



From the Commissioner

Dear Staff and Colleagues,

It's the holiday season! Though it looks very different this year, we are all called to embrace what makes this season something to celebrate: The spirit of caring for each other enough to sacrifice and reinvent traditions, while maintaining the connections to family, friends and community.

I want to take this opportunity to once again give you virtual hugs for leading from every level and being the heart of our mission: Lifting DCBS' efforts to serve vulnerable families, adults and children.

Your service to others is demanding and yet you

DSR's Melinda Vise honored as CAC 2020 'Legendary Partner'

Congratulations to Melinda Vise, Administrative Manager of the Field Quality Branch in the Division of Service Regions, for being named a 2020 Legendary Partner by the Children's Advocacy Centers of Kentucky.

Melinda is one of 17 honorees recognized by CAC Kentucky for their extraordinary efforts to promote child welfare. Each of Kentucky's 15 CACs and the state coalition nominated individuals with demonstrated commitments to serving children impacted by abuse.



Melinda said she was privileged to accept this award, which included a plaque and a hero's cape.

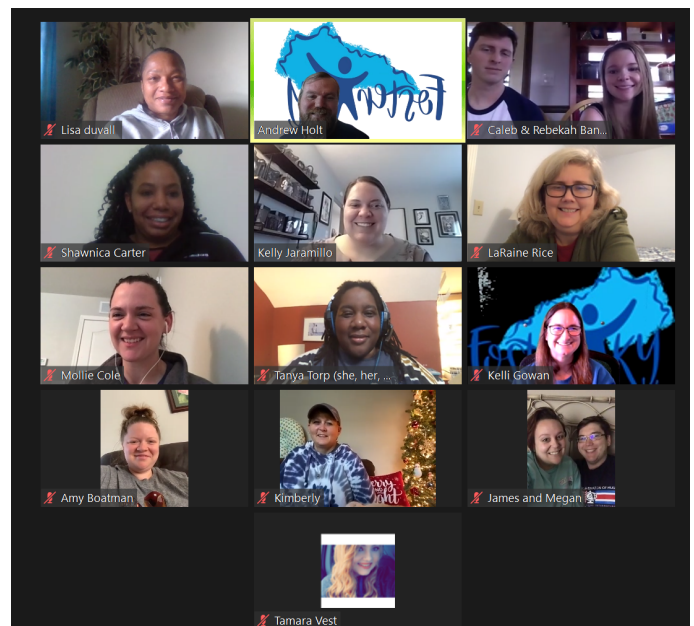
[Read entire story here](#)



Commissioner Marta Miranda-Straub hosted a virtual departmentwide "Tea and Cookies" meeting on Nov. 24 with 120 participants. Topics included work from home issues, staffing policies and mental health support.

continue to walk along your teams and clients. Thank you for all the effort, flexibility and commitment you've displayed as we adjusted in these unprecedented times.

[Read entire story here](#)



DCBS Hosts Virtual Foster Care Resource Fair
DCBS' Recruitment and Certification Training Team hosted its Annual Exploring Foster Care Resource Fair and Training on Dec 5. The event offered resource links, personal stories from veteran parents, training credit and even prizes!

Shade Chaffin of Division of Child Care named DCBS Superhero

Congratulations to Shade Chaffin, DCBS Superhero Award winner!

Shade is Quality Initiatives Section Supervisor for the Kentucky All STARS program in the DCBS Division of Child Care.

Throughout the COVID-19 State of Emergency, Shade has worked hard to be flexible and accomplish goals that are not in his typical job description.



Read entire story [here](#) Shade Chaffin



Family Children and Youth



SKY Soars in January 2021!

Beginning January 2021, a single statewide managed care organization (MCO), Aetna Better Health of Kentucky, will manage the new Supporting Kentucky Youth program, also known as SKY.

Read entire story [here](#)

DCBS Surpasses KECC Goal with Pledges, Creative Fundraisers

DCBS is extremely proud of the engagement by staff in the Kentucky Employee Charity Campaign. This year DCBS surpassed their goal of \$4,500 and raised a total of \$8,005 through KHRIS donations and a total of \$1,127 through campaign events!

KECC's mission is to improve lives and strengthen Kentucky communities by investing in basic needs, family stability, education and health for every Kentuckian. The KECC charities program is managed and undergoes rigorous scrutiny by the Kentucky Personnel Cabinet to ensure they have met stringent guidelines. Most importantly, 100% of collected pledges goes directly to help others!

The DCBS campaign strategy was organized and managed by Jessica Bowman, a Resource Management Analyst for the Division of Service Regions. The 2020 campaign season included six events for staff to join. The campaigns were:

Special thanks to Division of Service Regions Resource Management Analyst **Jessica Bowman**, who coordinated DCBS' KECC campaign!



Winners of the DCBS T-shirts for Charity contest were:
1st place - Paige Tallent, 2nd place - Daniela Larison and 3rd place - Brittney Ellison. Sales of the T-shirts, which will be shipped soon, raised \$500 for KECC.

The Signature Line Campaign: In efforts to raise awareness of KECC, DCBS staff were encouraged to change their signature line to include the KECC logo, mission statement and links to donate to the cause. This campaign was free to participate in.

Read entire story [here](#)

Building a 21st Century DCBS

Surveys were conducted of both staff and stakeholders:

- 3,085 staff respondents
- 820 stakeholder respondents

Overwhelmingly positive response by both staff and stakeholders regarding use of virtual platforms and electronic means for all types of needs.

Reduced time spent on travel and inclusion of those who otherwise might not be able to participate.

Increased efficiency reported among staff working remotely.

Increased work/life balance.

Opportunities to decrease our brick and mortar footprint and improve efficiency.

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12/15/20



Update on Training and Child Welfare

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, WELFARE AND FAMILY SERVICES
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2020



Legislative Update

DCBS Commissioner Marta Miranda-Straub and Director of Family Support Jason Dunn presented to the Health, Welfare, and Family Services Interim Joint Committee on Dec.15. They spoke about child welfare and the provision of Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) benefits to assist in purchasing meals for school children who would have received free or reduced lunch if attending in-person school during the pandemic. Division of Protection and Permanency Assistant Director Melanie Taylor answered legislators' questions on abuse referrals and reporting policy.

[Read entire story here](#)

Trauma/ Resilience and Engaged Healing



New Child Welfare Training Available for Staff in 2021

In partnership with the University of Kentucky Center on Trauma and Children, and new training for child welfare staff will be offered in 2021. The Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit (CWTTT) supports caseworkers, supervisors and all other levels of the child welfare workforce in implementing trauma-informed knowledge and skills in their daily interactions, professional services and organizational culture.

[Read entire story here](#)

Self Care: Coping during the COVID-19 Winter

Coping with the stress of the holidays, end-of-year work and school projects and colder, darker days is already difficult. During a pandemic, it's even harder.

These tips from the Mayo Clinic can help us minimize stress during the holidays and take better care of ourselves.

[Read entire story here](#)



Tamara Vest

Tamara Vest, Former Foster Child, Shines as UK Graduate

Tamara Vest is currently the Chairman of the Voices of the Commonwealth (VOC) and graduated this year with her Bachelors of Social Work from the University of Kentucky.

Tamara was asked to give the commencement speech for her graduating class in December for the College of Social Work. Tamara has been a vital part of many of the changes implemented over the past two years as part of her role on the VOC.

Congratulations to Tamara on this amazing milestone!

WebMD[®]

WebMD Will Be KEHP LivingWell Program's Wellness Partner in 2021

In 2021, The LivingWell Program, the well-being program offered by the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan, will have a new vendor, WebMD Health Services. What does this mean? In short, there will be a new web portal and app to make achieving wellness and self-care easier for KEHP members.

[Read entire story here](#)