

A Message from Commissioner Hamilton



Thanks to each of you for your ongoing and unwavering commitment to serving our children and families. I recognize that the past few weeks have been unusually difficult given recent media coverage involving a tragic child death. Please remember to support each other and take a few moments to read our *"Spotlight on What's Right"* newsletter highlighting important events, milestones and the unique accomplishments of our staff.

Thank you to Monica Rams and the Central Office Diversity Action Team for putting together the Hispanic/Latine Heritage Month celebration! *"Collective Heritage, Growing Seeds of Hope, Safety & Respect,"* was Connecticut DCF's theme for the month. We were treated with inspirational words, videos, a panel discussion and yes..... salsa dancing lessons!



Congratulations to Social Work Supervisor Stephen Heredia who was awarded the 2025 William Rivera Humanitarian Award. "Mr. Heredia is respected by colleagues, trusted by families, and admired for his calm leadership, empathy, and unwavering advocacy," his nomination stated. "Through his vision and dedication, Mr. Heredia has created pathways of support for Hispanic and Latine families, ensuring they are seen, valued, and empowered within our system." Read more about Stephen in this month's Spotlight.



Nominees for the award also included Sandra Ramirez, Kathie Marotta, Nina Bentham, Bereniz Cote-Luna, and Annika Diaz. Click [here](#) to read their nominations:

[William Rivera Nominees.](#)
Congratulations everyone!



We raise heightened awareness this month of the epidemic of Domestic Violence across our communities. CT Safe Connecticut is a 24/7/365, free and confidential information and resource line for anyone impacted by domestic violence. Contact can be made by calling 1-888-774-2900 or visiting CTSafeConnect.org to call, chat, text or email for assistance.

A shout out one more time to the September Employees of the Month! Who has been nominated for the October Award? Read to see who is described as "*compassionate and kind,*" having a "*bubbly*" personality and a "*can do/positive*" attitude.



Were you seen at the Region 6 Foster Care Division Trunk or Treat event? A great night for all including our fabulous foster, kinship and adoptive parents and children in our care! Our staff even joined in the fun of dressing up!

Foster Care Division Program Director, Eduardo Rivera, discuss the importance of Kinship care on the WFSB Great Day at 9 show: [Eduardo Rivera](#). Clinical Behavioral Health Manager, Christa Rider, outlined the warnings signs of child sex trafficking: [Christa Rider on NBC 30](#)



Clinical Behavioral Health Managers Kristen Oliver and Melissa Milardo presented on the role of the Regional Resource Groups at a Connecticut Bar Association Child Welfare and Juvenile Law Section meeting. Important information to discuss!

Connecticut DCF strives to ensure every child has a permanent and loving family to support them. In fact, approximately 93% of children and youth in our care and custody reside with a family with about 7% in congregate care. This month, I attended the Ending the Need for Group Placement (ENGP) community forum to continue to assess ways to address gaps in our system, maintain children with their families, and enhance our service array.



After my opening remarks, the ENGP group heard from Deputy Commissioner Tina Jefferson, Director of Fatherhood Services Anthony Gay and Bureau of External Affairs Ken Mysogland about how their work intersects with this important topic.



Social Workers, Theresa Watkins and Alexis Williams, from the Hartford Office recently attended a Child Welfare class at Central Connecticut State University, where they shared their passion for the work they do. They spoke about the challenges and rewards of the work, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to make a difference every day. *"Even on the most challenging days, we're reminded that our work has purpose... helping children and families build hope and healing is what keeps us going,"* they stated.



Congratulations to the Waterbury Office for being honored by Kuhn, a Connecticut based nonprofit that helps people with disabilities find employment. This year in a vote, participants and staff selected Waterbury DCF as "Employer of the Year" for their Group Supported Employment program.

October is also National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The 2025 theme is *"Every story is unique, Every journey matters."* As we recognize that almost all of us know someone impacted by breast cancer, we can agree that early detection saves lives! The Connecticut Department of Public Health's [Early Detection and Prevention Program](#) provides breast cancer screenings at locations throughout the state for patients who have low income and who have no or limited health insurance.



As always, please remember the real and lasting impact you make every day on the lives of the children and families we serve and thank you for your continued dedication to this difficult yet rewarding work.