



Human Services (HS)

Executive Column

Marlene Hagen, Director, Children and Family Services



Although my journey with Children and Family Services began 17 years ago, I feel I have only just begun!

As the new Director for Children and Family Services (CFS), I am humbled by the incredible responsibility we carry each and every day to keep the most vulnerable children in our county safe. As a result, it is a mission that I undertake with great pride, hope and confidence.

It is quite fitting that March, which is Social Work Appreciation Month, was my first full month as the Director for Children and Family Services. It was followed by Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month in April. Both of these months bring much needed recognition and awareness to the children and families we serve and to the CFS staff who work tirelessly to ensure their safety and well-being; which at times, can feel like an overwhelming responsibility.

Having risen through the ranks in CFS, I feel fortunate to have been able to work in several different areas throughout my career. I began my career as a Carrier Social Worker providing family maintenance, family reunification and permanency planning services to children and parents on my caseload. I was a Forensic Interviewer with the Children's Assessment Center and I provided adoption services to children in need of permanent homes both as a Social Worker and as a supervisor. I eventually promoted to Child Welfare Services Manager for a specialized division within CFS and again had the opportunity to learn more new and exciting practices and programs in Child Welfare. In 2010, I was promoted to Deputy Director, and then to Assistant Director in 2013. I now proudly lead this department with an incredible team to carry out our mission of Safety, Permanency and Well-being which supports our Countywide goal of providing for the Safety, Health and Social Service Needs of County Residents.

We have come a long way in the years since I began my career with CFS and we still have a long way to go. It is an exciting and challenging time within our department as we move forward with our implementation of Safety Organized Practice and Child and Family Team meetings to ensure that we continue to involve the family, their support network and community service providers in the decision making process to ensure a child's safety and to meet their physical, emotional and educational needs.

This past year we have also witnessed a record number of our co-workers and friends moving

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on to retirement and other opportunities. Although it is difficult to lose the experience and expertise of our retiring workforce, it provides us with an opportunity to build a new foundation for the future of CFS. Each new opening and promotion brings opportunity for more staff to grow, learn and promote within the ranks of CFS. I am excited about the opportunities brought about by change and look forward to further implementing our Business Redesign and System Improvement Plan to increase our capacity to maintain a skilled workforce who are committed to ensuring the Safety, Permanency and Well-being of the children and families of San Bernardino County.