

Child Support Report

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OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

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18th National Conference Sparks Interest in Collaborations 'Beyond the Bench'



By Elaine Blackman
OCSE

Addressing an audience of 435 at the start of the OCSE 18th National Child Support Enforcement Training Conference, Aug. 25, in Washington, DC, Commissioner Margot Bean praised workers at every level of the national child support enforcement program for making a difference in children's lives.

The Commissioner likened their can-do attitude to a spark that flickers within each individual and unites with others to form partnerships in a national program where "no one goes it alone!" Heeding her message were representatives from State, Tribal, and local child support agencies, judiciary and courts, stakeholder organizations, and partnering government agencies.

"No one goes it alone!"

With its theme "Beyond the Bench," the conference focused for the first time on child support program partnerships through courts, fatherhood programs, and employment initiatives.

One plenary session, titled "The Changing Faces of Fatherhood and Families in America," featured researchers who reported on the significance of the nation's changing demographics, which includes a growing majority of unwed parents and increasing rates of incarceration within the child support program's caseload.

Speakers advised child support workers to encourage training in relationship management skills for parents at the time of the child's birth, as well as training in parenting skills.

In other sessions, judges from around the country highlighted benefits of building partnerships between the courts and child support agencies to help parents who owe child support improve their ability to pay. Others explained the importance of child support work with



OCSE Commissioner Margot Bean, left, takes a break with Policy Division Director Lily Matheson, center, and Deputy Commissioner Donna Bonar at the 18th National Child Support Enforcement Training Conference.

See more photos and a list of this year's award winners on the following pages

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

agencies that help parents obtain and retain employment.

In her keynote, the Commissioner asked the audience to consider applying the lessons they take from these sessions to improving child support collections on both current support and arrears—the goal of the national Project to Avoid Increasing Delinquencies, or PAID. The sessions relate to PAID, said the Commissioner, “because isn’t it true that if we can find out how to improve our communication with one another and with our customers, and if we can find out how we can help our customers achieve self-sufficiency, then we will see improved

communication between parents and children, and more reliable child support for families?”

Referring back to the nation of sparks under PAID and other initiatives, Commissioner Bean concluded, “I have been honored to have carried the torch as Commissioner of OCSE over the past 3+ years—and deeply honored to have shared the journey with all of you, especially the OCSE staff. As I pass the torch on to those who come behind me ... I thank each and every one of you for your commitment to our program and to the children and families whose lives we make better every day.”



From left, New Mexico Child Support Enforcement Division Director Charissa Saavedra, and Child Support Attorneys Elizabeth Price and Pam Garcia of the New Mexico Office of General Counsel, discuss how to improve processes for scheduling court hearings and quality of work, and maximize use of court time. They agreed the information they gained from workshops was invaluable.



Judge Chet Harhut, right, from Scranton, PA, spoke on a plenary panel about benefits of child support program collaboration with courts. Honorable John Aman from White Plains, NY, joined a workshop panel on practices in setting court orders. In discussing the courtroom experience of confronting custodial parents who need more money and noncustodial parents who can’t pay more money, Judge Aman pointed out that “despite formulas, percentages, and federal mandates, the process is a human one, fraught with all our human frailties. I think we need to keep that in the back of our minds.”



Cheryl Breaux and Ernest Breaux from Albany, LA, sport their “Fill the Gap” shirts, named for the faith-based project they run to help parents find and keep employment, and financially and emotionally support their children. The couple presented their project in a workshop with Matthew Keller, far right, who presented his community-based “Child Support Employment and Parenting Program,” a Knoxville project with a similar mission. (Both projects were featured in previous *Child Support Report* articles, in the February and December 2007 issues, respectively.)





Following a workshop, Delaware's Michael Morgan and Virginia's Holly Smith share aspects of having one noncustodial parent with several child support cases attend a court hearing at one court location and the need for noncustodial parents to understand the mediation process.



From left, Comanche Nation (Oklahoma) Child Support Director Deborah Yates, with Program Trainer Gloria Howard and Child Support Director Kim Reynon-Spisak, both from Puyallup Tribe (Washington), discuss the value of State and Tribal cooperation among caseworkers.



Below, Nancy Smith of Father Friendly Initiative in Boston, left, and Massachusetts Child Support Director Marilyn R. Smith share their comments with the Urban Institute's Harry Holzer, following the panel presentation about economic, policy, and fatherhood trends in which Holzer emphasized, "Our goal is to get NCPs paying—we all have the same goal." In the background is panel moderator Linda Mellgren from the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.



Above, from left, Kenia Seoane Lopez, Shelia Jordan, and Susanne Callender, from the District of Columbia Child Support Enforcement program, share their excitement about learning the good ideas in other programs.





From left, Alisha Griffin, IV-D Director, New Jersey; Justice Maura Corrigan, Michigan; Judge Kristin Ruth, North Carolina; and Mike Schwindt, IV-Director, North Dakota, gather following a workshop about collaboration with courts in which Justice Corrigan and Judge Ruth offered practical solutions to improve child support agencies' relationship with courts.



Award Winners—OCSE 18th National Training Conference

Commissioner's Award for Innovative Partnership

- Massachusetts Fatherhood Initiative
- p.a.p.a: Parenting and Paternity Awareness Project, Texas
- CARE: Collaborative Arrears Reduction Effort, Connecticut
- National Judicial - Child Support Enforcement Task Force
- Multi-Program Collaboration Workgroup, North Dakota
- Defense Manpower Data Center Match Team

Commissioner's Award for High Performance

- Rapid Response Improvement Implementation Team, Georgia
- Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement
- Jackie Pische, Forest County Potawatomi Child Support Services

Commissioner's Award for Consistent Commitment to Child Support Enforcement

- Linda Mellgren, DHHS/ASPE
- Paul Swanenburg, SSA/OS/OEEAS
- Michael Rifkin, OCSE

Commissioner's Award for Exemplary Customer Service

- YoungWilliams Child Support Services and Commonwealth of Virginia
- Contact Center Staff, Georgia

Commissioner's Award for Specific Projects or Workgroups

- Bethany Special Collections Office, Oklahoma
- Strategies to Help Low Income Families (SHLIF) Workgroup, Minnesota

Commissioner's Award for Exemplary Leadership

- Benidia A. Rice, District of Columbia
- Walley Naylor, Mississippi
- Mike Schwindt, North Dakota
- Lily Matheson, OCSE
- Dr. Ronald Mincy, Columbia University
- William Stuart, Lockheed Martin

Commissioner's Award for Innovative Technology

- New York State E-filing of Child Support Team, New York
- Greg Kidder, Osage Nation Tribal Child Support Services



By Gregg Keesling

My passion for economic and social justice has taken me many places. Having seen the impact of economic depravity up close in both the United States and in Jamaica, where I lived from the early '80s to mid-'90s, the field of workforce development offered me a place in which I could address both social and economic disenfranchisement of those with the greatest need.

Since moving back to my home State of Indiana in 1996, my wife and I have worked with individuals, the private sector, government, and nonprofits, in efforts to build on social and economic community-based initiatives. Our first effort was to design the Indianapolis-based welfare-to-work company Keys to Work, Inc.

During the years that followed, however, employment opportunities and wages declined for poor, less educated young men, especially young black men, many of whom are fathers. Also, as research associated with the work of child support enforcement has shown us, many of these low-income fathers increasingly cycle in and out of the prison system. Furthermore, fathers who are disconnected from their children remain a negative force in neighborhood and family life.

To help these men become proud providers for their families, in 2005 I went on to develop Workforce, Inc. (WFI), a nonprofit that could offer transitional jobs—short-term, wage-paying jobs that combine real work, skill



Name: Gregg Keesling
Title: President, Workforce, Inc.
Location: Indianapolis, IN
Quote: "Transitional jobs are the way of the future. We are convinced that it does work."

development, and support services to help participants develop real-time work experience.

At WFI, I was able to build on my knowledge gained from Keys to Work, where I had developed an understanding of how the issues of child support enforcement and incarceration intersected and combined as an impediment to family formation. I had also come to believe that these fathers are our most squandered resource.

A primary component of the WFI strategy involves the concept of social enterprise, so WFI settled on the growing electronic recycling industry as a business that could provide jobs that new workers could quickly be trained to take, and which also provided a series of skills sets that would help them become more employable in the private sector. By choosing the electronic waste and recycling industry, WFI is helping to respond to increasing awareness of the damage that the large amounts of discarded electronics reeks upon our environment.

Through WFI, transitional jobs provide incarcerated men with immediate work and the financial resources needed to satisfy child support and re-entry obligations. To help achieve these goals, WFI is taking part in an innovative pilot project operated by the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research, under an OCSE Special Improvement Project grant. The Institute is partnering also with the Indiana Child Support Bureau, which identifies and refers fathers to WFI. (*See article on next page.*) Under this project, WFI is working with other State and local agencies as well to find ways to reduce cross-purpose efforts and to reward noncustodial parents for doing the right thing.

Since we began in 2005, we have employed over 150 men and two women. To date only seven have returned to prison. Most of those who graduated from our program



have continued to be employed and for that we are very proud.

WFI is based on the idea that people who work are more likely to succeed than people who do not, and on the concept of rewarding responsible behavior. I am grateful

for the journey that has brought me to this place and I look forward to continuing the pursuit of partnerships with agencies that also work toward giving all fathers a chance to do the right thing.

Gregg Keesling can be reached at gkeesling@workforce-inc.com.

Suggestions for this "In Focus" column may be sent to elaine.blackman@acf.hhs.gov.

Grant Projects

Making Connections in Indiana Child Support's Partnership with Transitional Employment Program Strengthens Re-entry Initiative

By **Thelzeda Moore**
*Child Support Bureau
Indiana Department of Child Services*

In the previous article, Gregg Keesling tells his personal story that led him to develop Workforce, Inc., a program designed to train and employ ex-offenders for its "transitional" jobs. In this article, Thelzeda Moore, Grants and Community Outreach Manager for the Indiana Child Support Bureau, describes the Bureau's connection with Keesling's program, and the path that led to the Bureau's participation in re-entry initiatives.

The Indiana Child Support Bureau's partnership with Gregg Keesling goes back several years. He first invited the Bureau to collaborate with his Workforce, Inc. (WFI) program after it got off the ground in 2005.

Understanding the importance of re-entry work through our previous efforts in the community, the Bureau accepted his invitation to work together to help ex-offender parents obtain transitional employment with WFI, where they would learn



skills to become self-sufficient and more able to provide support for their children.

Then, in 2007, Mr. Keesling and the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research joined together to submit a proposal for an OCSE Special Improvement Project grant concerning re-entry. The proposal placed a large emphasis on the Child Support Bureau, and we were eager to collaborate again with Mr. Keesling.

The Institute's goal for the 3-year grant project is to improve child support enforcement among current and formerly incarcerated individuals who have accumulated large arrearages during incarceration. Its work includes a pilot in which half of the participants receive transitional jobs and support services from WFI. The other half receives general re-entry services provided by various community agencies that routinely serve the re-entry population. The pilot plans to study the efficacy of order modification as a reward for responsible behavior and the effectiveness of the transitional jobs program in the pilot population.

A Partnership in Progress

As WFI was getting underway, Mr. Keesling often found that the ex-offender participants did not know the approximate amount of their support arrearage. In fact, some offenders did not know if they had a support order or whether or not paternity was ever established.

In Indiana, most offenders are not allowed to attend any



Thelzeda Moore

court hearings unless it is for the crime for which they are currently incarcerated. Some offenders may have been scheduled for a court hearing just prior to incarceration or during the period of incarceration. When they did not appear in court as required, a default judgment was entered against them. Many paternities and support orders were established in this manner.

When we begin work on a case with WFI, first WFI completes a Release of Information form and then the Bureau provides information for each noncustodial parent's case. Of course, we release no information about the custodial parent. This background information has been helpful to the attorney working with the participant. For example, sometimes the participant may have had a license suspension that needed to be lifted before he could return to work as a truck driver or chauffer. The support information allowed the attorney an opportunity to work on a payment arrangement with the court so that the driver's license could be released and the participant could then obtain a more lucrative job. This type of resolution benefits the ex-offender as well as the custodial parent.

The Road Along the Re-entry Initiative

The story behind the Indiana Child Support Bureau's participation in re-entry work actually began in 1999, when the Bureau and the Head Start Association jointly signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to work together for the benefit of both entities. This agreement, which followed an agreement at the Federal level, also led to a number of the county IV-D child support offices signing their own Memorandum of Understanding with their local Head Start offices.

Then in 2005, Donna Hogle, Coordinator of the Indiana Head Start Partnership, and I jointly authored an updated Memorandum with input and approval from the signatory parties, including then Indiana Child Support Director Wendy V. Yerkes and President of the Indiana Child Support Alliance, Scott Cooke. We had taken great pains to identify the participants in the agreement, their roles, mutual philosophy, and the authorizing guidelines.

Later that year, we received a request from Head Start

to provide assistance to the noncustodial fathers located in the prisons.

Apparently many of these men had children participating in Head Start and were totally unaware of their rights and responsibilities under child support. Of course, we agreed, and that single act launched our agency into the re-entry initiative.

Our first thought was how do we go about providing the needed assistance? What other services or information might these individuals need? To get a better understanding of the problem and types of assistance needed, Geneva Bishop, Region V OCSE, arranged for a consultant/trainer to come and provide training in the area of re-entry. For 2 days we listened and conversed with an expert in the field of re-entry, Norris Stevenson, from the Illinois Division of Child Support Enforcement. Individuals from other agencies, including IV-D Prosecutor offices, Director of Juvenile and Family Law at the Indiana Judicial Center, Marion County Sheriff's Office, and a Marion County Court judge also participated.

Down the road, the Bureau was invited to speak to the members of the Domestic Relations Committee of the Indiana Judicial Center and later, to participate in discussions with other State agencies, providing information about the Bureau's work with re-entry for the Department of Correction to include in their resource book. Bureau staff began visiting the local Plainfield Re-Entry Facility a few months later.

It was shortly thereafter when Gregg Keesling approached the Bureau to form a partnership with WFI, and the rest, as they say, is history.

While other agencies are also partnering with the Sagamore Institute under the Special Improvement Project grant, we believe our Bureau's partnership with Workforce, Inc. to be a positive outreach effort as well as an initiative that will only strengthen our State in having stronger families and better workers.

For more information, contact Thelzeda Moore, Manager, Grants and Community Outreach, at 317-232-4874 or Thelzeda.Moore@dcs.in.gov. For information about OCSE discretionary grants, visit the OCSE Web site at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/grants/>





Region II Holds First Directors Meeting, Extends Pilot with Dominican Republic

By Jens A. Feck

OCSE Region II Program Manager

We all know that geography is no longer a barrier to child support collaboration. Region II provided the most recent proof when it brought together New York, Puerto Rico, New Jersey, and the Virgin Islands for the Region's first-ever IV-D Directors' Meeting.

The early September event was held in San Juan to allow for wider Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico participation. Special guests included Dr. Marisol Tobal, the Dominican Republic's Deputy Attorney General for Family Affairs, and Commissioner Margot Bean, who provided an update on the Hague Multilateral Treaty on the international recovery of child support.

Alfonso Ramos Torres, Puerto Rico's IV-D Director, hosted the event under the umbrella of the Commonwealth's renowned hospitality. Attendees shared best practices, received updates on Project Save Our Children activities and recommendations for enhanced use of Federal systems data, and learned about Puerto Rico's evolution from a full judicial to full administrative process.

Consistent with the theme of breaking geographic

barriers, Puerto Rico recently extended its Pilot Reciprocal Arrangement with the Dominican Republic for another 3 years. The pilot has been extremely successful: dozens of cases have been processed, support orders have been established and enforced in the Dominican Republic, and child support collections have been transferred from the Dominican Republic to children and families in Puerto Rico.

The IV-D Directors' Meeting built on that success. Alisha Griffin, New Jersey IV-D Director, and Regina DeChabert, the Virgin Islands IV-D Director, within days of returning to their respective home jurisdictions, initiated negotiations with the Dominican Republic for the establishment of new reciprocal arrangements based on Puerto Rico's model. Scott Cade, New York IV-D Director, intends to pursue an arrangement for locate services.

The meeting resulted in additional positive outcomes. Puerto Rico has offered to study the feasibility of extending electronic disbursement services to the Virgin Islands through Puerto Rico's EFT vendor. New Jersey has offered to share its experiences with vendor-provided FIDM services, and New York sparked interest in its new electronic interface with the court system.

Most important, all four Region II jurisdictions came to appreciate the benefit of closer collaboration with their regional colleagues, and agreed from now on to talk and meet on a regular basis—a fitting tribute to the Commissioner's mantra at the OCSE 18th National Conference: "No one goes it alone!"



From left: Jens Feck, OCSE Region II Program Manager; Regina DeChabert, Virgin Islands IV-D Director; Alisha Griffin, New Jersey IV-D Director; Sonia Thompson, Virgin Islands Systems Manager; Vernice Gumbs, Virgin Islands Office Administrator; Commissioner Margot Bean; Scott Cade, New York IV-D Director; Alfonso Ramos, Puerto Rico IV-D Director; Keshia Rodriguez, Region II Program Specialist; Dr. Marisol Tobal, Dominican Republic Deputy Attorney General; Jamilla Canario Morales, Puerto Rico Assistant IV-D Director.

Bi-Regional Meetings Plan for Child Support Programs' Year Ahead

REGIONS V and VII



Ten midwest IV-D Child Support Program Directors met in August to collaborate on budget challenges, enhancements, and best practices at the annual Bi-Regional IV-D Directors' Meeting in Chicago. Region V and VII State Directors and OCSE Regional staff discussed paternity establishment, medical support and medical support indicators, administrative enforcement remedies, the national Project to Avoid Increasing Delinquencies (PAID), and activities in the 10 Region V and VII States. The group agreed that this meeting is one of their most anticipated and valuable of the year. Front row, from left: Sally Kolanowski, Program Specialist Region V; Sherri Larkins, Program Specialist Region VII; Crystal Rodriguez, Policy Specialist, OCSE Division of Policy; Nancy Thoma Groetken, Acting Regional Program Manager, Region VII; Pam Lowry, Illinois IV-D Director; Carol Eaton, Iowa IV-D Director; Susan Pfeiffer, Wisconsin IV-D Director; Terri Hinzpeter, Missouri Deputy IV-D Director; Janis DeBoer, Kansas IV-D Director; and Jeff Stocks, Program Specialist, Region VII. Back row, from left: Linda Lawrence, Regional Program Manager, Region V; Roy Nix, Director, Division of Regional Operations; Doug Thompson, Ohio IV-D Director; Marilyn Stephen, Michigan IV-D Director; Wayland Campbell, Minnesota IV-D Director; Cynthia Longest, Indiana IV-D Director; and Byron Van Patten, Nebraska IV-D Director. Also attending the meeting were Geneva Bishop and Mike Vicars, Region V Program Specialists. (Photo by Roberta Coons, Region VII Program Specialist) —Nancy Thoma Groetken, Region VII

REGIONS IV and VI



More than 60 representatives from the 13 Region IV and Region VI States joined OCSE staff on the "Pathway to Success for Children," at the first Bi-Regional Child Support Conference for the two Regions, this August in Biloxi, MS. Don Thomson, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, presented a moving "before and after" Hurricane Katrina video of Biloxi. In a session relevant to the current hurricane season, Directors Walley Naylor (MS) and Robbie Endris (LA) spoke to the need for planning in all areas of emergency preparedness. Barry Miller, Director, North Carolina Office of Child Support, provided a status report for the Director's Meeting, which included a legislative "wish list" and a consensus statement that we must all continue to work together and share experiences, skills, and knowledge in settings such as this conference to achieve our goals in providing financial and medical support for our nation's children. Front row, from left: Jon Costa, Alabama Department of Human Resources; Carol Osborne and Janet Shore, Region IV; Jane Martin, Region VI; Hazel Walton, Region IV; Faye Nelson, Alabama IV-D Director; Minnie Thomas, Alabama IV-D Deputy Director; Roy Nix, OCSE Regional Program Operations; and Leon McCowan, Region VI. Back row, from left: David Collins, Alabama Fatherhood Initiative; Carl Rich, Region VI; Bridget Minor, Ken Jackson, and Ann Russell, Region IV; and James Travis, Region VI. —Jane Martin, Region VI

Colorado Hits the Jackpot

By Diane Degenhart
OCSE Region VIII

On July 1, the much anticipated Gambling Payment Intercept Act went into effect in Colorado. The Act allows limited stakes casinos (except on reservations) and race tracks to intercept gambling winnings when a person wins enough to file an IRS W-2G. This occurs any time a person wins \$1,200 or more at a casino, or if they win \$600 or more on a wager at a race track.

Since the bill's passage in May 2007, a lot of coordination has taken place between the Colorado Department of Revenue and Child Support Enforcement Program. Using a private vendor, a registry was created to track all child support obligors. The casinos and race tracks query the database prior to paying out the jackpot, and if the person is listed, they snatch the cash before the person is paid. The intercepted money is sent electronically to the registry and then on to the child support office.

The bill was set to be repealed in 1 year after implementation if no collections were received. No worries about this happening, as the first collection occurred at 1:30 p.m. on July 1st. Since then, the amount of collections in the first 2 months has reached \$121,242



on 90 intercepts, for an average intercept per case of \$1,347. At this early stage, the new enforcement tool appears to be very worthwhile.

Here are two anecdotal stories:

- A couple was playing slot machines next to each other when she won the jackpot. The woman didn't have an ID to claim her winnings, so he did instead. Bad choice—he owed child support arrears and neither received the winnings.
- Several noncustodial parents have won twice in one day; that's good or bad luck, depending on how you look at it. There were even reports that someone was putting flyers up in the men's bathrooms at the casinos to alert others as to what may happen if they win and owe child support arrears.

Anyone curious as to which casinos are paying out child support arrearages the most is out of luck since Colorado is not sharing that information. If you would like other information, please contact Paula Brown in the Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program, at 303-866-5170 or paula.brown@state.co.us.

State, Tribal Directors Share Leadership Know-How

By Toni Baker
OCSE

This July, 18 Child Support Directors, representing 11 States, 2 Territories, and 4 Tribes, met in Washington, DC, for a seminar with a two-fold purpose: to help less experienced directors gain basic knowledge of the IV-D program and their leadership responsibilities, and to expose the directors to theories and models related to effective leadership within their programs.

The seminar grew out of a similar training piloted with a focus group of IV-D directors last year.

Training was provided by Nick Mann, an organization development trainer and consultant, and Cynthia Bryant, a former IV-D director for Texas. It focused on four competencies which had been identified by the earlier

focus group as necessary to be an effective leader in the child support program.

The competencies are: 1) the ability to lead change by developing and executing a vision for their program; 2) the ability to lead people; 3) accountability to customers and the public; and 4) communications. The trainers used a case study approach with the directors, working primarily in small groups, to help them better relate to the four competencies.

The seminar provided an opportunity for the directors to share knowledge and experiences, which was especially beneficial to the newer directors, who were able to talk with those more "seasoned." All participants praised the trainers and rated the seminar very highly.

Several directors who were members of last year's pilot took the training to the next level by demonstrating what they had learned in their own States, including Mississippi IV-D Director Walley Naylor. For his efforts, Naylor was awarded the "Commissioner's Award for Exemplary Leadership" at the OCSE 18th National Child

Support Enforcement Training Conference last month. And Nevada IV-D Director Louise Bush this January conducted a “Leadership for Performance” workshop for 55 managers, supervisors, and caseworkers in the IV-A

TANF program, where attendees acquired new skills and were able to network with others to expand their vision beyond their own office.

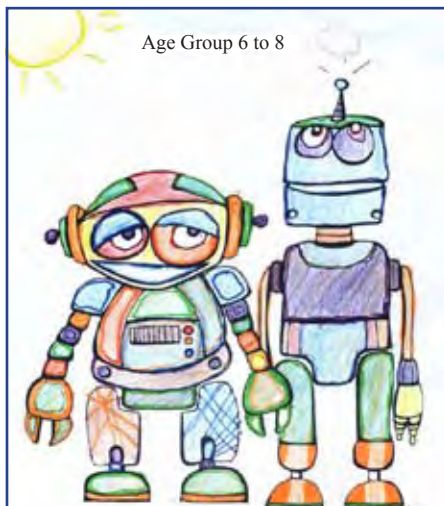
Coloring Contest Kudos in Centre County, PA



Winners of an annual coloring contest sponsored by the Centre County Domestic Relations Section (Pennsylvania) pose in front of the contest judges. The judges are, from left, Ike the Spike; Maxine Ishler, Centre County Court Administrator; Judge Pamela Ruest; Daniel Richard, Director, Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement; and Kimberly Hamilton, Esq., IV-D Attorney. Centre County sponsored the contest in August to celebrate the State’s Child Support Enforcement Awareness Month. (Centre County got the idea several years ago from the *Child Support Report*, in which Clermont County, OH, publicized a similar contest.) With three age categories represented, grand prizes included savings bonds, as well as donated tickets to the State College Spikes (the local minor league baseball team), and gift certificates to a play facility, restaurant, and book store. In addition, community support for the event included donations from large chain stores for a luncheon awards ceremony. More than 70 participants—an increase over last year—received an “honorable mention” letter and prize. Plans are under way for an even bigger event next year.



Age Group 9 to 10



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