



September is National Kinship Care Month. Recognizing the unique role extended family members, friends, neighbors, teachers, and other important adults play while caring for children who cannot remain safely at home. In Connecticut, approximately 50% of children under the age of 18 years old who are placed into a family setting reside with kin - proudly one of the highest percentages in the country because of your hard work.

Hispanic and Latino (a,e) Heritage Month is celebrated between 9/15/23 - 10/15/23. The 50th anniversary theme "**Latinos: Driving Prosperity, Power and Progress in America,**" pays tribute to the significant economic and political strides Hispanics/Latinos have made in the United States. Approximately 19% of the US population identifies as Hispanic/Latino as does 17% of DCF's workforce! Across the state, we honor our diversity, and the important contributions Hispanic/Latinos play within our Agency, communities, and families we serve. A listing of events this month can be found here: [2023 Events](#)



Commissioners from Dept of Banking, Dept of Housing, Dept of Corrections, Dept of Economic Community Development join Gov Lamont in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month



Maribel Martinez, Senior Administrator for Clinical and Community Consultation Support Division, appeared on **Radio Dinamica 1120 AM** this month to discuss the critical work of the Department including the importance of understanding a family's culture during engagement.

HOPE IS REAL National Recovery Month 2023

"Recovery is for Everyone. Every Person. Every Family. Every Community," Recovery truly is possible for anyone. To honor the memory of the 1,464 lives lost in CT to overdose in 2022, flags for each of their lives were placed in New Britain during an annual ceremonial remembrance to raise awareness and reinforce continued efforts.



"Your addiction is our addiction...your recovery is our recovery ...And recovery is contagious." Gov Ned Lamont

In this month's "**Spotlight on What's Right**" newsletter, read how **Mindy Richardson** overcame addiction. Now sober, she has reunified with her children, and is a Regional Manager for Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) supervising Recovery Coaches. *"My purpose is to help others find their way,"* she stated about those she serves. *"I support them and am their biggest cheerleader."*

During **Child Welfare Workforce Development Month**, we focus attention on the unique relationships with those we serve. Read how **JonDez** describes his relationship with **Social Worker Torrance Jennings**. *"Torrance has been there for my entire journey," JonDez stated. "Everyone has a story. Torrance has been a part of mine from the beginning. He is family."*

The **Academy for Workforce Development Mentoring Program** is now in its 21st year



matching DCF Senior leaders with mentees plucked from our workforce to build and shape leadership capacity. The mentors share their development experiences and *secret sauce* to their own success by pouring into the *NEXT Ups*. Beginning in 2002, the program has seen **146** mentors (many volunteering their time with multiple pairings!) connected to **385** mentees. Mentees will pick the mentor's brain, shadow meetings, and attend forums that they wouldn't ordinarily be exposed to during their daily work.

DAS BITS & DCF represented Team Connecticut on a panel discussion "*Working Together for Better Outcomes*" at the 2023 ISM + PHSA Education Conference & Expo produced by the American Public Human Service Association (APHSA) held in Kissimmee, Florida. **Treena Mazzotta, Eric Nixon, Kate Dwyer** along with a team from the state of Nebraska participated in this national conference attended by 1500 participants including DCF's own **Michelle Laboy** who is on the conference planning committee and **Elizabeth Stokes** who was among the 2023 cohort of **Emerging Leaders**. Congrats Liz!



Congratulations to **Child and Family Agency of Southeastern Connecticut** for opening our state's 4th Urgent Crisis Center! The UCCs are designed to divert children experiencing a behavioral health crisis from an emergency department visit if not warranted. Almost 200 children across Connecticut have benefitted from this type of intervention. For other locations and more information on UCCs: [Urgent Crisis Centers](#)

We all must continue to lift the stigma of seeking support during **Suicide Awareness Prevention Month** and throughout the year. Across the country, **988** has been designated as the three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#). Connecticut has experienced a 125% increase in calls over the past year. Keeping spreading awareness!

I appreciate all of your efforts!