

A Message from Commissioner Hill-Lilly



**Father's Day, Reunification Month** and **PRIDE Month** are all highlights of June!

**Happy Father's Day** again to our **Fathers, Stepfathers, Foster and Adoptive Fathers and Father figures!** We recognize the unique influence a Father has on his children and will continue to lift and empower the Fatherhood voice and include Fathers in all aspects of our work. These efforts have included hiring a **Fatherhood**



**Coordinator** and establishing best practices across the Agency, so **Fathers are equal partners** in parenting.



The **"Best Dad by Par"** event again was a huge success! Hosted by **DCF's Foster Care Division**, in collaboration with the **Statewide Fatherhood Engagement Leadership Team**, Fathers of all kinds came together for a round of golf and celebrate the critical role they play in the life of a child. Thank you, **Governor Lamont**, for attending!

*"I wanted to give my daughter the best life possible,"* stated **John James**. Three days before Father's Day - and his birthday - John was reunited with his daughter, Madison. Read about his journey and the message he has in this month's **"Spotlight"** for other Fathers involved with DCF.



June is also **Reunification month**. Since the beginning of the year, over 230 children have been safely reunited with their families. Critical to reunification is the role foster parents play in supporting not just the child, but also the birth parents as they partner to establish life-long relationships while working towards permanency.



**James Clifford** and his wife have been foster parents since 2021 and embraced fostering with open hearts. Read in this newsletter how they have cared for children birth to five years old, and even provided respite and emergency temporary care for children up to eleven years of age. *"Until I am too tired or too old, I will be here, fostering,"* James stated. Watch James here on the **WFSB GreatDay@9A** segment: [James Clifford WFSB](#)

Thank you to the **Foster Care Division** for putting on fabulous appreciation events over the past two months! We value our foster and adoptive families who "answer the call" to support the children and families we serve! **We cannot say THANK YOU enough!**



Building future leaders is one strength of our Agency. This month, we graduated 8 DCF leaders from the

**Executive Fellowship Program.**

Congratulations to **Jeanette Blackwell, Olga Coleman-Williams, Linda Dixon, Maribel**

**Martinez, Lenisa Mathew, Matthew Pelowski, Heidi Pugliese and Nieka Thompson** on this wonderful accomplishment! Congratulations are also in order for **Nicole Cossette and Kristen Dudanowicz** from the **Office of Early Childhood** as well as **Fatmata Williams** from the **Department of Social Services** who are also **Executive Fellowship graduates!**

Mentoring relationships lasts for a lifetime! **"Planting the Seeds for Growth"** was the theme of this month's Academy for Workforce Development **L.E.A.D. 2024 Mentoring Program Graduation.** Mentors presented their innovative projects to improve aspects of our case practice along with hearing a keynote address from **Dr. Natasha Wright, LCSW** and a few jokes along the way. One fast fact.....two Mentees have already been promoted! Great job everyone!



Thank you to **President and CEO Dr. Sabrina Trocchi from Wheeler Clinic** and **City of Hartford Mayor Arunan Arulampalam** for the opportunity to speak a press conference announcing the successes of the **Hartford Emergency Assistance Response Team (HEARTeam).** This unique program provides mental health responders to help Public Safety Departments in response to 911 calls. Learn more here: [HEARTeam](#)

Thank you as well to our partners at **Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI)** for asking me to provide opening remarks at the **2024 Evidence-Based Practice Conference: "Cultivating Connections and Equity in Connecticut's Behavioral Health System."** The event brought together over 460 behavioral health providers, school professionals, state agency staff, and others working with CHDI to strengthen children's behavioral health EBPs across our state.



Congratulations again to the **May 2024 Employees of the Month**..... Who has been nominated to receive the **June award**? Is it **YOU**? Read on.....

June is **PRIDE month**. Read about the **Stonewall Uprising**. Initially referred to as "a riot," the brave actions of a small group were actually protests in the community that served to both draw attention to the injustices brought against the **LGBTQIA+** community and launched the gay right's movement.



The **CT Department of Children and Families** is committed to consistent, safe, and affirming care, support, and services for **LGBTQIA+** children, young adults, parents, caregivers, and foster parents working with the Department. Please see our enhanced **website** with supports and resources for children and families: [LGBTQIA+ website](#)

**Juneteenth, a Celebration of Freedom and a Day of Reflection**, was held this month. In our state, this was the second year Juneteenth was legally recognized as a paid state holiday. Known by many names such as "**Second Independence Day**", "**Jubilee Day**", "**Freedom Day**", and "**Black Independence Day**", the day commemorates the date that news of the **Emancipation Proclamation** (and their subsequent freedom from slavery) reached enslaved people in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865. This was three years after President Abraham Lincoln had issued the proclamation.



**Thanks for all you do - each and every day!**