

## Commissioner's April 2025 Message



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month with the theme. **"Powered by Hope. Strengthened by Prevention."**

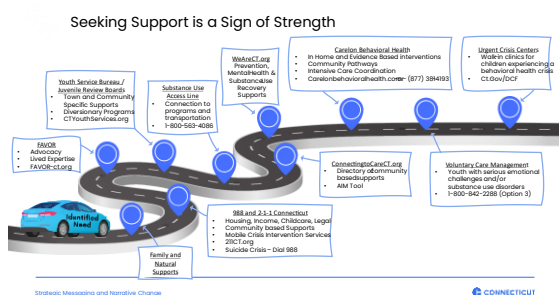
A fundamental belief we share is that **children are best supported by families and families are best supported by the community.** Seeking support truly is a sign of strength and we must continue to **lift the stigma** associated with asking for help.

**"Prevention"** brings with it many connotations from **"preventing"** involvement with DCF to

**"preventing"** a family from going deeper into an existing system. It is all our responsibility to provide **family-centered and timely supports** to those we serve.

To reinforce this philosophy, **Prevention is now the 6<sup>th</sup> Strategic Focus Area** of the Department.

**Prevention**  
Early intervention & support for families upstream



Connecticut has a vast array of supports and services for families - the question is how do we ensure all members of our communities - families, professionals and concerned citizens - know what is available? One effort the Department developed was this **"roadmap" of supports** video which is now a key component of the **Mandated Reporter training**. Watch it here: [Seeking Supports is a Sign of Strength](#)

Speaking of great resources..... **97% of the time** a child visits an **Urgent Crisis Center** they are **discharged home** to their families with wraparound services. Please take some time to review the information about the [UCCs](#) which includes a [flier](#) that can be provided to **our families including licensed caregivers**.

April is also **Safe Havens Awareness Month**. Passed in 2000, the law allows a parent, who does not believe they can care for their newborn, to **voluntarily give up custody of an infant age 30 days or younger** to the staff of an emergency room and remain anonymous. DCF will then place the baby in a pre-approved adoptive home. To date, **57 children have been safely placed**. Read more here: [Safe Havens](#)

**The Safe Havens Act for Newborns**

*No Blame. No Shame.  
No Questions Asked*



**DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE**

**Department of Agriculture** and state, regional, and municipal **Animal Control Officers (ACO)** to address this epidemic in our society.

"**The Link**" refers to the strong correlation between **animal cruelty, child maltreatment, and other forms of interpersonal violence**. Visit our website to learn more: [The Link](#). A strong collaboration exists amongst the **Department of Children and Families,**

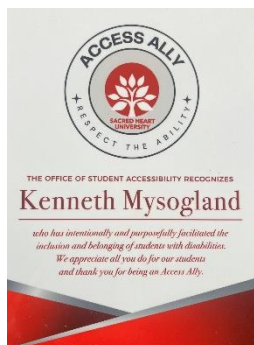
**Welcome Samaris Rose!** As we strive to lift the **voices of the children and families** that we serve, the Department has hired the first of its kind **Parent with Lived Expertise Consultant!** Read about Samaris in this month's "Spotlight" and her life's journey that includes both **working with and now working for DCF!**

A **shout out** one more time to the **March Employees of the Month!** Who has been nominated to receive the **April Award?** Read to see who is described as "culturally sensitive," a "leader," and "model employee."



Thanks to the fantastic efforts of **Director of Communications Peter Yazbak** and **Visual Media Designer Liz Calvi**, we now have a **new DCF logo** and a **modernized website!** Check out the enhanced features of our website here: [DCF Website](#)

Congratulations to **Lisa Bowen-Connor APRN** for being recognized as an "**outstanding MDT member**" at the Pinwheels for Prevention event hosted at the University of New Haven!



**Ken Mysogland** is our **Chief Administrator of External Affairs**, and he is also a **Professor of Social Work at Sacred Heart University**. Congratulations to Ken for being awarded the "**ACCESS Ally Award**" given to the faculty member who has done the most to support students with disabilities.

"**Youth Find They Have Sanctuary, Hidden Talent and Options in Solnit North Art Class**," is about **Anna Gawel's** work at the Solnit North PRTF, a residential treatment center for youth facing behavioral health challenges. Read how Anna leads the young men on a **transformative journey** that unfolds through the **power of art**. Watch her here on the [WFSB Great Day at 9a segment](#).





**Jackie Robison Day** was April 15<sup>th</sup>, and I threw out one of the first pitches at the **Yard Goats Barrier Breakers Recognition** event before the game. It was an honor to meet **Jackie's Grandson Busaro Robinson** along with leaders across Connecticut recognized for **creating pathways of inclusion and commitment** to standing up for others. This is who we are at DCF!



In a span of less than 48 hours, **I flew over 2,000 miles to highlight Connecticut's work** at the **Child Welfare League of America's (CWLA)** Annual Conference in Washington DC and then to Nashville Tennessee for the **American Public Human Services Association (APHSA)** National Leadership Academy. I remain so proud of our Agency!



Speaking of miles, after a **134-mile, 3+ hour round trip** to the **Norwalk Regional Office** the **Town Halls** are complete! Thank you to the **Norwalk, Meriden and CQI** staff for the engaging and genuine conversations this past month. You raised

**creative new solutions to practice challenges** while providing honest feedback. We are committed **to reviewing and implementing these thoughtful ideas** so please look forward to future updates.

**Jailene Derisse, MSW**, from the **Juvenile Justice Education Unit at DCF** and **myself** served on a panel entitled, "**Careers in Juvenile Justice Through the Lens of Education and Human Services**" hosted by Charter Oak State University.



A **Commissioner's Monthly Video** will now be provided to keep you updated on Agency operations. Watch **April's** again here: [Commissioner's April 2025 Video](#)

Thanks everyone!