

# The Human Side

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES • SPRING 2004

The mission of the Georgia Department of Human Resources is to assist Georgians in achieving healthy, independent and self-sufficient lives.

## DFCS Restructures

**T**he Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) has begun a major restructuring designed to ensure the safety and well-being of Georgia's children and help more families become independent.

"Based on our research, states that have implemented similar changes have seen a reduction in staff turnover, as well as an increase in pride of work," said DFCS Director **Janet Oliva**. "Retaining our

most experienced staff and recruiting better qualified staff will help us protect children and help families more effectively."

The restructuring establishes three new offices within DFCS. The Office of Child Protection will focus on protecting children from abuse, reunifying families when possible and finding permanent homes for children when necessary. The Office of Family Independence — including Temporary Assistance to Needy

Families (TANF), Food and Nutrition Programs, Child Care, Community Based Services and Medicaid Eligibility — will focus on moving families from economic dependence to self-reliance. These two offices are



Janet Oliva  
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## GPHA Contest Winner

**W**e published the 2003 Georgia Public Health Association's annual photography contest's first prize winner last year, but somehow missed the two other winners. **Myra Belcher, R.N., C.S., F.N.P.**, a nurse practitioner with the Bar-

tow County Public Health Department, won third prize for this thoughtful composition: "Public Health: Responding



to challenges, changes and opportunities." We will publish the second prize winner for 2003 in the summer Human Side, and our fall issue will feature the first prize winner for 2004 (to be announced in September).

## LATE BREAKING NEWS:

Governor Sonny Perdue has appointed **Beverly (B.J.) Walker** as the new commissioner of the Department of Human Resources, effective May 17. For more information: [www.dhr.georgia.gov](http://www.dhr.georgia.gov) (under "news").

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# Commissioner's Corner

## The 2004 Legislative Session: an Interim Report

As you know, Governor Perdue has called a special session of the General Assembly to begin May 3, 2004. The special session will address budgetary issues that were unresolved during the regular session that ended in April. It may also address several items in the Governor's legislative agenda.

We believe that legislation and budget items approved during the regular session that affect DHR will not be changed when the legislature returns.

The budget approved by House and Senate conferees supports the Governor's request for funds for DHR in several important areas. They approved new funding for:

- **Olmstead Plan community services** — funds to move 20 people with developmental disabilities from hospitals to community placements.
- **Child protection** — funds to continue development of the new child welfare information system and for a level of care system for children in foster care. This will help us improve services by better managing information and by providing appropriate care and treatment for children who have suffered from abuse and neglect.
- **Community services for older Georgians** — funds for the Community Care Services Program, which helps older Georgians stay in their communities and out of institutions. The funding will per-



Maria Greene

mit a modest expansion that will allow us to serve 400 additional people.

Several children's bills endorsed by Governor Perdue were approved by the General Assembly. These include:

- **Child Endangerment** — A law that makes serious acts of child endangerment a felony and adds penalties for exposing children to illegal drug labs in the home.
  - **Foster Parents Bill of Rights** — A bill that gives foster parents court standing, access to information on the child's history, and a new way to resolve grievances.
- The department worked with legislators to sponsor legislation that will help us improve our services.

Departmental legislation that passed during the session included:

- **Adoptions** — Senator Barry Fleming introduced HB 1322, which requires judges to review every six months the progress of children in DHR's custody who are available for adoption. Prior law required a yearly review. This brings the law into agreement with our Program Improvement Plan

for child protection.

- **Vital Records** — Senator Don Thomas introduced SB 478, which allows us to receive vital records information electronically and permits the Board of Human Resources to set fees for birth and death certificates and related services.
- **Lifetime Immunization Registry** — Representatives Ben Harbin and Debbie Buckner sponsored HB 1526, which expands the existing vaccination registry to include adults over age 18. This will enable health care providers to maintain adult immunization information and to plan for vaccine purchases. It will be helpful in emergency response situations as well.

The department appreciates those legislators who helped us to make these changes in the laws.

Finally, several reorganizations were included in legislation passed in the 2004 session. SB 456 transferred childcare licensing to the new Department of Early Care and Learning. The Division of Family and Children Services received budgetary approval to transfer staff from the state office to county offices as a part of its reorganization.

As you can see, DHR was deeply involved in the session and many of our programs and services were affected. I want to thank the many people who worked so hard during the "first forty days" to get good outcomes for the people we serve.

— Acting Commissioner Maria Greene

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# Human Resources Offices Merge

The Offices of Human Resource Management (OHRM) and Human Resource and Organizational Development (OHROD) merged on March 1. The combined agency is titled Office of Human Resource Management and Development (OHRMD), with **Rosa Waymon** as director. Waymon, who had been OHRM director, also served as DHR's acting deputy commissioner for several months through mid-April of this year.

**William Warren** continues as the primary contact for employees interested in training programs, conference planning, audio-visual services, web-based training and organizational development services.

**Gary Nagel** remains responsible for personnel policies, employee benefits, pay grades and compensation, performance improvement, employee relations, related training and workforce planning.

The merger is designed to

stream-line personnel administration and improve coordination between management training and organizational development.



Rosa Waymon

— Barbara Joye

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## DHR Wins Award for Giving



Rosa Waymon (left) and Linda Parker (second from left) accept the Commissioner's Cup award from Governor Perdue and Georgia Merit System Commissioner Marjorie H. Young (far right).

**DHR** has won a Commissioner's Award for contributing the second highest amount per person to the 2003 State Charitable Contributions Program (SCCP), in the category for agencies with

over 9,000 employees. University of Georgia staff gave the most per employee in that category. SCCP donations benefit some 1,200 nonprofit community organizations and charities.

DHR employees gave a total

of \$280,541 to the charity drive, with just under 25 percent participation. This topped the statewide participation level of 21 percent. Recently retired Office of Human Resources and Organizational Development (OHROD) Director **Dennis Yarman** chaired DHR's drive, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) Director **Rosa Waymon** was chairperson emeritus, and **Linda Parker** of OHRM served as coordinator. (OHROD and OHRM have since merged.)

"I agree with Governor Perdue that we have a culture of 'servant leadership' in Georgia state government, especially in DHR," said Waymon. "As our economy recovers we look forward to contributing even more next year."

— Barbara Joye

## DFCS Restructures

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expected to become operational in July.

The Office of Adoption, which has been separate since 1997, has rejoined DFCS to become the division's third office. The combined staffs of the Office of Child Protection and the Office of Adoption will be able to shorten the time a child spends in state custody before moving to a permanent home, according to Oliva.

The Adult Protective Services Program will move from DFCS to the Division of Aging Services, so that DFCS can maintain its focus on its core missions.

Two programs will help professional staff improve the quality of their work and encourage them to remain with the agency: a Child Protection Certification Program and a Career Path Program.

All child protection caseworkers will be required to become certified by January 1, 2005. New hires will complete eight weeks of training at a new DFCS academy, followed by two months of fieldwork supervised by an experienced caseworker.

"Rapid response teams" of caseworkers will be deployed to counties with excessively high child protection caseloads. Other measures have also been taken to lighten caseloads. Sixty-five staff from the state office have been reassigned to county offices. The Special Investigations Unit staff have also been reassigned to work directly under field managers, so that they can mentor less experienced case managers and help understaffed counties.

A College Child Protection Certi-

fication Program at schools of social work throughout the state will enable students to become certified to work in child protection by the time they graduate. They may also receive a tuition stipend if they agree to work for DFCS for two years after graduation. Currently, the

division has 232 vacancies for caseworkers.

DFCS expects the restructuring to substantially reduce child protection caseloads, reduce staff turnover to eight percent, and significantly increase work participation by TANF recipients.

— Barbara Joye

## Star Staff To Be Honored In May

DHR will honor our star staff by sponsoring an **employee recognition reception** from noon to 2:30 p.m., May 4 in the 29th floor board room at Two Peachtree Street in Atlanta. This event will take place in conjunction with the Georgia Merit System's third annual Public Employees Recognition Week to honor state employees across Georgia for outstanding service. DHR's activities also coincide with National Public Service Week, May 2-8.

"Congratulations to all of our winners and nominees for this wonderful honor," said Acting Commissioner Maria Greene. "Thank you for the dedication and commitment that you have exhibited in achieving this recognition."

**Donna Gordon**, a social services manager for the Madison County Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), won the Customer Service Award. She has been praised by the county's foster parent association as well as her co-workers for treating the children on her caseload as though they were her own. "If I were a foster child, I would want Donna Gordon to be my caseworker," says Shea Squire, administrative operations manager for Madison County DFCS, who nominated Gordon for the award.

**Tammy May** won the Community Service Award. As a new caseworker with Washington County DFCS she saw that the county's one-day-a-week food pantry did not meet the community's needs. She enlisted faith-based organizations to obtain and store food donations, volunteered to pick up the donations at a moment's notice, and set up a paperless referral and distribution system. Now, Washington County residents who are elderly, hungry or experiencing an emergency can receive food seven days a week.

**Marie Chow, RPh.**, directs Georgia Regional Hospital-Atlanta's pharmacy. She won the Innovations/ Suggestions Award for her comprehensive plan for lowering GRHA's cost of medication without affecting the quality of care. For example, by allowing physicians to substitute lower-priced equivalents for two classes of medications she saved the hospital at least \$27,000 in 2003.

**Cindy Moss**, director of state operations for the Office of Child Support Enforcement won the Leadership Award for spearheading numerous innovative projects, including developing and obtaining certification for a new computer system; establishing the "Where's My Child's Check?" customer service web page

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## Food for Thought

### Eating fish safely

Fish is good for everyone, including children and pregnant women — if you choose and prepare it safely. Fish is a great source of protein, minerals and vitamins. It also provides Omega-3 fatty acids, which are important for the developing fetus. Most sport fish caught in Georgia are high quality. However, fish and seafood caught in contaminated water may contain mercury, PCBs and other substances that people should avoid, especially young children, pregnant women and women who are nursing.

The Division of Public Health (DPH) and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division (GEPD) have joined forces to inform women about the safety of different types of fish caught in each part of the state, and healthy cooking methods. They are distributing four brochures called "A Woman's Guide to Eating Fish and Seafood" geared to coastal Georgia; the Coosa, Etowah and Oostanaula rivers; middle and south Georgia; and north Georgia.

You can get these brochures on fish safety in English or Spanish from county health departments, regional GEPD offices, the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service offices, fishing license vendors, bait shops, community organizations, and at [www.geha-online.org/pages/publications.htm](http://www.geha-online.org/pages/publications.htm) (under "fish consumption brochures") or call DPH's Chemical Hazards Program: 404/657-6534.

*-Jane Perry, director, Chemical Hazards Program, Division of Public Health*

**Cooking Tip:** Avoid cooking fish in batter or breading. Don't deep-fry fish. These methods seal in the liquid and fat where most contaminants are found. Instead: bake, broil, grill, roast or steam fish.

## DHR Values Diversity

The population of Georgia is changing rapidly and so is DHR's workforce. Our workforce is becoming older, with steadily increasing percentages of women, immigrants, members of a wide spectrum of minority groups, and individuals with disabilities, according to **George Gaines**, manager of DHR's Diversity/EEO Program.

"Diversity in our workforce will help DHR meet the challenges of the 21st century," said Gaines.

Last July a plan to guide the department in managing and valuing diversity was introduced on the Office of Human Resource Management and Development (OHRMD) website, <http://www2.state.ga.us/departments/dhr/DiversityPlan.pdf>.

A Diversity Project Work Group consisting of representatives from each division and office wrote the plan, and DHR's management

team endorsed it.

The Work Group is currently working toward full implementation of the plan. Several DHR policies have already been revised. Changes to Policies 101, 102 and 1503 include the following:

- OHRMD will provide direction, coordination and technical assistance to DHR administrators and managers regarding implementation of and compliance with requirements and provisions of the department's Diversity Plan.
- OHRMD will disseminate to all DHR organizations, by way of memorandum, policy, training and other relevant information for the purpose of informing and furthering the department's diversity interests and expectations.

For more information, contact George Gaines at 404-656-4136, [gbgaines@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:gbgaines@dhr.state.ga.us).

*— Edna Jackson*

## Write it Right: Seeing Double

Many English words sound or look like other words but have different meanings. You can avoid trips to the dictionary by remembering this list of common pairs that cause confusion:

- **accept:** to take something that is offered; **except:** to exclude
- **affect:** to have a style or a mood or have an effect on something; **effect:** to cause (verb); result (noun)
- **capitol:** building that houses a legislative body; **capital:** many meanings, including the city that is the seat of a government, or investment funds, or upper case letter
- **ensure:** to make certain, or guarantee; **insure:** to take out an insurance policy (can also mean to make certain)
- **continual:** done regularly; **continuous:** repeated or without interruption
- **immanent:** inherent; **imminent:** overhanging, or about to occur
- **stationary:** unmoving; **stationery:** letter paper

And while we're on the subject of pairs, here are two words that don't look alike but are often confused: **verbal:** uses words, either written or spoken; **oral:** uses the mouth, or spoken

words. When you hear people say "we had a verbal agreement" they probably mean "we had an oral (unwritten) agreement."

*— Marian the Grammarian*

# Christmas in the Strangest Places

**I**t was just part of my job, sitting through a regional DHR board transition meeting. For three full hours speaker after speaker walked to the podium and was given only four minutes to make their particular plea to the board. Armed with handouts of statistics and accomplishments, they made the best use of limited time to convince the attending board member that although cuts must be made, their agency was not the one to cut. I looked at the long list of speakers and felt a sense of dread knowing it would take three hours for all to be heard and then I had an hour's drive home after that.

I can't tell you specifically what changed my thinking or even when it started changing. I first noticed feeling as if an overpowering burden was being placed upon my shoulders simply by listening to the speakers. It is a fact that DHR must make cuts; how on earth will the board decide where those cuts will be? These are real people out here who will do without because there is not enough to go around. While I began feeling empathy for the board members who have this responsibility, I was also glad that when the meeting was over I would be able to shrug off this burden weighing down on me, put it all out of my mind, and go home. They will not.

Then there was the distraction coming from the back of the room. As the meeting was starting, I had seen the attendees in wheelchairs coming in. Now it was difficult to hear some of the speakers due to the

noise being made by some of the disabled children and adults in the back of the room.

Then it came their turn at the podium. I listened as each of those attendees was wheeled to the podium and the parents or other relatives who came with them told their story. I thought of my own two children. I have never had to worry about what will happen to them when I'm old and can no longer care for them, or when I die and there is no one willing to take on the daily responsibilities for caring for a disabled person. I do not have to feel trapped in daily routines, providing constant care and supervision, and not being able to leave my house even for a few minutes because there is no help to relieve me.

This was only the beginning. More stories were told. A loving wife told of the help she needed when her husband of 47 years developed Alzheimer's. A spry young-looking 76-year-old woman was thankful to have received help in purchasing her medication. The audience was moved to applause when "John" struggled through his four precious minutes to tell his story of how he had received training for a job and a place to live through mental retardation services. He is now "self-sufficient" when before he lived on the streets. He spoke of how this center is the only family he has.

Finally the meeting was over. I headed home in the darkness of the pre-Christmas night. I thought of

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Christmas came early for two families who were "adopted" for the holidays by the N.E. Atlanta office of the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). The kids had a lot of fun opening all the presents from the office staff. One family was living in a shelter. The mom of the second family was working part-time at the OCSE office as part of the welfare-to-work initiative. There were refreshments for everyone — and WSB-TV covered the story. Pictured above: **Shondra Echols**, N.E. Atlanta OCSE, with one of the children.

## Who's News

**A**ntonio "Tony" Flores, community outreach specialist with DHR's LEP/SI Client Services Program, was voted "Latino Person of the Year" by readers of the bilin-



gual newspaper *Atlanta Latino*. Reporter Jose L. Castillo explained that the newspaper honored Flores also "for his altruism and loyalty to his roots in the fastest growing minority community."

Flores moved to Atlanta from New York City in 1980. After working for Coca-Cola (USA) and helping to found the Atlanta Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Atlanta chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens and the advertising firm of Flores, Vargas and Amigos, Flores joined DHR in 2002. He works to ensure that consumers with limited English ability have access to services and that DHR is aware of the needs of immigrant communities.



**J**ohn Stewart has been named chief information officer for the Office of Information Technology. John and his team are responsible for ensuring the safety of our computer network, building new applications to advance the goals of

DHR, and establishing standards by which all projects will be monitored and measured. Prior to joining DHR, he worked for the Georgia Technology Authority, leading efforts to develop IT standards and policies.



**X**enia Wiggins was named Acting Director of the DHR Office of Communications (OC) in February. Wiggins worked in communications for the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Disease since 1985, heading up the division's communications office from 1998 to 2003. She has worked for DHR since 1975. The previous OC director, Jed Nitzberg, has joined Ogilvy Public Relations as an account director.



**C**harlie Ishikawa, an epidemiologist with the Center for Public Health Preparedness at the DeKalb County Board of Health, received the 2004 Sellers-McCroan award in recognition of his work developing a data management system for smallpox vaccination clinics. His system, originally designed for DeKalb County, was replicated statewide and became a national model. The award, jointly sponsored by the Georgia Public Health Association and the Division of Public Health, recognizes outstanding achievement and service to Georgians in the fields of epidemiology and/or laboratory science.



**T**he International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services has named **Larry Fricks**, director of MHDDAD's Office of Consumer Relations, the "2004 Person in Recovery." He was recognized for his key leadership in recovery efforts in Georgia and many other states, his advocacy for positive changes in the way people in recovery are regarded, and his work with projects such as Habitat for Humanity. He will receive the award at the association's annual conference in San Diego in May.



*Larry Fricks — photograph by Annemarie Poyo*



**W**. Douglas Skelton, M.D., recently appointed director of the East Health District 9-1, was named an Outstanding Citizen of the State of Georgia by Secretary of State Cathy Cox, and was honored with resolutions of appreciation by the Georgia House and Senate. Skelton, a former DHR commissioner and professor of psychiatry at Emory University, has held many positions in private practice, medical administration, medical education and public service. He served as dean of Mercer University's School of Medicine before returning to DHR.

**J**im Hilliard, DHR's Emergency Management Director, was named a "Certified Emergency Manager" by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency after he completed over two years of course work on topics such as disaster response and recovery operations, emergency planning, hazardous weather and flooding preparedness, infection control, and rescue operations.

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**F**ulton County DFCS staff, especially **Childcare Supervisor Maggie Glover**; the **DHR Office of Investigative Services**, especially **Senior Investigator Penny Bradley**; and **DFCS Child-care and Parent Services staff** helped federal authorities convict Frances Dukes and Emmet Jimerson on charges of defrauding the Department of Health and Human Services and DFCS by filing false

claims for childcare payments. Jimerson, director of Magnificent Daycare, added fictitious children to his rolls, using "borrowed" Social Security numbers and submitted false claims for subsidy payments totaling \$120,000. Frances Dukes, a DFCS employee, was also convicted of accepting bribes to overlook the bogus filings.

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## What's News

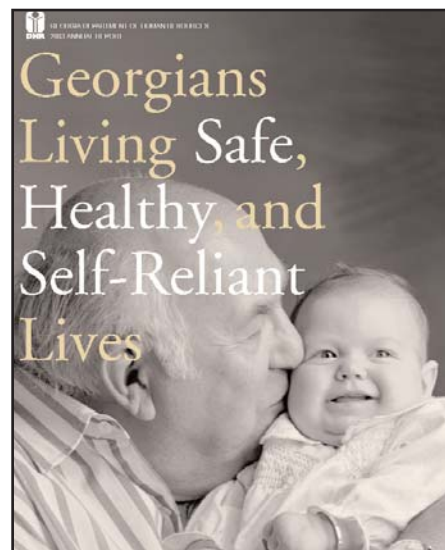
### Thinking about a career move?

**S**ome **DHR job openings** are offered to our employees first. You can find a special list of those jobs on the [www.dhrjobs.com](http://www.dhrjobs.com) web page.

The DHR Recruitment Services Team in the Office of Human Resource Management created [www.dhrjobs.com](http://www.dhrjobs.com) to provide greater access to DHR job information. Many positions posted at this site may not be found at other sites. You will also find information about how to apply for a job, DHR divisions and offices, and benefits.



The **DHR FY 2003 Annual Report**, written by the Office of Communications, sums up a year of accomplishments achieved despite many challenges. It pays tribute to the work of DHR managers and frontline staff alike. Each section summarizes highlights of the work performed by a division or office last year, accompanied by brief human interest stories that illustrate the benefits our services provide the people of Georgia. A special feature lists money we saved or earned for taxpayers in FY 2003 through unusual achievement or innovation. You can find the report on [dhr.georgia.gov](http://dhr.georgia.gov) under "About Us" and "Publications."



DHR FY 2003 Annual Report

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The **Office of Adoptions** is excited to announce that one of its families is currently being featured as a success story ("It Happened to be a Wednesday") on the national Wednesday's Child website.

"Wednesday's Child" is a television program that recruits families for children in foster care who are available for adoption. In Georgia, the program is a partnership of the Freddie Mac Foundation, WAGA Fox 5 Atlanta, and the Office of Adoptions. The children are profiled in a twice-weekly news segment, hosted by Amanda Davis. The Wednesday's Child website is maintained by the National Adoption Center and funded by the Freddie Mac Foundation. To read the article, go to: [http://adopt.org/wednesdayschild/home/adoption\\_story\\_happened2b-a-wed.htm](http://adopt.org/wednesdayschild/home/adoption_story_happened2b-a-wed.htm)

## Christmas in Strangest Places

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many things in the quiet of that hour's drive. Of course I was thankful for all the many blessings I have in my life. I've had my share of adversity, heartbreak, and illness like we all do, but so far none have compared to the hurdles that many of the attendees face every day of their life. I also thought of some of the burdens of my fellow employees. So often I want to help but I just don't know how.

I must admit, with a touch of guilt, that I even thought "What must God feel when He looks upon a world of suffering? It is within his power to solve each and every problem of the disabled and the disadvantaged in the world. Why doesn't he?"

And then it hit me. Perhaps it's so we can help each other. And in doing so we fill our own hearts as well as the world with good will, happiness, kindness and compassion. Those feelings are as contagious as the viruses that travel the world and cyberspace. What can be more uplifting than a simple whispered "Thank you" from a client, a friend, or a co-worker when we've taken the time to help them? What can make you appreciate your own blessings more than hearing the heartfelt pleas of someone who is in need?

So Christmas came a little early for me this year.

*— Janice Mercer, child support enforcement manager, Southern Judicial Circuit*



## COMING UP: Best Practices Fair

The second annual DHR Best Practices Fair and Seminars will take place June 3, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., on the seventh floor of the Two Peachtree Street building in Atlanta. The one-day event will include a general session, information fair and several seminars. It is free to all DHR employees, but offices must pay for their employees' travel expenses.

The Best Practices Fair will have information tables staffed with representatives from employee motivation programs in the private and public sector. Concurrent seminars will be presented during the day. To attend the seminars you must preregister. Topics will be included in the registration information, which will be distributed in May.

Approximately 170 people attend-

ed a smaller fair that was held last year for managers and supervisors, to share information about best practices and promote employee recognition. "We are expanding this year's event to include topics and exhibits relevant to all DHR employees," said **Celeste Gosier**, co-leader of DHR's Total Rewards Strategic Workforce Planning Workgroup, which is organizing the event.

"We are excited about the opportunity to highlight Total Rewards programs designed to improve employee job satisfaction and retention in DHR," said Gosier.

For more information, contact Celeste Gosier at 404-656-6759, [crgosier@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:crgosier@dhr.state.ga.us) or Mary Walker at 404-656-4257, [mdwalker@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:mdwalker@dhr.state.ga.us).

*— Edna Jackson*

### Star Staff *(continued from page 4)*

feature; helping pave the way for debit cards to replace paper checks; and increasing the number of children receiving child support.

**Carole Jakeway**, R.N., M.P.H., chief nurse, Division of Public Health, won the Safety Award for preparing the public health nursing workforce to respond effectively to disasters and emergencies. In addition to developing the Georgia Nurse Alert System, she developed a Duty Officer Resource Manual that will enable the DHR Emergency Operations Center to identify quickly public health nurses who can be deployed in an emergency.

The Team Award went to the four members of the **Washington County DFCS Employment Services Unit** for placing 108 TANF clients in jobs

during FY 2003. As a result, 88 of those clients were able to leave the TANF rolls. They achieved a work activity rate of 99.7 percent for their TANF clients, well above the statewide goal of 90 percent. The team members are **Lynn Harris, Angelina Rogers, Sharon Smith and Likithe Watts**.

**Marie Chow, Cindy Moss** and the **Washington County DFCS Employment Services Unit** also will receive honorable mentions from Governor Perdue and the Georgia Merit System at the Governor's proclamation and award ceremony on May 5th in Atlanta.

For more information on DHR's employee recognition activities, contact **Beverly Christian** at 404-657-6271; [bmchrist@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:bmchrist@dhr.state.ga.us).

*— Edna Jackson and Barbara Joye*