



Employee of the Month Awards!

Congratulations to the following staff who have been nominated within their respective Divisions to receive the October Employee of the Month Award!

Paul Gressly - Foster Care Division

Paul Gressly has been in the Foster Care Division since 2017, and he has single-handedly managed the post-adopt college program for approximately 11 years now. He is no stranger to fostering, having grown up with parents who provided foster care for many years. His experience led him to pursue the social work field. In addition to the college program, he was also reviewing every single subsidized adoption packet within the State, up until the year 2020, when some packets were disseminated out for review, and then the rest were dispersed recently in 2024. Paul has worked very hard to make sure that the adoption subsidy packets were always complete and on time. He has gone beyond his scope to help each person who reached out to him with questions, or if they needed assistance to complete their subsidy packet with precision. He is also a student of ongoing professional development and has been an active member of CT Council on Adoption. Paul has managed a very high caseload for the post-adopt college population which continues to grow. To say that Paul has gone above and beyond to help his college students is minuscule, when looking at the actual work conducted, as it has gone way beyond his regular schedule. Paul is very meticulous, conscientious and produces high quality work and has been patient, efficient and effective when working with college youth, families, and community stakeholders. Paul is always more than willing to help his students, parents, colleagues at any time of the day or night as he doesn't want families to feel any more stressed than need be. We routinely receive commendations from parents and students who respect his work ethic and commitment. His collaborative efforts are stunning as has established great relationships with internal colleagues and external community providers. He handles every college situation in an effective and timely manner. He truly cares about every student in the post-adopt college program and has put his all into his work to make sure that every single youth receives guidance, help and support along their college journey. Paul's actions have been consistent with the agency's mission. He has been an invaluable asset to the post-adopt college program, and the Agency as a whole. We are very fortunate to have him!

EXCELLENT



Terry Watkins - Careline

The Careline Management team is excited to nominate Careline Supervisor Terry Watkins for Employee of the Month. Terry has dedicated an impressive 30 years to DCF, including 18 years in Manchester and has been a part of our Careline team since 2015. Her contributions to our team are nothing short of exceptional, and this recognition is long overdue. Terry has been instrumental in various initiatives, notably the creation and ongoing updates of our screening manual, which has become a vital resource for our work. She plays a crucial role in training our staff, ensuring they are well-prepared and supported in their roles. Terry's "Tips of the Day" emails play a key role in keeping everyone informed and aware of policies and Careline procedures, enhancing staff learning and bringing significant value to our Careline operations. Terry is incredibly supportive of her staff, always ready to lend a hand and advocate for their needs, and her unwavering dedication is deeply appreciated by everyone she works with. Terry skillfully guides her staff in assessing our cases with critical thinking, recognizing the children and families that need our involvement and support. She is dependable, professional, and a true team player, treating everyone with kindness and respect while demonstrating a deep sense of care for our work, the children, and their families. When additional coverage is needed, Terry always volunteers to work extra after-hour shifts. She has done it all, and we appreciate her every day. Currently, she works 1st shift but has also previously worked 3rd shift, where she supervised primaries and handled after-hour responses. Terry's commitment to excellence and her dedication to supporting our Careline team make her an outstanding candidate for Employee of the Month. Thank you, Terry, we at the Careline appreciate you.

The logo for SPEECHLESS, with the word in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

Alexandra Jennett - Bridgeport Area Office

We like to nominate Administrative Assistant, Alexandra Jennett, as employee of the month. Alexandra shows grace and humility with whomever she comes across and interacts with. Alexandra provides unwavering daily support to Office Director, Chrichton Stewart, as well as countless number of supports to the entire Bridgeport Office and staff. Alexandra exudes a profound level of approach in bringing a stable structure to the Bridgeport Office around tasks associated with regular Officewide communications, staffing trainings, calendar agendas, etc. Alexandra does her work efficiently and is an important glue that keeps the Bridgeport Office afloat. The Bridgeport Office is proud to have Alexandra and is appreciative of her commitment to the office.

Evelyn Ayala - Norwalk Area Office

I am honored to recommend Evelyn Ayala, who has been an exemplary office assistant in the Norwalk office. With over 30 years of state experience, Evelyn consistently demonstrates that she is both efficient and reliable. Within her role as an office assistant, Evelyn ensures that provider invoices are properly processed in the link. In any moment, Evelyn can be seen zooming around the office searching for a Social Worker or Supervisor to make sure all of her payments are entered accurately and timely. Her unwavering dedication and tireless

commitment to her role, makes her a vital part of the office. Recently, Evelyn noticed a need in our visiting room and took the initiative to clean, paint a chalk wall and obtain baby furniture to ensure we are meeting the needs of our families. Her meticulous attention to detail, exceptional organizational skills, and proactive approach makes her an asset to the Norwalk staff.

Jessica Slauson - Waterbury Area Office

The Waterbury office is pleased to nominate Jessica Slauson for employee of the month. Jessica began her employment with the Department on 11-13-17, all in treatment units. Jessica has a great work ethic and a great attendance record. She is independent but is also a team player, is excellent at documentation and is efficient in her work. We often receive compliments from DCF staff, providers and AAG's for her prompt and detailed information on her cases. She was recently recognized and commended by our AAGs for her dedication on a 7-children TPR case that the AAG described as being the most complex case she has experienced in her 20-year DCF history due to the large volume of providers and moving parts. The effort put forth by Jessica cannot be overstated. Jessica is very reliable and always meets her visitation for home visits. Jessica has a good understanding of people and is able to utilize her engagement skills to gain a solid understanding of the strengths and risk factors present on all cases assigned to her. Jessica dedicates her free time to being assigned as a mentor to our new trainees as well as being an active F.E.L.T member. Jessica is an asset to the Department, and we are thankful to have her part of the Waterbury family.

Lineth Santos - Danbury Area Office

The Danbury Office is nominating Lineth Santos investigative SWS. She is an advocate for Racial equity and co-leads our office Racial Justice initiative. She is someone who is thoughtful about her approach to the work, always working to help coach and guide her staff. She has worked to provide resources and education to our trainees and seasoned staff alike. In addition to her work with Racial Justice Lineth is an active member of our Wellness committee and works to ensure that staff have opportunities to participate in activities to build camaraderie and place for staff to come together.



Tara Tebo - Torrington Area Office

Tara has been selected for employee of the month. Tara has been at DCF since 2019. She started as an Office Assistant and was promoted to Secretary 2 in April 2024. Tara was multi-tasking in her new position along with training new OA's coming into the office. Tara is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to legal work and background checks, as well as many of office tasks. She is always willing to help her co-workers in any capacity and go above and beyond, always with a smile on her face. Tara is considered the "mom" of the office. She is compassionate, caring, and willing to help and support the office whenever needed. She adapted to her new role with ease and is an asset to the Torrington office.

Kelley Wood - New Haven Area Office

Kelley Wood has recently returned to the agency in September 2024. Kelley has always demonstrated an excellent work ethic and gone above and beyond for her team, the office and for the families that she works with. She has such a passion for working with children and families and especially for her caseload of high-risk newborns. Recently on 9/27/24, Kelley was assisting her peer in the unit by attempting an unannounced home visit to the home of a MGM on a case in effort to locate a mother and her baby. When Kelley arrived at the home of MGM, she found the front door opened ajar. Kelley knocked and called out for MGM and MGM faintly responded and told her to come inside. Kelley observed that MGM had labored breathing and was slumped over. MGM reported that she overdosed on sleeping pills. Kelley immediately and without hesitation, contacted emergency services to quickly respond to the home. MGM was administered Narcan, and she responded to the Narcan. MGM was subsequently transported to the hospital. The assigned SW on the case met with MGM a few days later to check on her wellbeing. MGM asked the SW to please thank Kelley, as Kelley's home visit and quick response to contact emergency services saved her life. We are very proud of Kelley and are fortunate to have her back as a SW in the New Haven Office. Keep up the great work, Kelley!

Hemnauth (Vinnie) Arjune - Milford Area Office

We would like to nominate Hemnauth (Vinnie) Arjune, Intake Social Worker from the Milford Area Office for employee of the month. Vinnie has been employed by DCF for 19 years and most of his time has been in Intake. Vinnie has been assigned several fatality investigations in recent years and he most recently received a fatality case that involved an infant drowning. One of Vinnie's greatest strengths is family engagement. The sensitivity and compassion Vinnie has for families who have experienced the tremendous loss of a child speaks to what an incredible human being he is. Vinnie provided comfort to the grieving mother through the investigation process while at the same time assisting her in making funeral arrangements. Vinnie carefully and expertly balanced completing the Department's investigation while supporting the family during their grief, including supporting the parent responsible for the child's passing. Fatality case situations are extremely difficult, yet each time Vinnie has been assigned to one of these cases, his compassion and respect for the family during their most difficult time has made a lasting impact on them which they will never forget. The care Vinnie shows to all the families he works with and also to his coworkers during their difficult times is very much valued and appreciated by the Milford staff!



Dina Kelly - Norwich Area Office

Dina Kelly is an exemplary leader and team member. She recently assisted a Social Worker with placing a youth at Solnit North from the Waterford STTAR, as the unit was stretched thin. She was making efforts prior to doing this placement in trying to find biological parents/relatives for the youth for over a year. She went on Facebook, reached out to MA CPS, did a LexisNexis, asked FPs (continuously), reached out to our FCD. While assisting the SW with the placement,

youth commented that he did not know if he is Black to which SW responded that he is Haitian, and the youth seemed surprised. When Dina heard this, she returned to the office and reached out to the youth's attorney and GAL for assistance, as she felt he needed to know all about his history. The GAL sent a letter to MA CPS, which really got things moving in the right direction. The social worker ultimately contacted Dina and provided the information we were looking for. Dina contacted the youth's mother, and she confirmed that she is in fact the youth's mom and wants to meet him! Mom has since met youth and wants to do whatever it takes to reunify. Youth was adopted in MA, mom said she thought she was doing the right thing by having him adopted, as she was in an abusive relationship. This is only one of many things Dina has done. She remains in the trenches with the workers and supervisors to ensure timely permanency. She is a strong advocate for each worker. She is honest and straightforward with how she deals with issues be it on a case, with an employee, with the fiscal department, executive team, etc. Everyone in her management set talks about how supported they feel by her. She is the reason why employees continue to work for the Department. She has been a hard worker for the Department since the first day she started at DCF, no matter which facet of DCF she has worked. She always has a smile on her face, she is so very welcoming to new staff, always finds strengths in every worker. An overall asset to the agency. She is co-chair of the Norwich racial justice team. She has gone out to the local schools to get officials on board with our racial justice initiatives, such as taking a critical look at reports being made by the schools. She is consistent working on initiatives that improve our work. She is always willing to have difficult conversations and is always transparent.



Traniece McKnight - Middletown Area Office

Traniece is a seasoned permanency social worker within the Middletown office who has been with the Department for just over 20 years. She is everyone's favorite social worker! She is extremely reliable and conscientious, and she strives hard each day working toward permanency for her kids. Her dedication and hard work are evident with the many reunification/guardianship transfers and adoptions she has had over the years. Traniece is always on the run going above and beyond in ensuring all her kids needs are met along with their caregivers. She is a true partner in the work and ALWAYS has a smile, kind word to offer, and a positive attitude. She puts any judgement aside with families and has a quiet, but firm/direct approach which really reaches people. She takes great pride in her work and is outstanding in fatherhood engagement. She had an amazing reunification outcome on a case recently involving a father and his young son. Against all odds, this father overcame his past and after a long legal battle, he was able to reunify successfully. Traniece was one of his biggest supporters and advocates which he clearly recognized. It is a common occurrence to get positive feedback from stakeholders, foster parents, parents, etc., on Traniece's professionalism, kindness, and support. She is a true team player and is always there to help out. Her work and dedication should be celebrated and recognized.

Patrick Placido - Willimantic Area Office

Recently, an AAG shared the following regarding Patrick's work with a family with chronic and complex needs- and who is involved on both sides of the juvenile court: "I wanted to take a moment to recognize Patrick Placido for his amazing efforts [on one of his] cases. We had a detention review – the third one we have attended in the last three weeks for the youth. In the span of about 3 weeks, Patrick was able to work with a very reluctant and reactive father and got an entire DDS application completed for youth, just before his impending 18th birthday. There was nothing but praise for Patrick in court – from the judge, the prosecutor, public defender, and probation. Not only did Patrick get the DDS application done, but he also got an expedited referral into MDFT. Patrick was able to communicate with the court and all parties in a confident, composed manner. All the praise is very well deserved." Accomplishing the above in expeditious timeframes required attention to detail, follow up and follow through with RRG, multiple providers, AAG and SWS; all of which he accomplished seamlessly. This is fantastic work noting that Patrick has been with the Department for only 9 months and prior to joining DCF had no knowledge of the court systems and executing CPS work within them. Additionally, Patrick routinely assists his peers when needed and truly takes a person-centered approach to Child Protection work both with his clients and with providers. As noted above by AAG, this father's reluctance and reactivity has been a barrier to prior interventions with DCF. Patrick has been patient, clear, supportive and most of all - kind, which has made a big difference!



ShaMia Henderson - Hartford Area Office

ShaMia has been with the Department for many years and has served as SW, ISW, Supervisor, Intake Supervisor, and ACR facilitator. She recently transitioned from the role of an ACR facilitator to supervise an Ongoing Services unit. During her transition, she has been proactive meeting with her peers as well as her new staff. Has established clear systems, expectations and trust with her staff. ShaMia has been diligent in getting to know her staff and cases assigned to her unit. ShaMia can provide clear directions and deadlines without losing the ability of importance of supporting her team. ShaMia takes great pride in her work, and it shows. She is a trusted team player, has a wealth of knowledge, and a delight to work with.

Orisha Crooms - Manchester Area Office

Orisha Crooms is being nominated (by several people including her supervisor, manager, and a Careline PS) for her hard work on several cases. Orisha has demonstrated outstanding engagement skills, assessment skills, and compassion, and has been an advocate for the children on her caseload. On 09/04/2024, during a home visit, Orisha trusted her "gut instinct" that something was not right and communicated this promptly to her supervisor. As a result of Orisha's work with the family throughout the assessment, the child was safe. After the child entered the Department's care, Orisha continued her efforts to keep her parents in the loop, despite their lack of communication and inconsistent whereabouts, as she knew this

meant a lot to the child. Orisha was also patient and understanding with the child's foster parents as they navigated their first placement. Orisha truly exemplifies the remarkable work we all do as social workers. The Careline PS noted the following regarding Orisha's response to an on-call case alert, ""Her empathy, dedication, and skill in connecting with the family were truly remarkable. Orisha's ability to engage the children and their caregivers was key to making progress in this challenging case. She was amazing, and her efforts have made a significant impact. We at the Careline appreciate all that Orisha did to support this family. The Hartford area office was appreciative along with upper-level management.

Jovannie Vincenty-Medina - New Britain Area Office

Social Worker Jovanni Vincenty-Medina has been with DCF for 2 ½ years. As a social worker, he is very compassionate towards his clients and spends a lot of time building relationships with families. He is also the first person to offer support to his peers in times of need. In August 2024, Jovanni successfully completed the Army/State of CT Officer Candidate School (OCS) for the Army National Guard while also working as a trainee here at DCF. Completing OCS is a very grueling and challenging process in itself but doing so while also subsequently learning at our own training academy, managing a caseload and transitioning from trainee to social worker is a huge feat and accomplishment. 2nd Lieutenant Vincenty-Medina now has the task and privilege to continue serving the state in various capacities with DCF and the CT Army National Guard.

Alyson Perez - Meriden Area Office

Alyson Perez is being nominated for Employee of the Month for her unwavering consistency and dedication to her work, regardless of case complexities. She treats every investigation as she would with a same day response with urgency, responding to families as quickly as possible. Alyson consistently makes timely referrals, and her assessments are thorough, well-organized, and of the highest quality. She approaches even the most challenging tasks without complaint and is someone her peers and the office leadership can always rely on. Alyson's commitment to excellence and her positive attitude makes her an invaluable asset to the office, truly deserving of this recognition.



Kentavis Brice - Health Management and Oversight Division

It is with great pleasure that HMO Division nominate Kentavis Brice as this month's Employee of the Month. Kentavis has been with the division since 2021 and was hired as the Statewide Multidisciplinary Evaluation (MDE) Coordinator. Kentavis may have been new to DCF and the DCF MDE however, he quickly stepped into the role providing leadership, structure and consistency with the MDE process as well as bringing a wealth of knowledge working with the child welfare population. He has established invaluable relationships with both our regional staff and our outside MDE providers and has enhanced their ability to work together for the common goal of improving the health and wellbeing for the children we serve. In addition, Kentavis is an active member of our HMO Racial Justice committee providing insight and compassion to every project the committee works on. Most recently collaborating with other

HMO Racial Justice committee members on the new Health Literacy project. His work with the adolescent population in previous roles has been invaluable to the project. Kentavis is also a highly self-directed person. If there is a skill or topic that he wants to learn about he takes it upon himself to seek out how and where to obtain the knowledge. He is currently participating in the Lead Mentoring Program through the Academy of Workforce and Development. I know we will see more great things from Kentavis in the future! Lastly, Kentavis is also simply a joy to work with. He has a great sense of humor and always willing to help anyone in our division and regularly recognizes others for their contributions to the team. We are truly lucky to have him in our division.

Beth King - Transitional Supports and Success

Beth came to the Wilderness School in 2023 as a full-time supervisor however, she worked from 2017 through 2019 as a Wilderness School Seasonal Instructor and Course Director. She has brought her knowledge of experiential/outdoor education, along with a background in social work to program. She has been an excellent fit for our program. She works with a steady consistency and is always willing to extend her support as our program needs rise. Importantly, Beth makes excellent judgements and always strives to do high quality work with excellent results. She is fun, creative, and always willing to learn. Recently, Beth has been working to expand our regional course area by exploring the natural resources of the state in order to do courses closer to the communities of the groups served by Wilderness School. Additionally, Beth administers short courses and shorter expeditions for the program. Congratulations Beth well deserved.



Laurie Pierson - PRTF (South)

Laurie Pierson is highly deserving of the Employee of the Month nomination at Solnit PRTF due to her dedication and years of service, both at the Hospital and PRTF units. As a compassionate patient advocate, Laurie has built strong, trusting relationships with the youth, helping them feel supported and heard. Her calm demeanor consistently contributes to creating a peaceful and stable environment within the unit. Laurie's sharp clinical assessment skills have been invaluable, especially when working with medically complex youth, ensuring they receive the best care and treatment possible. During staffing shortages, Laurie remained a reliable constant on second shift, going above and beyond to maintain continuity of care and support for both the staff and youth. Her dedication, compassion, and clinical expertise make her an outstanding candidate for this recognition.

Jennifer White - PRTF (North)

Jennifer White has been nominated for employee of the month based on the following: 1. Excellence in Patient Care: Jennifer consistently provides exceptional care to psychiatric patients, offering a compassionate and calming presence in challenging situations. Her ability to de-escalate crises while maintaining patient dignity stands out. She goes above and beyond to ensure each patient feels heard and understood. 2. Teamwork and Support: Jennifer is a

collaborative team player, always willing to assist her colleagues. She actively supports newer staff members by offering guidance and sharing her expertise, fostering a positive work environment.3. Professionalism and Dedication: Jennifer demonstrates unwavering professionalism and empathy, even when faced with high-stress scenarios. Her dedication to patient well-being is evident in every shift, making her an indispensable part of the team. Jennifer's commitment to holistic patient care and her leadership within the team make her highly deserving of this recognition. Written by: Albert J. Solnit North PRTF's Director of Nursing.

Catherine Santiago - Fiscal

Catherine Santiago, Associate Fiscal Administrative Officer, is a valuable asset to Fiscal Services. She has stepped into a position and had the responsibility to bring State Single Audit in compliance. She has been steadfast in her approach and dedicated in addressing the backlog of the work. She is always upbeat and willing to help her co-workers and contract support unit.

Chelsea Powell - Juvenile Justice Education Unit

Sometimes the term 'hitting the ground running' can be overused or not accurate. However, when thinking about the work of Chelsea Powell, Pupil Service Specialist for the JJEU, the term genuinely applies. Chelsea has certainly hit the ground running in her work serving the students and families in the Juvenile Justice system. Chelsea brings a wealth of experience and expertise understanding to the barriers and challenges many of our students face. She pairs that knowledge with a calm poise and easy connect ability to her students as well as her partners and colleagues. What's great about Chelsea isn't just that she fulfills the tasks of her job so well, it's that she looks at things with an eye towards innovation and improvement. So, while she helps her students and families to have better opportunities in their life, she cares about the unit and those she works alongside with too. That's why when Chelsea brings forward new ideas or new strategies or solutions, they are always received so well. Her commitment and credibility as a professional and someone who always produces high quality work is a daily reminder of why the JJEU is fortunate to have her in their unit. Chelsea has hit the ground running and there's no sign of her stopping or slowing down. Thank you, Chelsea, for your great work!



Dr. Stephney Springer - Central Office Clinical and Community Consultation and Supports Division

Dr. Springer's unwavering dedication to advancing Connecticut's children's behavioral health system is truly remarkable. She has been instrumental in addressing the critical issue of children languishing in emergency rooms while awaiting behavioral health services. Her tireless efforts ensure that these vulnerable children and families receive timely care, alleviating their immediate crises and paving the way for their long-term well-being. A key aspect of Dr. Springer's success is her exceptional ability to collaborate with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and the Department of Social Services (DSS). Through

these partnerships, she supports youth and their families with Medicaid/HUSKY Health, ensuring they have access to comprehensive and continuous behavioral health services. Her work with DMHAS and DSS has strengthened the safety net for children and adolescents in need, making a tangible difference in their lives. Additionally, Dr. Springer has excelled in her role as a fair and supportive leader in managing the CT BHP contract. She provides invaluable support and mentoring to Carelon Behavioral Health staff, helping them navigate the complexities of the healthcare system and encouraging a collaborative and inclusive work environment. Her ability to balance the demands of contract management while fostering professional growth among her colleagues speaks volumes about her leadership skills and commitment to excellence. In recognition of her outstanding contributions, relentless advocacy, and her pivotal role in enhancing the behavioral health system for children and youth, I wholeheartedly recommend Dr. Stephney Springer for the Employee of the Month award at DCF. She exemplifies the highest standards of commitment, fairness, and excellence that this honor represents. Ann Hogan (Sr. Government Relations Officer-Yale New Haven Health). In my role at Yale New Haven Health, I have had the pleasure of working with Dr. Stephney Springer for many years. Stephney is a consummate professional with a calm (and calming) demeanor that has yielded a strong partnership where we effectively work together on behalf of the children and families we serve. I rely heavily on Stephney's knowledge of both the Agency and the state's behavioral health system, and I am never disappointed! Christa Rider (Reg 1:

Behavioral Health Clinical Manager): I would like to nominate Dr. Springer for Employee of the Month. Dr. Springer is very compassionate, reliable, knowledgeable, and an exceptional leader, who is a huge asset to our team and agency. Her unwavering dedication and support to



Connecticut's most vulnerable children and families is second to none. She consistently will spend the time to understand a child/family's needs and many times goes out of her way to support coming up with a viable solution. Dr. Springer's holistic view of children and families and their intersectionality with systems is respected, especially through her lens of racial justice, trauma and other social determinates of health. Similarly, Dr. Springer is equally as supportive to her colleagues. She is committed to investing in her staff and their continued growth and professional development. She continues to be a mentor to many, whether that be colleagues watching her from afar or working directly with her. Dr. Springer will go out of her way to check in on you as a person. I personally have the upmost respect for her and feel privileged to be able to learn from her or consult with her on cases.

Gina Mangano - Area Office Clinical and Community Consultation and Supports Division

We are pleased to nominate Gina for Employee of the Month in a gesture that we hope honors all the work that she has done on behalf of the Department and the children and families we serve. Gina Mangano, Norwich Intimate Partner Violence Specialist, has been a dedicated DCF employee for the past 27 years, and most notably one of the original Intimate Partner Violence Specialists in the state. Gina is retiring at the end of October, which was a difficult decision for

her, as she is described by her supervisor, Lori Blinderman, as pouring her heart into her work. Lori also described Gina as being a powerful advocate for families and being closely connected to the community. Gina has been one of the original members of the Steering Committee for the Justice Center opening in Waterford. The Justice Center will serve families from the region in a holistic center for clinical, case management, legal, housing, and parenting services for all members of families impacted by violence. Gina's colleagues, IPVS Caitlin Rustic and Jenette Arabasz, describe Gina as "a fierce advocate for the families. Caitlin Rustic: "Her insight and knowledge around IPV embodies the true meaning of advocacy. When coming into this position, Gina went above and beyond to make sure that we were set up with everything we could need. She also took the time to introduce us to community providers to ensure that a strong working relationship continued throughout the Region. Gina was a support for us, whether we needed to process a case or by encouraging us to develop our own advocacy skills. We are very thankful to Gina. " Jenette Arabasz: "Gina is an incredible mentor and advocate in the field of IPV. Her dedication and clarity in documentation not only reflect her commitment to the work but also set a high standard for others. Only knowing Gina for a year now, she is an inspiring person that I wish I had met sooner. When I first began my work as IPVS, she was kind, welcoming and ensured that I had all the information to succeed in this position including documentation, connections with providers/the communities we serve. Gina is an employee to admire and very deserving of employee of the month."

Sarah Gibson - Family and Community Services Division

It is with great pleasure I nominate Sarah Gibson Employee of the Month for the Family & Community Services Division. Sarah has shared her various talents with the department for over 23 years. In that time, she has been a principal attorney in Region 2, Foster care in Region 4, CO Lead for Congregate Care and Foster Care, Director the Office

A large, stylized graphic of the word "STUPENDOUS!" in a bold, orange, bubbly font with a black outline and a slight shadow effect.

of Children Youth in Placement and for the past 5 years as the Region 4 Systems Program Director. Sarah's expansive experiences makes her one of our strongest SPDs. In her current role Sarah supports the Region 4 Regional Advisory Board and the Racial & Ethnic Disparities (RED) Reduction Project, while also supporting all the services in Region 4. Sarah's recent impact has been her outstanding work in responding to the CFRS Service Array section and support in the continued development of the Service Advisory Outcome Committee (SOAC). Sarah is a quiet but powerful behind the scenes player who moves the work forward with humble passion.

Miriam Migliacci - Education/Unified School District #2

Unified School District #2 is pleased to nominate Miriam Migliacci for Employee of the Month at Solnit North. Miriam transitioned seamlessly from her role as an ELA teacher to a Pupil Service Specialist, demonstrating remarkable adaptability. She has quickly acquired extensive knowledge and skills, positioning herself to train other PSS staff effectively. Miriam takes her responsibilities very seriously and is deeply committed to ensuring that every student on her caseload is well-represented and fully prepared for their educational journey. Her dedication and impact on our students are truly commendable.

Heidi Jaskiewicz - Office of Legal Affairs

This month, the Legal Division wishes to recognize Norwich paralegal Heidi Jaskiewicz as employee of the month. Heidi is a beloved member of the Norwich area office and the Legal Division. She is a support and mentor to both new and seasoned staff and is always willing to assist her colleagues. She is the Division expert on Indian Child Welfare Act notices and provides both support and training on ICWA matters as well as attending quarterly meetings with our tribal partners. In the words of her supervisor, "Heidi is truly the glue that keeps the Norwich office together." As noted by Office Director Dave Silva, " Heidi is an integral part of the Norwich office. She is very hands on with all of our legal needs and tries her best to get answers to any questions that are asked of her. The Norwich office and community is extremely fortunate to have Heidi." Heidi not only juggles the various responsibilities of her position, but also finds time to work on planning staff outings and organizing an annual holiday gift drive to ensure that our DCF involved families have a wonderful holiday experience. Heidi, you are a valued member of the Legal Division and the Department, and we appreciate you! Thank you and keep up the great work!



Elaine Jackson - Solnit South Hospital

No one will be surprised at our choice to nominate Elaine Jackson for Employee of the Month. She is known throughout Solnit South as a "go to" person who has answers to questions no one else can provide. However, what is truly extraordinary about Elaine is her unending and tireless dedication to the success of Solnit and to the youth we serve. In her role as Medical Records Specialist 2, she co-chairs the Medical Records Committee and keeps us all in line to ensure the medical records chart documentation is completed on time, per procedure and that it meets Joint Commission standards. This is just a piece of the 'work' aspect of her role here, but Elaine does so much more for Solnit. She reaches out to community organizations, finding people who will make special blankets for every youth admitted to Solnit so that each youth has something of their own to snuggle with when they go to bed each night. In addition, every year Elaine seeks holiday donations from the community and coordinates everything related to making wishes come true for the youth at Solnit. On her own time, she speaks at Churches and other community organizations to tell them about the kids at Solnit; she sets up our on-campus workshop for our "elves" and drives all over the state picking up donations that come in each year so that all the kids at Solnit have presents to open. All of this is above and way beyond what she was hired to do. Nominating her for Employee of the Month is just a small way that we can say a very big THANK YOU to Elaine Jackson.

