December 13, 2019 - Little Dixie Community Action Agency held its annual In-Service Event for full-time employees. Executive leadership, Board Members and 250 full-time employees in attendance were provided with highlights and accomplishments of agency programs, sexual harassment training and safety/risk management training.

Rebecca Reynolds, Executive Director, welcomed staff and provided an overview of Little Dixie’s programs and services. Service Award and Employee of the Month recipients were also honored. Hope Scott, Head Start Teacher, was announced as Little Dixie’s 2019 Employee of the Year. Dawn McDaniel, Human Resources Director, presented a video to staff regarding sexual harassment in the workplace. W.F. Grammar, Risk Management Consultant, provided staff with general tips/guidelines for keeping the workplace safe and creating optimal work spaces. Staff then had the opportunity for some fun and fellowship during the catered lunch.

For the special activity this year, staff participated in playing Bingo! Winners from each round received a wrapped prize.

In-Service was a terrific time for staff to congregate together and prepare for another wonderful year of serving the residents of Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties.
Around the Agency

Employee of the Month Awardees

October

The LDCAA Employee of the Month for October 2019 was Jeannie McMillin (center). Jeannie is our Transit Program Director. Also pictured: Board Chairman Brent Franks (left) and Executive Director Rebecca Reynolds.

November

The LDCAA Employee of the Month for November 2019 was Vicki Lester (center). Vicki is a cook for the Little Dixie Head Start Program.

Congratulations Vicki!

December

The LDCAA Employee of the Month for December 2019 was Renee McEntire (center). Renee is the Academic Instructor for our YouthBuild Program. Also pictured: Board Chairman Will Smith (left) and Associate Director Johnny Moffitt.

Service Award Recipients

Pam Price

Adina Burrell

10 Years

Employee of the Year

Pictured with Executive Director Rebecca Reynolds (left), Head Start Teacher, Hope Scott received the 2019 Employee of the Year Award at Little Dixie’s Annual In Service Event. Hope was chosen from among the 12 agency staff members who were named Employee of the Month during 2019.

OTA State Championship

James Jackson (pictured above), transit driver in Idabel placed first in the OTA State Championship Roadeo Contest in the Wheelchair Securement Category.

Congratulations Hope!
Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau attempts to count every single person living in the United States. Participating in the census is easy—just answer a few simple questions that help to determine who you are and where you live, and most importantly, We’re Counting on you Oklahoma!

Many may ask, “Does it REALLY Matter if EVERYONE is Counted?”

“YES” and one very big reason is MONEY!

Important dates for the upcoming Census Count: In mid-March, 2020, your household will begin receiving invitations to complete the 2020 Census. Once you receive the invitation, you should respond for EVERYONE who is living in your home at that time. You have three options to respond making it easier than ever: You can respond online, by phone, or by mail. If you do not have access to internet or assistance locating the website stop by a Little Dixie Community Action Agency, Inc. Office.

Census answers are confidential so the information you share is safe and your answers are used only for statistics.

WHEN EVERYONE COUNTS – EVERYONE WINS
be sure those in your community are counted because Southeast Oklahoma is depending on it!

If you have any questions about the Census Count or want to learn more, please visit the following websites:

Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign

This season, the Salvation Army kicked off the 129th Annual Red Kettle Nationwide Campaign. In 1891, Salvation Army Captain, Joseph McFee developed the idea of a Red Kettle Campaign to fund a free Christmas dinner for poverty-stricken individuals and families. In 1901, the idea spread across the nation. Today more than 25,000 volunteers ring bells and solicit donations to help improve the lives of low-income individuals and families. In 2018, more than $142.7 million was raised across the nation.

The Antlers, Hugo and Idabel Service Units of the Salvation Army wrapped up their 2019 Red Kettle campaigns around mid-December. Bell ringers volunteered their time in 1.5 – 2 hours shifts at locations including WalMart Supercenters in Hugo and Idabel and Pruett’s Food in Antlers, Oklahoma. Volunteer bell ringers included Rotary Club members, Lions Club members, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Youth Advisory Board, Arvest Bank, AmeriState Bank, FirstBank, Kiamichi Opportunities, Inc., Little Dixie CAA Board members, staff and family and many other volunteer residents.

The local Salvation Army Boards appreciate all who volunteered to ring the bell to raise funds to help families with low-incomes. All donations dropped in the kettles will be used to assist residents of Choctaw, McCurtain or Pushmataha Counties. Little Dixie CAA organizes the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign activities for the Antlers, Hugo and Idabel service units in order to assist families in need. While the International Salvation Army provides a multitude of services for poverty-stricken individuals and families, the local Salvation Army Service Units have primarily provided utility assistance for families in emergency situations. This year, some funds were used to provide care packages to residents in area nursing homes. These packages included blankets, lotion and chap-stick. Moving forward, the Antlers, Hugo and Idabel Service Units will utilize funds to assist families with utilities, food and other emergency needs.

Antlers $1,638.06
Hugo $4,386.79
Idabel $2,258.13
2019 HOLIDAY FOOD BASKET & TOY DRIVE INITIATIVE

The Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays provided a time to reflect on the blessings received during the year and share with others. To this end, Little Dixie Community Action Agency sought local funding opportunities to support an initiative to provide Thanksgiving and Christmas meals to families in need, who were nominated by agency staff. The agency also supported a toy drive to benefit children served by the Victim and Youth Services Programs. The following donations for the Holiday Food Basket and Toy Drive Initiatives were received from area businesses and individuals during the months of October through December, 2019:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First United Bank</th>
<th>$300</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual/Staff Donations</td>
<td>$124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of $1,224 in local monetary donations were received. These donations allowed the agency to provide Holiday Food Baskets to 30 families who would otherwise have not had sufficient funds for a Thanksgiving or Christmas Dinner.

In addition, monies were used to serve approximately 200 children through the Toy Drive Initiative.

OUTSTANDING CASA VOLUNTEERS

Judge Kenneth Farley, swore in two McCurtain County CASA Volunteers this quarter, Greg Curtis and Marcia Smith.

Loyetta Davis, long-time CASA volunteer received the "Making a Difference Volunteer of the Year" Award at McCurtain County RSVP Event.

Congratulations Greg, Marcia and Loyetha!

This project is supported by VOCA Subgrant No. 2018-VOCA-Little Dixie CAA-141 awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice through the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council.
FAMILY FUN DAY

Friday, November 8, 2019 — Little Dixie ECCS partnered with the Choctaw County Coalition to provide the second annual Family Fun Day in Choctaw County. The Family Fun Day is focused on early childhood developmental health and linking families to services and resources in our community. There were several community programs and organizations that set up a booth for parents to have direct access and learn about each program. At registration, families received a family engagement activity, which was a gingerbread house, to take home and enjoy as family and create long lasting positive memories. ECCS offered free Ages and Stages Developmental Screenings for parents to complete at the event. A total of 46 children were developmentally screened, to ensure they are meeting their early childhood milestones. Children had the opportunity to decorate their own book bag during the event and take home age-appropriate board books to enjoy. It was a huge success and we look forward to continuing these efforts into McCurtain and Pushmataha County in the upcoming year.

DEVELOPMENTAL SKILL BUILDING KITS

We have officially kicked off our brand new initiative to promote and enhance developmental health and the importance of screening early childhood aged children by offering our new Developmental Skill Building Kit (DSBK). Parents and caregivers have the opportunity to screen their child through our online ASQ Family Access portal. They can access the screening through Facebook or our QR code, which is on all of our outreach material. Upon completion of a screening, we will mail one Developmental Skill Building Kit (annually) along with the screening scores and follow-up information. We have created an ASQ Report Card for parents to easily understand the screening scores, so they will know exactly which area their child needs assistance with. The DSBKs are tailored to each age group and have developmental toys, early childhood board books, parent education book, and an Early Childhood and Family Resource Bundle. Each kit will help parents have the tools they need to advance their child’s developmental health and meet important milestones to help ensure their child is kindergarten ready. The DSBKs are available for children 0-4 years of age and they will receive one annually upon completion of a developmental screening. Parents are also encouraged to screen intermittently between birthdays and will receive a board book and screening scores to the mailing address they provide. We started offering the DSBKs on December 1, 2019 and 169 screenings have been completed since that time. This has proved to be highly successful and we look forward to continuing this effort into 2020!
Little Dixie Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Head Start-Child Care held their annual October In-Service with a variety of trainings offered to teaching staff, family advocates, substitutes, and AmeriCorps members. Trainings on child abuse awareness, autism and mental health, and meal pattern updates within the CACFP program were presented. Stephen Lacey from OKDHS spoke on child abuse awareness, while Wesley Elliott with OSDH spoke on autism and mental health in children. Our HS and EHS/EHS-CC staff were split in the afternoon, each attending developmental appropriate trainings for the age of children in which they serve. The Strategic Plan, which outlined new programmatic goals we would like to improve upon, was presented by HS/EHS Assistant Director Jordan Mack and CACFP and Civil Rights and Meal Pattern Requirement Updates were presented by Nutrition Specialist, Katelyn Nelms.

In October we like to give staff the option of participating in a costume contest. We encourage staff to participate as it builds a sense of unity and team building. Staff can come in costume individually or choose to participate as a group. A winner is selected from each category. Broken Bow was selected as the group winner for their costumes depicting the children’s book “Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See”.

NIHSA's 37th annual Parent and Family Engagement Conference is the only national event that focuses on how Head Start parents, families, and staff can best partner to promote both family engagement and children’s development. The 2019 Parent and Family Engagement conference explored a wide range of new resources and thinking on the forefront topics of young children and how Head Start programs can address the needs of children, families, and staff. Tori Crawford, Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Head Start-CC Family and Community Engagement Specialist along with Judy Derby, Early Head Start Family Advocate attended the Florida conference in December. During this conference they attended a variety of trainings that included: preventing and responding to domestic violence, setting anchors in parent involvement, social emotional learning, trauma informed care, ACES, and fatherhood involvement.
Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Head Start - Child Care and Early Learning Centers

NAEYC ACCREDITATION

Founded in 1926, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting practice, policy, and research. NAEYC advances a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and supports all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children. Antlers Early Head Start, Antlers Early Learning Center, and Hugo Early Head Start all received a new five year NAEYC accreditation during the fall of 2019. This is a prestigious recognition that emulates upstanding early childhood services within our communities. This accreditation is a year long process that includes a classroom portfolio, program portfolio, and classroom observations which all converge to prove the program is meeting 54 criterions within a 128 page regulation book. This accreditation is upheld for 5 years with annual reports submitted each year to monitor program performance.

HEAD START PROJECT FUNDED BY DONORS CHOOSE

An organization called DonorsChoose makes it possible for donors from around the country to fund project requests for classrooms. The four year old classroom Idabel 1 recently had a project request funded for the children. This project was funded by 7 donors reaching a goal of $292 that went toward purchasing alphabet puppets.

“I teach a class of bubbly, energetic and loving four year old’s. My children come from a variety of different backgrounds. Some of my children have never been out of our county, so I try to bring the world to them in my classroom. I teach my kiddo’s that they are all important and can do anything if they try hard and do their best.

My children love it when I teach a lesson using puppets! This is why I am excited about the possibility of being able to introduce the alphabet using puppets that begin with a different letter of the alphabet. By donating to our project, you will not only help to improve and increase student attention and focus, you will ultimately help to increase their academic achievement. Many of my students have never seen some of the characters that are represented by the different letters of the alphabet such as the “I” for iguana. So please help us learn the alphabet in a fun and exciting new way.

Children love to learn. The more imaginative I can be teaching them, the more successful they will be throughout their learning experience. Children love it when I use puppets to help me teach. They listen more attentively and remember what we are learning about. By using this set of alphabet puppets, I will be more effective when introducing each new letter of the alphabet. Teaching children that learning is FUN is the key to success.”

- Lisa Watkins, Teacher Idabel 1

The projects described were supported by Grant Numbers 06CH7099, 06CH00743, and 06HP00017 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Administration for Children and Families or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
Healthy Start has welcomed some new faces this year. In addition to the new Fatherhood program we have expanded into Atoka county and added two new coordinators there. We have seen a higher number of clients in the Northern part of Pushmataha County so we have also added a new coordinator that will be serving that area.

Healthy Start was recently awarded additional funds for Maternal Clinical Services which will cover all female Healthy Start participants and provide much needed maternal health services. Healthy Start will now have a Liaison that will be coordinating with the Pushmataha Family Medical Center in Clayton and Boswell to help our clients schedule their visits.

Pam Waugh, Mary Vannoy, Nichole Pulliam, Melissa Waterman, Ashley Staggs, Margo McCatee, Tosha Crawford, Jim Westbrook, Jennifer Goodman, Nichole Barrick, Many Brown, Bergandy Holt, Stana Sell, Amanda Terrebonne, Harli Phillips

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**Diagram:**

- **Atoka County:** 2 Care Coordinators
- **Pushmataha County:** 3 Care Coordinators
- **McCurtain County:** 3 Care Coordinators
- **Choctaw County:** 8 Care Coordinators
SELF-HELP HOUSING REGULATIONS UPDATE

On December 12, 2019, USDA published a Procedure Notice that will make updates to the 1944-I self-help regulations. Changes were made throughout the 1944-I in order to bring the instruction in line with the 7 CFR 1944 Subpart I which was originally updated after the release of 2 CFR 200 which combined and eliminated all old federal grant accounting regulations. This update has been in process for some time and our guidance is that Rural Development will be mostly incorporating old ANs into the regulation that they could no longer issue. The changes will be discussed at the National Self-Help Conference. For a review of the entire PN, visit: https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/pn532.pdf

Some examples of the changes include:

§1944.403(f), the words project and homes were added to be inclusive of Self-Help Rehab type programs

§ 1944.403(g), revised to reflect that the Equivalent value of a modest home is often referred to as the Cost of Contractor-Built home and encourage States with self-help to release these figures as an annual policy

§ 1944.403(l), ‘rehabilitation type construction’ was clarified to include both acquisition and owner-occupied type rehab

§ 1944.403(f), to add the authorized use of grant funds and added to define the minimum amount of liability insurance required

§1944.407, to add reference to Exhibit H for sample Technical Assistance fee calculations

§1944.407(d), to add standard for cost savings be equal to or greater than the Technical Assistance cost for Rehab type projects

§1944.407(e), added to note that other Technical fee limitation may apply and would be released on annual basis.
The 2020 National Self-Help Housing Conference is coming up quickly! The conference will be held on Feb. 4–6, 2020 at the Hyatt Regency in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The theme is 2020: Sharing the Vision. This will be a great opportunity for self-help grantees to learn and network with other grantees and USDA RD.

There will be no registration fee this year. The deadline for registration is January 20th. If you have not registered, please register soon. This is also when the hotel will stop holding rooms at our reduced rate.

Some highlights of the conference will include a report on the State of the Nation's Housing from Whitney Airgood-Obrycki, PHD, Senior Research Analyst with Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies; a session on Impact without Burnout from Master Trainer, Speaker, Author, and Blogger Beth Kanter as well as an overview of the updated 1944-I regulations with Andria Hively from USDA; a Legislative Update from Bob Rapoza and a welcome from Tom Collishaw, President of SHE and the National Rural Self-Help Housing Association. There will also be plenty of breakout sessions and time for networking.

Register online at: http://shh2020.littledixie.org/
For registration questions, contact: Jason Stillwell at jstillwell@ldcaa.org or (580) 326-5165.

The Rural Development 502 Direct note rate was reduced to 3.0% a few months ago. Please check with Rural Development’s website regularly to check for changes.

https://www.rd.usda.gov/
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

ANNUAL RECOGNITION EVENTS

October 2019 was a month of celebration for the RSVP volunteers of Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties. Program Director, Karla Luginbill, held three celebrations, one in each service county, to recognize the hard work, tenacity and outstanding accomplishments of the RSVP Volunteers. Canned goods were collected at each event to benefit area food banks.

| CHOCTAW     | 10,037 HOURS |
| MCCURTAIN   | 32,683 HOURS |
| PUSHMATAHA  | 24,020 HOURS |

66,740 HOURS EQUATING TO $1,480,293.20 OF IN-KIND VALUE

Congratulations & Thank You to All of Our Dedicated Volunteers!
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which first began in 1981 by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence as a Day of Unity to connect battered women's advocates across the country. Little Dixie staff members wore purple each Thursday in October to increase awareness of the significant problem of domestic violence in our communities.

In addition to wearing purple, Little Dixie's Victims Advocacy Staff held a Shine the Light event in Choctaw and Pushmataha County. Activities included shining of the lights, poem reading, songs, guest speaker and lantern release.

Guest Speaker at these events was Heidi Silcox, Choctaw County Assistant District Attorney. Heidi gave an excellent speech about domestic violence survivors and her future plans to pursue the perpetrators and bring justice to the victims of domestic violence.

Dee Dee Atwood, Jodie Allen and Tonya Finley attended Choctaw Nations Annual Walk With Me Against Domestic Violence held in Hugo and SOS for Families, Flowers on the in McCurtain County to raise awareness for Domestic Violence.

Thank you Heidi Silcox!

DISTRIBUTING FORENSIC EVIDENCE KITS TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Little Dixie staff, Jodie Allen and Tonya Finley recently distributed Forensic Evidence Light Kits to the McCurtain County Sheriff's Office and Hugo Police Department. Forensic Evidence Light Kits are a critical tool for crime scene investigators and lab technician's to enhance observation, photography and collection of evidence including latent fingerprints, body fluids, hair and fibers, bruises, bite marks, wound patterns, etc.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2017-WR-AX-0046 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

This project is supported by VOCA Subgrant No. 2018-VOCA-Little Dixie CAA-142 awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice through the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council.
ASSISTING RESIDENTS WITH ATTAINING THE DREAM OF HOME OWNERSHIP

Little Dixie's Self-Help Housing Program serves income eligible individuals and families in Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Choctaw, Love, Marshall, McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties. Home ownership is achieved through the involvement with construction of their homes and other participant's homes, resulting in reduced costs. Contact our Self-Help Program today for more information!

Schiebe Closing

Kinsley Schiebe is pictured with her grandmother after closing her loan to build a Self-Help Home in Bryan County.

Jackson Home

The Jackson Family is building a LDHR2 floor plan Self-Help home in Bryan County. Lance was approved for an OHFA grant of $11,500 to help with the amount borrowed from Rural Development to build his home.

Lynn Closing

Brandi Lynn is pictured with her grandfather after closing her loan to build a Self-Help home in Bryan County.

Christen Caldwell, Housing Counselor, (left) and Sommer McMurtry, Group Worker, (right) pictured working a booth at the Choctaw Headquarters Health Fair.

Christen Caldwell, Housing Counselor, (left), Sommer McMurtry, Group Worker, (center) and Brandy Stachowski, Program Secretary (right) pictured at the Durant 2019 Christmas Parade.
Youth First

Youth First utilizes the "Strengthening Families Program," and provides intervention and case management services to at-risk youth ages 10 to 17 who reside in Choctaw, McCurtain and Pushmataha Counties. Project activities and SFP training work to strengthen the family system, encourage protective factors and pro-social skills and parent-child communication.