

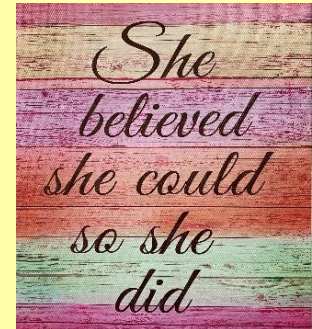
## A Message from Commissioner Dorantes



Back to school and back to a better normal. As we prepare for another school year, we are reminded of the important relationships we have established with our educational partners as we collaboratively work to support children and families in our school communities.

In this month's, "*Spotlight on What's Right*" newsletter, read about Dr. Glen Worthy, an educator in his 30<sup>th</sup> year, who is now serving as the Department's Educational Administrator for Juvenile Justice Services. A tough job? Is it any surprise the Department hired a former college linebacker for this role? He will lead a unit to oversee the education of youth in justice facilities, and who are incarcerated, to ensure their academic success. Linebackers fill the gaps - Dr. Worthy is a perfect fit!

The journey thought post-secondary education can be humbling. National statistics show that only 3-7% of youth in foster care will graduate college as compared to 30% of all Americans. With strong support from our Regional Office staff and Central Office Post-Secondary Educational Consultants, our youth will attend over 80 programs this Fall including as far away as Florida, Colorado, Utah and California!



Our youth are resilient and can teach us so many lessons to improve our child serving systems. For Stephanie Cooper, graduating from college at one point was a dream filled with twists and turns. Read how the dream all came true on a Saturday afternoon as she walked across the stage at Central Connecticut State University to receive her diploma. With one day in between, she began work on Monday - at Our Piece of the Pie in Hartford - side by side with youth involved with DCF.



We also highlight LPN Marcia Cherry who saved a life at Solnit South. Her personal story is one filled with giving back, compassion and serving others. Read as the "Mayor of Solnit" speaks about the children and youth she serves, her amazing intervention when she heard the words, "he's choking," and the request for a hug an hour later from the young man whose life has been forever changed.

Did you know August is also Dog Month? We were hosted by the Connecticut Human Society and reinforced our collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and the cross reporting of animal cruelty and child abuse. "Fernando" and his rescue pals are there awaiting safe and permanent homes..... Sound familiar?



August 31<sup>st</sup> is International Overdose Awareness Day. Let us pause in remembrance of all those lives lost due to substance misuse. The overdose deaths represent mothers, fathers, sons and daughters. Please continue to work together with our Agency Area Resource Group Clinicians to understand the impact of substances and the families we all serve.

Together we usher in a new school year.

Together we help each other.

Together we protect (human and furry) little ones.

Together we strengthen supports!

Thank you all!

