This new system will impact Fairfax County child care professionals and the Office for Children staff who support them.

When OFC begins to use the new system, state-funded families will receive a swipe card that they'll use to record their child's attendance in child care programs. Child care centers and family child care providers with children in the subsidy program will receive swipe-card readers from the state and reimbursements for state-funded children in the subsidy program directly from VDSS. Staff in the Child Care Assistance and Referral program and other OFC divisions will work to help families, providers and centers successfully adjust to these changes.

"This is going to be a big change for providers and centers who have been using paper attendance records," explains CCAR Director **Carol Keil**. "Using the swipe cards will be a change for families as well. If we all pull together, we can make sure the transition to the new procedures goes smoothly," **Keil** says.

Early this year, CCAR staff will schedule a series of information sessions about the new system for Department of Family Services partners. Information and training sessions will be offered to child care programs this spring. CCAR is scheduled to begin using the new system this summer.



Making Seasons Bright

Office for Children employees helped area families during the holiday season. The Child Care Assistance and Referral program donated boxes of non-perishable food items to FACETS, the Employees' Child Care Center staff participated in the Salvation Army's Adopt-a-Family program, and the School Age Child Care program administrative staff also adopted a family and participated in the Food for Others' Power Pack program. Here, SACC employees **Andria Marshall, DeYonna Jackson, Angelis Hoffman, Rondia Prescott, and Johanna Bolanos** bag food donations.



Susan Hansell-Davis



Tina Lee



Beckie McNair



Casey McCullough



Maribeth Bretschneider

Mobile Workforce

Recently the county's InfoWeb site featured an article on county employees who have enjoyed working in multiple county agencies. Here at the Office for Children, we also have a number of employees who have held a variety of positions within OFC.

Susan Hansell-Davis started as a teacher in the School Age Child Care program, and then moved to the Employees' Child Care Center. She's now a child care specialist for the Child Care Assistance and Referral program.

"Although my job has changed from working directly with children to working more directly with their parents, it's been very helpful to have seen and experienced both sides to better know how to help families in Fairfax County," **Hansell-Davis** says.

Tina Lee also sees a link between her work for the ECCC, CCAR and the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

"Every OFC job has prepared me for working in the next program," she explains. "Having worked as a teacher at ECCC allowed me to have an understanding of what parents were looking for in child care, which helped me as a CCAR child care specialist. Working in CCAR helped me to understand the eligibility requirements for VPI families," she says.

Having employees who have worked in several positions in the same

organization can benefit the employer as well the employee.

"It's nice when our managers can hire someone whom they know has already done good work for OFC," says OFC's Director of Human Resources, **Beckie McNair**. "It also helps to hire someone who already knows the culture and how to work with people in our other programs," **McNair** adds.

"I have a much greater idea of how OFC as a whole operates, and a much better sense of the wide population which it serves," agrees **Casey McCullough**, who

started as an eligibility specialist for CCAR, then went to Community Education and Provider Services, and is now a business analyst with SACC.

Maribeth Bretschneider also moved from CEPS to SACC, but she started her OFC career in the

training office. She says that working for several OFC programs "has enabled me to see how we work together as a team to assist parents with quality child care."

McNair agrees that working in a variety of positions with the same employer can be positive. "Along with the natural invigoration that comes from getting a new job and learning new skills, some employees value the stability that comes from staying within the organization," **McNair** says.

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sNOw Delays



This winter, Fairfax County and other DC-area jurisdictions will encourage residents to “Get Where You Need to Be Before the Weather Gets Bad.”

In 2011, our region had two weather events that resulted in

massive traffic jams: the snow storm of January 26 and the Tropical Storm Lee floods of September 8. In both cases, evening commuters experienced extreme delays.

During the January 26 storm, many parents weren’t able to reach child care programs until late at night. This year, authorities will urge area families to pick their children up from child care before it starts to snow so that fewer people will endanger themselves, their children and other drivers by clogging the roadways at the height of bad storms.

Risky Business

Office for Children staff are often invited to share their expertise with colleagues at professional conferences. Recently, OFC’s marketing manager, **Lois Kirkpatrick**, presented a risk communications workshop at the Public Relations Society of America’s 2011 international conference in Florida.

“Crisis communication is what public affairs professionals do after something has gone wrong. For example, we work with the media to inform the public that a school bus has crashed, or there’s been employee misconduct. Risk communication is about things that might go wrong. A bad storm might lead to floods, or a flu strain might result in a pandemic. There

are proven strategies for what to say and how to say it during those types of situations,”

Kirkpatrick explains.

Kirkpatrick and her co-presenter, a public information officer from the police department, spoke to about 80 public affairs professionals from all over the world at the PRSA conference.



What’s This?

You’ve probably seen images like this on pieces of mail, and in newspapers and magazines. Quick-response codes were created in Japan in 1994, and have proliferated in the

U.S. in the last two years. QR codes can be used to transmit web addresses, phone numbers, text messages, and other information. You can decode them using a smart phone that has a QR reader (a free app). Scan the QR code here to see an OFC-related resource.



O F C Office for Children

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