from

ALMSHOUSES TO EXCELLENCE:

A HISTORY OF

Child Welfare in Allegheny County

Allegheny County Department of Human Services

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) is dedicated to meeting the human services needs of county residents, particularly the county's most vulnerable populations, through an extensive range of prevention, intervention, crisis management and after-care services.

DHS publications are available for viewing and download at the DHS Research and Reports Web page at **www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/research.aspx**.

Published 2013 by Allegheny County DHS

On the cover

PITTSBURGH'S LITTLE MOTHER

August 5, 1906
The Gazette Times
Courtesy of
Kathy Leahy

Acknowledgments

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services thanks Christine O'Toole for researching and writing this historical account of child welfare in Allegheny County.

Many people contributed to this history, some by sharing their knowledge and others by supporting its production. To those individuals quoted in the pages of the narrative, we thank you for your time, your insights and your work on behalf of children and families. And to the following individuals, who labored behind the scenes and were vital to the completion of the report, we extend our sincere appreciation: Karen Blumen, Robert Gangewere, Megan Good, Meredith Joos, Kathy Leahy, Courtney Lewis, Jean O'Connell Jenkins, Ebony Robinson, Edward Sites, Sarah Thurston and Evelyn Whitehill.

Introduction by

RICH FITZGERALD
ALLEGHENY COUNTY EXECUTIVE

September 2013 marks the 225th anniversary of the founding of Allegheny County. Eleven generations have passed since the first settlers arrived to create a community along our three rivers. Although not many of us can trace our local family trees to 1788, in every generation, family served as the keystone upon which neighborhoods were created and our county thrived.

The publication of this history commemorates another significant anniversary—50 years during which our local government has been responsible for providing public child welfare services for the residents of Allegheny County. We are fortunate to have had a strong network of partners, including churches, neighborhoods and community organizations with proud histories of providing compassionate and effective help to those in need. In collaboration with these partners, we have been able to offer an array of services designed to support children and families when they are at their most vulnerable.

Working closely with these partners, and with the assistance of the greater community and our local foundations, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) serves more than 200,000 county residents each year, providing a comprehensive set of services that include information and referral, prevention, early intervention, case management, crisis intervention and after-care services. With an emphasis on empowering families to build upon their resilience, capabilities and natural supports, the Department's Office of Children, Youth and Families has set the standard for high-quality programs designed to ensure a safe, lifelong and permanent family for every child by protecting children from abuse and neglect, supporting parents and caregivers, and strengthening families.

Today, Allegheny County is recognized as a national leader in creating better outcomes for children. Under the leadership of Marc Cherna since 1997, DHS has been recognized with many honors, including three Innovation Awards from the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, the American Public Human Services Association, and the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators. The Annie E. Casey Foundation has singled out Allegheny County for its outstanding programs, and our successes have made national headlines in major media and national publications.

These successes have been hard-won, and we continue to refine and improve our efforts. Our community-derived vision, developed in 1997, continues to inspire us to excellence: to offer services that are high-quality, readily accessible, strengths-based, culturally competent, individually tailored and empowering, and holistic. While celebrating this significant anniversary, we are ever mindful that this vision can continue to be translated into quality services for our residents only by our county's collective dedication, industry and commitment to excellence.

I. FLASHPOINT

On March 4, 1994, a tiny body was discovered in a bleak motel room in Pittsburgh.

Two-year-old Shawntee Ford had been ignored, starved and abused by her father since he had been given legal custody of the child six weeks before. She died of the multiple effects of 54 different injuries, from a broken wrist to massive contusions, internal hemorrhaging and malnourishment.

Her murder was the kind of everyday tragedy that had made occasional headlines for 20 years in Allegheny County. It was made more heinous by the fact that the actions of the county child welfare office and juvenile court had put the child in harm's way. The agency had not disclosed to a Family Court judge that the father, Maurice Booker, had a record of previous arrests.

Shawntee's death was a community tipping point. Outrage over the loss of one helpless child amplified concerns that public child welfare services, overwhelmed by crushing caseloads and the raging epidemic of crack cocaine, needed a major overhaul. The county of 1.3 million was coping with an extremely large number of cases of actual or potential child victimization a year, the majority of which involved drugs.

In its struggle to protect children, the agency was caught between a rock and a hard place. Some children, like Shawntee, were returned to families unable to care for them; others languished in group homes or foster care for years. Still others from the African American community were placed with white foster families, ignoring pleas from their birth parents for a second chance. Despite rapid growth since its founding in 1963, the agency found itself chronically underfunded and understaffed.

A series of public recommendations from 1962 onward had called for an emphasis on services to strengthen family life and support the healthy growth of children in their own homes. But systemic change had not followed. Other social service agencies that were addressing the issues of mental health, drug abuse, homelessness and aging—often serving the same families as those served by what was then the Office of Children and Youth Services—were battling similar problems. The maze of disjointed efforts mirrored a county government that had some 30 departments and agencies, directed by an elected triumvirate vulnerable to shifts in the political wind.

And the wind was about to change.

In 1994, the Allegheny County Commissioners convened "The Independent Committee to Review CYS," to analyze child welfare and recommend reforms. Its blue-ribbon panel created a blueprint for the agency's next chapter. Under the leadership of Duquesne University President John E. Murray, Jr., the committee called for a department dedicated to transparent and efficient operations, cooperating closely with juvenile courts, staffed at appropriate levels, and respectful of cultural differences in the community. And it called for "total community support" for the agency, with a new director who would later be called "an unparalleled leader of the county's advocacy efforts to protect children."

"The essential ingredient in the implementation of all these recommendations is the good will, trust and mutual respect of all involved in the protection and preservation of our children," the report concluded. "Not only is the tragedy of Shawntee Ford totally unacceptable, but any significant risk of victimization to any child is totally unacceptable. We must foster an environment that helps rather than punishes, and keeps families and communities together rather than dividing them."

As he released the committee's final report in 1995, Murray prepared to undertake a similar analysis of Allegheny County's government and economic development efforts. The resulting report, dubbed ComPAC 21, recommended streamlining services under several larger departments with "zero duplication of services." With voters approving sweeping changes in a home rule referendum in 1999, the county was heading into the 21st century with a single county executive, and a newly unified Department of Human Services (DHS), including the Office of Children, Youth and Families, was poised for an era of revolutionary change.

GIRLS IN ALLEY

Circa 1910
Kingsley Association Records, 1894 –1980
Photo by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Archives

II. THE WEIGHT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

Even before the founding of Allegheny County in 1788, the community had devised an emergency system of care for distressed families: Fort Pitt provided a refuge for settlers fleeing periodic floods and attacks from local Native Americans.

Foster care for children whose parents could not care for them also existed, though in harsh form. Children were indentured to the lowest bidder, a practice that existed until 1927.

For most of the 19th century, American cities adopted a centuries-old approach imported from Great Britain, where "poor laws" designated local almshouses where families could find shelter. Pittsburgh's first almshouse was built in 1804 and quickly overflowed. Later known as Mayview State Hospital, it would remain in operation until 2008. Woodville, the county's poor farm, opened in 1854, closing in 1992.

Before 1916, Mayview was known as Marshalsea, "so named for the famous London debtors' prison in which Charles Dickens' father was once held," reported the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette upon the state hospital's final closing. "Marshalsea became a place to which the poor, the orphaned, the unwed pregnant, the tubercular, were sent, living alongside the city's insane, mentally retarded, and members of the population who were merely inexplicable." Officials realized that the chaotic almshouses were a terrible place to raise children.

MAYVIEW HOSPITAL GROUP

September 26, 1916
Pittsburgh City Photographer Collection, 1901–2002
Children in the almshouses often had their heads shaved to prevent lice outbreaks. Photo by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Archives

"The Children's Law was passed in 1883 in Pennsylvania, forbidding children between two and 16 to remain in almshouses for more than 60 days," explains Kathy Leahy, who studied the history of child welfare in the county while she served as the Adoption Research Specialist for the Allegheny County Department of Human Services.

Even then, tension arose between those advocating for child protection and those advising family reunification. "The directors of the almshouses did not want to separate families, and performed 'paper' discharges and admissions on the same day," Leahy notes. And although public education for both black and white children was already widely available in Pittsburgh, "one of the greatest problems with keeping children in almshouses was that there was no provision for education. Since the children remained barely literate, poverty continued through the generations."

ORPHANS' PICNIC

Circa 1905
Courtesy of Kathy Leahy

In the wake of the Civil War, Pittsburgh's religious and charitable groups mobilized aid for soldiers' widows and orphans. A flood of European immigrants, eager for the jobs created by rapid post-war industrialization, presented additional issues. Pittsburgh would become the fifth-largest city in the country by the turn of the century. Mills and furnaces flared 24 hours a day, providing laborers with a daily wage but little safety or security. Brutal living conditions accompanied 12-hour-a-day jobs.

Benevolent associations struggled to keep up with rising demands for help. The end of the 19th century saw a proliferation of institutions to care for children. Orphanages became strategies for family survival, notes University of Pittsburgh historian Jessie B. Ramey, housing children temporarily when breadwinners were stricken. She reports that, in 1907, 9,269 local children lived in families that received "outdoor relief" (food, coal or shoes), while 6,000 lived in institutions.

Those serving the poor began to lobby for the county to address growing desperation. Women, in particular, urged creation of a Mothers' Assistance Fund for single women with dependent children. When the state created a fund that matched monies from each county, the demand immediately outstripped supply. Facing an 18-month backlog for pensions, many mothers were forced to place their children in foster care or orphanages.

In the same era, Allegheny County was one of the first in the nation to create a Children's Court, in 1902. Under the leadership of Alice B. Montgomery, the county's chief probation officer, children were removed from the adult population of the jail. For the first time, the county's judicial system considered the needs of children separate from those of adults. Judges and probation officers worked with families to solve the problems that brought children into the system. A staff of 10 probation officers—all women, whose salaries were paid by local patrons—investigated individual cases. A report published in 1905, "What Is Allegheny County Doing For Its Children?," recounted success stories like this one:

> *When [the children] heard the judge say, "Take them to the detention room," they were pretty well scared. . . . Then came a long talk with the probation officer. Dick said he had a half-brother in Johnstown and would like to live with him. His brother was written to, and as he consented to take the boy and give him a good home, the court committed Dick to his care.*

One reformer, Florence Lattimore, called the court "the most thought-provoking step on behalf of children ever taken in the District." It was the dawn of the Progressive Era, and Progressives who believed in exposing society's flaws saw Pittsburgh as an example of a city under stress. The region became the focus of the famous Pittsburgh Survey of 1907, under the leadership of Paul Kellogg.

Kellogg succinctly reported the trends his 50 researchers documented while living in the region over a two-year period: low wages, "incredible" overwork and "archaic" social institutions. Most significantly, he noted, "the destruction of family life, not in any imaginary or mystical sense, but by the demands of the day's work, and by the very demonstrable and material method of typhoid fever and industrial accidents; both preventable, but costing in single years in Pittsburgh considerably more than a thousand lives, and irretrievably shattering nearly as many homes."

***Florence Larrabee Lattimore :* A Progressive Documents Family Struggles**

Among the shrewdest observers of family life in the region was Florence Larrabee Lattimore, who contributed the chapter "Pittsburgh as a Foster Mother" to the Pittsburgh Survey. She visited squalid homes in Skunk Hollow (now Ewing Street in Bloomfield) and mill towns, reported on conditions at the almshouses, and exposed the lack of enforced standards for charitable institutions. She began to document the case histories not only of children, but of their parents, arguing that institutions became the default remedy for children who could have remained in their homes had other supports for the adults been provided. She came to advocate for a holistic system of care that addressed complex family needs.

PORCH SCENE

1906 Kingsley Association Records, 1894–1980 Photo by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Archives

"The first step is to determine whether the possibility of life in his own home still exists for a child; the second is, if he does require charitable provision, to ascertain whether or not institutional care is what he needs most. It is not sufficient to learn that the father is out of work or that the mother is in the hospital. Modern philanthropy has demonstrated that the unemployment of a father and the illness of a mother are mere starting points for the determination of the real cause of trouble. Is the unemployment necessary, and why? Can work be found for the father and health be found for the mother? These questions must be settled before a child can be justly pronounced to be in need of new guardianship or of institutional care."

The situation, she argued, "involved fundamental questions of municipal responsibility for the hidden as well as exposed causes of poverty and distress. What tributaries from the Pittsburgh hills fed this living stream, and toward what was it flowing?"

***Alice Montgomery:* A Court Leader Asks for the Pittsburgh Survey**

The first chief probation officer of Allegheny County Children's Court not only created a system to counsel children and address family problems; she also prompted reforms that affected the entire community.

Upon reading about a social survey conducted in Washington, D.C., Montgomery advocated that civic leaders invite reformer Paul Kellogg to the city. The results of the Pittsburgh Survey, funded by the Russell Sage Foundation, brought dozens of eager investigators, including lawyer Crystal Eastman, social worker Florence Lattimore, artist Joseph Stella, and photographer Lewis Hine. Published as a series of articles in *Charities and the Commons* in 1909, the Survey's recommendations led to the city's first water purification plant, which reduced typhoid outbreaks, and to new worker's compensation laws.

PORTRAIT OF ALICE BALLARD MONTGOMERY

Circa 1910 Courtesy of Kathy Leahy

PORTRAIT OF YOUNG GIRL WITH DOLL AND TEDDY BEAR

Date unknown
Carnegie Museum of Art
Photo by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Archives

III. MID-CENTURY REFORMS

The muckrakers of the Progressive Era had correctly identified the lack of coordinated services for dependent children in Allegheny County. As the 20th century presented new challenges, government gradually—if grudgingly—assumed a greater role in regulating child welfare services.

But then as now, implementing real change on even a small scale required a delicate balance between private and public agencies.

Beginning in 1903, county boards of visitors inspected child welfare institutions each year and required them to submit yearly reports—but not necessarily to make changes. Pennsylvania's first Department of Welfare, founded in 1921 to coordinate care for dependent children, relied on the local boards to negotiate with orphanages and foster homes on needed improvements. The state might urge institutions to provide individual toothbrushes or modern toilet facilities, but provided no funding for such improvements.

Even before women gained the right to vote in 1919, they had been at the forefront of social work, as volunteers or matrons in private institutions. A new generation of family service agencies emerged from Progressive Era reforms, offering women their first professional careers in the field. The institutions now known as Hill House, the Ward Home, Bradley Children's Home and the Davis Home for Colored Children were all launched in the first decade of the new century. Influenced by leaders like Alice Montgomery and Ellen C. Potter, the first head of the state Department of Welfare, the institutions demanded better administration and training for their new staffs.

"The agencies and court stimulated the demand for workers. It was reciprocal," explains Edward Sites, professor emeritus at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work. "The demand for workers stimulated the need for training, and the availability of workers encouraged the development of the agencies."

In 1918, Pitt offered the first training courses for social workers. By 1930, a consortium of 18 private agencies sponsored courses within the university's department of sociology; later, grants from the Buhl Foundation helped establish the present-day School of Social Work, accredited in 1938.

The advent of the Great Depression, however, is what flooded child welfare agencies and orphanages throughout the county.

"The Depression dealt a severe blow to agencies," says Sites. "Rampant hunger and homelessness in the era were great, but [the agencies'] financial resources were restricted. They couldn't meet the need. Churches stepped in to build orphanages."

IMPOVERISHED CHILDREN

Circa 1918
Kingsley Association Records, 1894–1980
Photo by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Archives

Mothers' pensions helped some families at first, as did aid provided as "company relief." Mills and furnaces employed nurses and welfare workers to conduct home visits, staff summer camps and provide carfare for transportation to clinics. As the economy slowed, they also provided food baskets. But food baskets could not compensate for a county that had gone from near full employment to 40 percent unemployment in just three years, from 1930 to 1933. One private agency, the Family Society of Allegheny County, saw its caseload skyrocket from 6,260 cases in January 1931 to 64,148 in June 1933. Foster placements also increased nearly 20 percent from 1931 through 1935.

As the national crisis deepened, pressure for federal action grew. In 1935, the first Social Security Act provided aid to families with dependent children. In addition to administering the first federal funds for foster care and child welfare services, county assistance boards took over the tasks of local "poor boards." The trend toward consolidation would build throughout the next seven decades.

Juvenile Court

The establishment of Allegheny County's Juvenile Court in 1933 was the county's first comprehensive attempt to provide ongoing support for dependent children. It was desperately needed—probation officers were frequently unqualified and unethical, accepting kickbacks for child placements, and many homes used as detention houses had been condemned as fire hazards. By 1935, 85 percent of children in foster care were under the supervision of the court. However, Judge Gustav Schramm (1898–1959) campaigned for civil service hiring standards and new facilities. The Juvenile Court facility that opened in 1938 at 3333 Forbes Avenue—later the home of the Allegheny County Health Department—included courtrooms as well as living spaces for both delinquent and dependent children. Allegheny County was the first major metropolitan region to adopt the new structure, which sought to combine the justice system with rehabilitation and prevention. Schramm became a national leader in his field, with powerful local allies.

The Pittsburgh Public Schools offered classes for children at the court and sent a representative of the child's school to hearings. Special instruction or schedules were arranged, a forerunner of the contemporary cooperation between school districts and the Department of Human Services. The court also received community support: Student social workers from Pitt and Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon University) served as volunteer probation officers. The Variety Club sent movies. Annual holiday gift drives provided other treats. In one first-person report, Judge Schramm singled out "a lady who for years has been buying the Sunday papers for youngsters in the detention home so they won't miss the comics."

CHICKEN DINNER

Circa 1930
James R. Cox Papers, 1923–1950
Boy sits near a "Feed the Kitty" donation bowl at one of Father Cox's organized dinners for the poor

Photo by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Archives

After the War

Judge Schramm continued to be a driving force for reform of dependent care and an advocate of transparency until his death in 1959. He personally authored reports to the community, summarizing the disposition of cases and drawing poignant vignettes about individual children. He even experimented with new media, producing a short film about the court. At the same time, he insisted that court hearings be private. "There should be no public exhibition of the child's difficulties," he wrote. That well-meaning approach would later come under fire: The Hon. Patrick Tamilia, who served in Juvenile Court from 1969 to 1980, observed that "the unbridled discretion of the juvenile court has been both the blessing and the curse of the juvenile justice system."

During Schramm's 28 years heading Juvenile Court, the Health and Welfare Federation of Allegheny County promoted increased cooperation among social service agencies, attempting to centralize budget planning and lend coherence to individual agencies' efforts. Among those was a growing campaign to move children out of congregate care to permanency. Orphanages gradually disappeared, and family reunification became a primary goal.

A growing body of research on child development and social work best practices, conducted during the 1950s at the University of Pittsburgh and nationally, began to differentiate between the needs of dependent children and delinquents. In 1960, County Commissioners William McClelland, John O'Grady and John Walker asked the Federation—now called the Health and Welfare Association—to examine the issue. The Association recommended a separate county agency for services to dependent children, an idea that had been resisted by county leaders like Judge Schramm and the commissioners since 1935.

Federal legislation also forced changes upon the county. The great political movements of the 1960s, the Civil Rights Act and the War on Poverty, all had implications for child welfare as they enlarged federal programs. Amendments to the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program made three major changes to the original 1935 legislation: widened eligibility for black women, who had been excluded from benefits under the original legislation; included federal funding for foster care; and created funds to reimburse counties for child welfare expenses.

MARCH ON MLK NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

April 7, 1968
Charles Martin
Photograph Collection

Three days after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Pittsburghers march from the Hill District to Downtown and the Point, under the watch of the National Guard and state police.

Photo and historical information by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Archives

Equally important was the 1964 passage of the Community Mental Health Act, which deinstitutionalized the treatment of those with mental retardation as well as those with mental illness. "It was the death knell for state mental hospitals," says Pitt's Ed Sites. "The child development research had proved that children could not be treated like miniature adults. They had different needs and couldn't simply be placed behind locked doors." Grassroots advocacy for improved mental health services included the highly visible leadership of the Kennedy family, whose liberal attitude had been influenced by an institutionalized sister.

But it was the power of the federal purse that eventually forced Allegheny County to move forward. The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare demanded that the county comply with the AFDC program and with state law in order to continue to receive matching funds for child welfare. A deadline of January 1, 1963 loomed. The commissioners acquiesced, and the department named Child Welfare Services (CWS) was born. Its first-year county appropriation was $200,000, plus administrative costs of $75,000.

Housed in a two-room space at the Allegheny County Office Building, the new 10-person staff led by Director Tom Carros faced immediate challenges.

"In 1963, every private child welfare agency dropped its most difficult and complex cases on the county," says Ed Sites. "It went from zero clients to a huge caseload. It was inundated and underfunded. In a hostile public environment, it had to build programs from scratch."

The office moved quickly, establishing 24-hour emergency shelter care, separating delinquent from dependent children, and easing severe overcrowding at Juvenile Court. Private institutions made space for children while renovations were made to Hutchinson Hall (later used as McIntyre Shelter); other sites, including an abandoned Nike missile facility in North Park and the former Odd Fellows Home on the North Side, were also pressed into service. In its first year, Child Welfare Services served 1,050 children.

HOME FOR COLORED CHILDREN

Courtesy of Three Rivers Youth Foundation

Before the end of the decade, the county launched other agencies that would eventually join child welfare under the human services umbrella. These agencies served older adults as well as people with mental illness, mental retardation and/or substance abuse issues.

By 1977, CWS was serving 11,794 children. With a caseload 10 times larger than at its inception, the agency was about to face a looming challenge: child abuse.

Helen Glenn Tyson

Helen Glenn Tyson was an insightful advocate for child welfare and a Pittsburgh leader in the Progressive era. She earned a Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh, wrote noted reports on child welfare for the city and state, and served as deputy secretary of welfare for Pennsylvania in 1930. Tyson was a strong early supporter of mothers' aid and served on the board of the Home for Colored Children, one of the first orphanages to care for African American children in Pittsburgh. She was also a founder of the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh. Created as part of a national movement in 1918 to enable African Americans to secure economic self-reliance, parity and power, and civil rights, the Urban League is today an active partner in DHS initiatives.

Can CYS be Fixed?

"CAN CYS BE FIXED?"

Courtesy of Pittsburgh Magazine

A 1995 article in Pittsburgh Magazine notes that many saw CYS's shattered reputation as a "catalyst for the agency's resurrection"

Only if local leaders get the political guts it will take to give Children and Youth Services the support and clear mission it needs to protect children

By Douglas Root

Arnold Cantor abruptly stops rummaging through file folders and legal briefs gathered in clumps around his tiny office. "What would I say to the jury if this case goes to trial?" He repeats the question in smaller chunks. "What would I say? Hmmmm. To a jury? Huh. Oh, hell. I don't know."

But he really does, of course. He sits upright in his chair and shrugs as if he only now considers the possibility the case he has been micro-managing for more than a year would go to trial. Until this moment, he has been immersed in the microscopic details of the law, protecting his arguments from poisonous precedents and motions to dismiss.

Now, with a recent green light ruling from the federal court judge presiding over the case, there could come a date when he and his partner, Max Levine, will bundle up all their research, gather their wits and make a jury care about a little nothing of a 2-year-old girl named Shawntee Ford, beaten to death in an Oakland motel room on March 8, 1994.

It was Allegheny County Children and Youth Services, among a dozen other defendants, that helped put her there, the attorneys will argue in this wrongful death suit.

After a minute, Cantor works up to his opening address to the jury.

"OK. Let's try this." He leans forward, hands braced at the edge of his desk as if it were the edge of the jury box.

"Ladies and gentleman, I won't tell you that this child was destined to become an

IV. THE EARLY NINETIES: "INSTITUTIONAL CHAOS"

The stresses that brought the county's child welfare structure to its knees in the 1990s had origins in two pieces of legislation from the 1970s.

Research was beginning to prove that outcomes for children in foster care were better than for those in congregate shelters. Meanwhile, Allegheny County's institutions for youth were filled to overflowing.

The demand for services had boomed after Congress passed the 1974 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act; Pennsylvania passed its Child Protective Services Law the following year. The new laws required medical and other professionals to report suspected cases and provide immediate protection for children at risk. Shelters and foster care became the default solution. As the county raced to find more foster families—more than 800 were found and recruited in 1977 alone—it also opened McIntyre Shelter for emergency and temporary care. With amendments to the state's Juvenile Act the same year, Pennsylvania made a strategic funding shift, raising reimbursements for services provided in homes and community-based programs.

Growing public awareness of child abuse and child sexual abuse pushed caseloads higher into the 1980s. Walter H. Smith, Jr., Ph.D., the former executive director of Family Resources who is now DHS's Deputy Director of Children, Youth and Families, recalls a television broadcast that sparked a deluge of calls.

"In 1984, ABC-TV broadcast 'Something about Amelia,' a movie about child sexual abuse," recalls Smith. "After the program, Family Resources [then known as Parents Anonymous] ran its telephone number on the screen as a local resource. The phone rang all night, all the next day, and all the next night."

Too often, emergency rescues became long-term placements. By 1987, when Smith became the executive director of Family Resources, children removed from abusive homes often faced years in institutions. New national research showed that African American children were removed from their homes at disproportionate rates. "Sixty percent of the children removed were poor and black," says Smith. "After a family crisis of 30 to 60 days, children might be out of the home for 22 months. The momentary event triggered a bigger trauma. To a lot of people, that didn't make sense. That wasn't the right way to do it."

Two sensational cases illustrated the growing dilemma.

When CYS staffers showed up to remove one African American infant from his white foster parents, the incident later known as the Baby Byron case made national headlines. "In the early '90s, there was a degree of suspicion among African Americans locally that's still there," Smith acknowledges. "Human services [seemed] like the police—they came and did bad things. Larry Dunn [a county

commissioner from 1989 to 2000] campaigned on a platform that involved child welfare, feeding off complaints, as an indicator that county government wasn't well run. There was a politicization around child welfare issues that was striking."

The debacle of Shawntee Ford's death in March 1994 exposed a department that had failed in the profound task of keeping a child safe. The next year brought more tragedies. Eight Allegheny County children died from abuse or neglect. After years of CYS veering between two philosophies—family reunification and separation from family—the public questioned whether either strategy truly protected children.

At the heart of many family crises lay a national epidemic: Crack cocaine, cheap and powerful, invaded the country in 1985. The powerful addiction to crack overpowered many parents and overwhelmed county agencies and courts.

As children flooded the system, caseloads crested at more than 30 per intake worker, far above the state's recommended levels. Workers were not just overwhelmed; they were also underpaid, with starting salaries of $17,000. Staff turnover rates were high, reaching 33 percent in 1995. Three- to five-month delays in hiring replacements were common. A series of provisional licenses from the state, from 1992 through 1995, reflected serious deficits in the agency's performance.

James Rieland, who transferred from Family Court to become deputy director for casework services in 1994, summarized the agency's mood when he arrived. "There was a contentious atmosphere between caseworkers and administrators—a lot of complaints," he recalls. At the time, CYS was not allowed access to criminal records in caregiver background checks. An overwhelmed Family Court system exacerbated problems.

PORTRAIT OF MARC CHERNA

1996

The Independent Review Committee chaired by John Murray and appointed by the county specifically acknowledged in its report that CYS was "dealing with pathologies it did not create." But it nonetheless recommended a series of vital administrative changes. The committee faulted the agency for its failure to be open with the public and cooperate effectively with the court system. It noted a five-year backlog of adoption cases that hampered moving children to permanency. And it suggested that the department modernize its computer systems and recruit more minority employees. "We must foster an environment that helps rather than punishes, and keeps families and communities together rather than dividing them," the report concluded.

In accepting the report, the county commissioners launched a national search for a new director of Children and Youth Services. In February 1996, Marc Cherna arrived. A native of the South Bronx and an experienced administrator for the New Jersey Department of Human Services, he would later explain his decision: "I was intrigued by the challenge of reforming a system so riddled with systemic issues. It was an opportunity I just couldn't pass up."

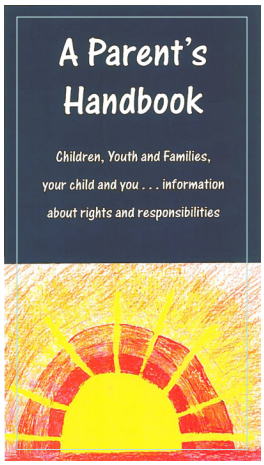
The stakes were high. A new era had begun.

V. 1996 — TWO HUNDRED DAYS: "AGGRESSIVE REFORM"

In his first six months on the job, Cherna set three priorities. The first was stabilizing the system and addressing case overloads; the second, regaining public confidence; and the third, improving cooperation with the courts.

The solution to the case overload required an all-hands-on-deck approach. Cherna asked 52 downtown supervisors to go into field offices to support cases. "It did not matter what your title was . . . Everyone who could took a direct role in serving children and families," Cherna explained. Coupled with the addition of 42 new caseworkers, the three-month emergency response worked. By August, average caseloads for intake had dropped to 16.9 per caseworker, while the average for family services had dropped to 27.1.

Supervisors began regular case reviews. Internal morale improved. "No one likes an outside person questioning decisions that had been made, but people were pleased to have the help," recalls Deputy Director Rieland. "The case reviews got people thinking, putting some logic in their mix."



COVER OF "A PARENT'S HANDBOOK"
1998

To begin to build public confidence, the department adopted a program Cherna had developed in New Jersey. On September 9, 1996, telephones began ringing at the Director's Action Line. Separate from the child welfare service line, the hotline—housed in the newly created Office of Community Relations—invited the public to register complaints about services or caseworkers. On its first day, it logged 11 calls; now, expanded to cover all publicly funded human services in the county, it fields approximately 14,000 phone, face-to-face and online inquiries annually.

A second effort to bridge the divide between the agency and the community followed. "A Parent's Handbook," containing straightforward advice about procedures, rights and responsibilities, was developed after a lengthy input and vetting process and debuted in 1998. Highmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield sponsored publication of the booklet, which has been frequently updated and given to more than 150,000 child welfare–involved adults and interested parties.

The support from Highmark was part of a larger strategy to persuade corporate and nonprofit partners to support CYS's efforts. Several other important partners made early commitments. Among them were the region's philanthropic foundations, which were poised to engage the child welfare system in a more sophisticated way.

Another significant collaboration began when Max Baer, administrative judge for Family Court, telephoned Marc Cherna on the announcement of his new post. Baer was offering help, as well as looking for it.

Because CYS could not make decisions on child placements without the approval of state courts, says James Rieland, a closer relationship was essential. "We decided to use the power of the court to help us make these decisions."

The partnership between Children and Youth Services and the court ensured that cases were quickly and thoroughly reviewed, adding more velocity to permanence. The court system and CYS agreed that the recommendations in the Murray report were shared priorities. "It was our bible," Baer recalls.

After 200 days, Cherna had led major progress on his trio of priorities. He had also reached out to Carnegie Mellon University, where students at the Heinz School of Public Policy & Management developed an electronic bulletin board designed to match children to appropriate agencies. To address racial disparities, the department created off-site testing opportunities and increased advertising to encourage minorities to take the civil service exam for staff vacancies, and asked two community-based agencies, whose staff and cultural perspective were reflective of the communities in which they were located, to recruit foster homes. Staffers enrolled in new workshops for cultural sensitivity training. And Cherna ventured into often-stormy community meetings.

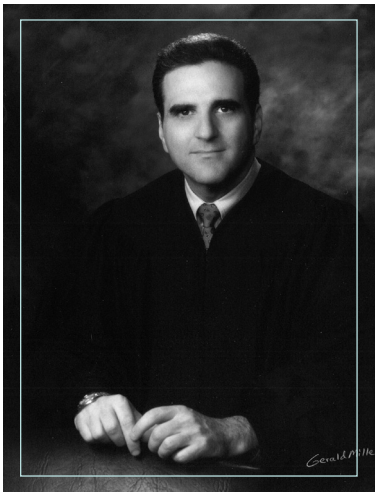
"Marc had the courage and the willingness to go out and talk to people who were mad as hell," recalls Walter Smith. "He provided leadership in the provider community."

As the department stabilized, Congress readied the Adoption and Safe Families Act. The federal legislation, passed in 1997, required states to set up a permanent-placement plan for a child in his or her first year of foster care, and created incentives for states to increase adoptions, especially among older youth. The legislation confirmed Children and Youth Services' commitment to permanency for dependent children, and the agency began to chart a flight path into the 21st century.

Justice Max Baer:
A New Judge Learns on the Job and Creates Effective Partnerships

Elected to the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas in 1988, Max Baer had little experience in family law when he was assigned to be administrative judge of Family Court in 1994. His first visit appalled him.

"Every aspect of the process was deficient," he recalls. "The building was medieval. It looked like something out of an 18th-century novel. The hallways were jammed, there were no lights, there were two judges hearing 60 cases a day. Cases were reviewed every six months, but they were often paper reviews, written by social workers [instead of judges]." Baer set out to address a 1,600-case backlog of adoption cases and worked with Cherna to devise a plan. He convinced the county's largest law firm, Reed Smith Shaw & McClay (now Reed Smith LLC), to provide pro bono assistance to finalize cases. Cherna appeared with Baer at the media announcement, detailing how the court's actions advanced CYS's goal of increasing "speed to permanency" for children.



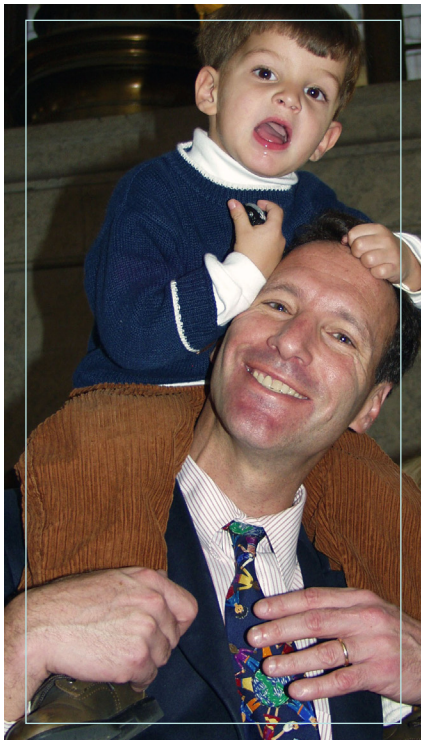
JUSTICE MAX BAER

Early 1990s
Courtesy of the Baer Family

"The partnerships gave the message that we were worth working with," Cherna summarizes. "We needed help to do this work, and Max got the private sector to be part of the team."

After intense effort, the backlog was cleared. "We handled the most adoptions in a two-year period in the history of the court," notes Baer, now a member of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and a nationally known child advocate. Family Court acquired more space and more judges, with eight now hearing dependency cases. With public adoptions handled in Family Court rather than Orphans' Court, the processing time for adoptions has been reduced.

Foundations joined the Family Court effort in 1999, agreeing to fund salaries for judicial hearing officers. "That was another tipping point," Cherna acknowledges. "The court could review cases every three months instead of every six months. In each review, there was a child advocate, a parent advocate and a county solicitor. Sixteen years later, it's still going strong. It's had a huge impact."



ADOPTION DAY

Circa 1990s

***Sharon McDaniel:* A Child of the System Becomes a Leader in Kinship Care**

After the death of Sharon McDaniel's mother, her family struggled. But thanks to the support of a loving African American family network, she ultimately succeeded in earning an Ed.D. and founded a highly regarded local agency that proves the power of kinship care.

Growing up in Pittsburgh, McDaniel faced a path that seemed less straightforward. During her teen years, she spent six months in congregate care at McIntyre Shelter. On her own, with no family visits and few people to ask about what plans the child welfare system had for her, she waited for someone else to decide her fate.

"Once you moved to McIntyre, it was 'out of sight, out of mind,' " she recalls. "The system didn't have to worry about those kids. They were safe. Then one day I was told, 'You're going on a placement visit tomorrow.' It went well. The next weekend I heard I was leaving. I never went to court one single day when I was in care. Decisions were made without my voice."

McDaniel lived with an aunt until her graduation from Penn State University. As she began a career in social work, she applied lessons from her own experience to the families she served. "I began to see what older relatives would need if kids moved in," she says. She also worked on early court efforts to acknowledge legal guardianship, as well as adoption, as options for permanency.

When Allegheny County complied with a consent order, providing foster care funds to families who accepted their kin, McDaniel founded the county's first subcontracting agency to focus on kinship care. On October 1, 1994, A Second Chance, Inc., opened its doors, with an emphasis on building family strengths. "We had 70 referrals the first day," she recalls. "In our first year, we had 1,000."

McDaniel is proud of her agency's record. And she credits Marc Cherna's leadership in pushing permanency to the forefront of the foster care debate.

"It's about consistent leadership," she says. "What has made the difference in the last 20 years? We've given kids a voice."

PAGE 20
PHOTO CAPTIONS

A: RECOVERY FESTIVAL *2005*

B: PROJECT PROM FASHION SHOW *2009*

C: DAVID CROSBY, ALLEGHENY COUNTY MUSIC FESTIVAL *2000*

D: HOLIDAY PROJECT *2010*

E: FAMILIES UNITED *2010*

F: YOUNG BUDS ART EXHIBIT *2005*

G: CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH *2008*

H: CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH DAY *2011*

I: FAMILIES UNITED *2009*

J: DONATIONS FROM "THE BEAR LADIES" *2003*


A


B

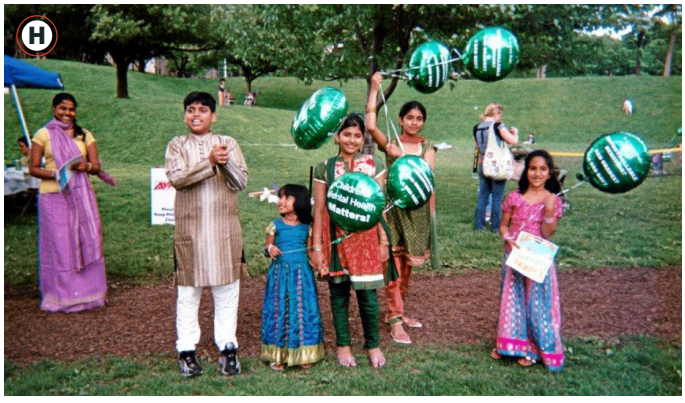

C


D


F


E


G


H


I


J

VI. INTEGRATED SERVICES

As CYS streamlined its operations, a plan for a similar effort for county governance emerged. John Murray, who had chaired the earlier committee to review CYS, chaired the Committee to Prepare Allegheny County for the 21st Century, known as ComPAC 21.

The group's countywide recommendations, adopted in 1996, envisioned a simplified government headed by a single executive instead of a three-person commission, and a goal of eliminating service duplications.

FACULTY PORTRAIT OF JOHN MURRAY

Courtesy of Duquesne University

For the county's social service agencies, four physically and financially separate silos, ComPAC 21 meant a historic consolidation. The newly created Department of Human Services united CYS (with a long-standing $8 million deficit), Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Drug & Alcohol/Homeless & Hunger Program, federal programs, and the Department of Aging. In January 1997, Cherna was named director of the new mega-agency. With 1,000 workers, 375 contract agencies and a budget of $360 million, it would serve one-fifth of the population of Allegheny County.

The director's goals for the department followed those he had pursued for CYS: to build on established community partnerships, particularly those with the courts, foundations and universities; to communicate effectively with the public; to professionalize staff; and to emphasize prevention-based strategies. With a mandate to keep the county's contribution to the overall human services funding level, DHS would have to find efficiencies within existing operations through consolidation and cost savings.

Two partners outside the human services system drew up important blueprints. Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz School identified the need for and attempted to create a management information system to integrate these separate departments. The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce undertook a pro bono benchmarking process that compared DHS's progress with other regions. The in-kind donations represented thousands of hours of professional consulting and helped to provide the administrative blueprint that local foundations would embrace to support DHS's infrastructure.

Integrating funding was as thorny as integrating information. "We looked for opportunities in uncapped entitlements such as Medicaid dollars for early intervention services. We also started maximizing the use of all funding to pay for specific service needs of individuals and families regardless of what door they walked through," described Cherna. A creative strategy to move $5 million in underspent mental health funds over to CYS helped alleviate the latter's deficit by covering the mental health services that had already been provided to CYS families. The proportions of DHS funding began to shift dramatically. By the time the administrative restructuring was complete, overall funding for human services nearly tripled to $786.5 million, and the percentage of county dollars decreased to 5.6 percent from 9.3 percent in 1997.

Reducing county expenditures—including streamlined contracts and administrative staffing—freed funds for preventive services, which now comprise over 50 percent of child welfare expenditures. Centralizing administrative functions freed program offices to concentrate on improving service delivery and coordination.

Human Services Integration Fund

While local philanthropies had addressed important issues for children's well-being for decades, funding after-school programs, violence prevention efforts, family support centers and many other supports, the Cherna era brought a concerted effort to supply another basic need in the field of child welfare: data.

"The mid-'90s was the age of specialists at foundations," recalls Marge Petruska, senior director of the Children, Youth and Families program at The Heinz Endowments. "Foundations were beginning to ask their grantees questions about performance-based outcomes. They were using information to drive decision-making." But in 1996, she notes, DHS "didn't even have a data system.

One person didn't know that five other staff were seeing the same family."

That concern would be one of the reasons for the creation of the Human Services Integration Fund (HSIF) the following year. Pooling nearly $10 million since 1997, more than a dozen local foundations have financed projects that include comprehensive information and data management. A 21st-century architecture for information systems had been sketched by university and corporate partners early on and was implemented with foundation funds. A major achievement has been the development of the DHS Data Warehouse, a central repository of data to support decision-making and improve case management. With 528 million records of more than 950,000 distinct clients, from 19 data sources representing 28 different human services program areas, the Data Warehouse protects client privacy while allowing analysts to understand emerging trends. It has grown into a core technology for integrating services across all DHS areas and a nationally recognized model on how to share data across systems. According to Erin Dalton, deputy director of DHS's Office of Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation, "The Data Warehouse has enabled us to use human services data as an integrated case management tool and has positioned Allegheny County at the forefront of analysis of and planning for human services issues."

HSIF funding made another breakthrough possible. In a landmark agreement in 2009, DHS and the Pittsburgh Public Schools agreed to share protected data on district children who receive DHS services. Thirty-nine percent of the children served by DHS are enrolled in city schools; the program facilitated through the Data Warehouse allows both sides to analyze data, and design and implement joint interventions to improve outcomes for those children.

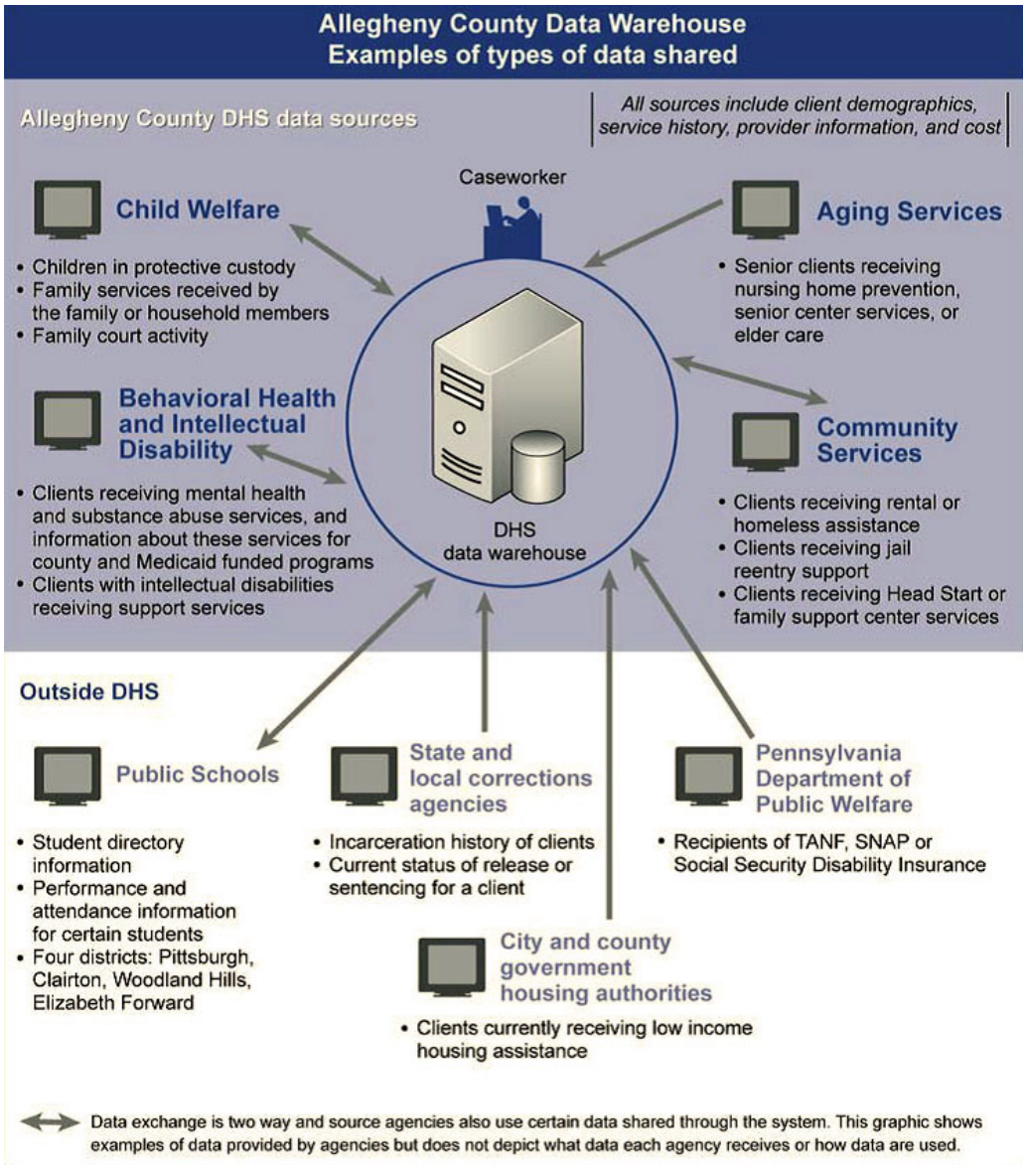
By the summer of 2013, similar agreements were in place with eight local school districts.

The Integration Fund has also made grants for research to gauge customer satisfaction and to analyze optimum caseloads for CYF, and for a variety of other activities designed to improve practice, data collection and information dissemination.

ILLUSTRATION OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY'S DATA WAREHOUSE AND EXAMPLES OF DATA SHARED

2013

Source: GAO analysis based on information collected from Allegheny County officials



A Family Emphasis

In January 1998, the Office of Children and Youth Services assumed a new name: Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF). The new name indicated a philosophical shift, emphasizing service provision from the perspective of families, rather than that of service delivery. The new title also placed the office in the context of a larger Department of Human Services, providing seamless access to the entire array of services available to individuals and families, including prevention services, family support, behavioral health services (mental health, drug and alcohol), and services for those with intellectual disabilities. Within the newly integrated DHS, at-risk child development and education services, hunger services, emergency shelters and housing for the homeless, non-emergency medical transportation, and job training and placement for public assistance recipients and older adults would also be provided.

Research on healthy development for infants, toddlers and preschoolers had proved that parental participation was key, and several demonstration projects in Pittsburgh neighborhoods had shown promising results. Newly developed family support centers, which offered parenting support, prenatal care and guidance on early childhood development, gained acceptance. The University of Pittsburgh's Office of Child Development provided professional development and support to the centers and their Policy Board, which included DHS staff.

Beginning in 1997, county support enabled the program to expand to dozens of low-income communities. In addition to core services for child development and health and medical attention, family support centers could choose to offer an array of other family services, ranging from housing and transportation assistance to substance abuse counseling.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

Courtesy of the Family Support Policy Board of Allegheny County

"Marc Cherna was very engaged," recalls Laurie Mulvey, director of service demonstrations for the Office of Child Development. "We all believe, number one, that family supports for families with young children can prevent abuse and neglect and prevent developmental delays. He shifted government money toward the family support centers that were proving results and had the endorsement of the community. He really led the charge in prevention as a crucial piece [of DHS's mission]."

One example of DHS's focus on engaging the community and its residents was the creation of the Beverly Jewel Wall Lovelace Children's Programs within public housing communities, which provided out-of-school programs for children and adolescents. Not only were the programs designed by the community, they were also staffed by community residents. 21st Century Community Learning Centers and YouthPlaces were also designed to provide constructive activities and direction for youth. Operated by private agencies with DHS support, they are a successful part of CYF's preventive strategy.

Integrating services meant that all DHS program offices had to become more agile in communicating, streamlining and coordinating the provision of previously discrete services in order to engage consumers and meet their individual needs. In 1999, Allegheny County became the first county in Pennsylvania to offer Family Group Decision Making. The practice model brings a family's natural support system to the table with the formal child welfare system when making critical decisions, including placement. Other team-based approaches followed. High Fidelity Wraparound incorporated mental health and addiction services for youth; a group of federally funded System of Care grants offered an integrated array of supports for children and youth with serious emotional disturbances, and their families, in a number of Pittsburgh neighborhoods. The Youth Support Partners program was added, employing young adults with personal experience of system involvement as mentors for youth involved in a number of DHS programs. The Youth Support Partners unit, the first of its kind in the nation, demonstrated that peer support was effective in helping achieve positive outcomes for youth and their families.

Conferencing and Teaming: A Custom-Made Practice Model for DHS

In 2013, DHS launched a new case practice model, Conferencing and Teaming. The family-inclusive strategy is based on the nationally recognized model of Family Team Conferencing and incorporates lessons learned from practice models tested through the Department's child-serving offices, particularly Family Group Decision Making and the programs that formed the System of Care Initiative. The new systemwide model creates a continuum of services from initial engagement, assessment and planning through a family conference; continuous service integration through teaming helps a participant meet his or her goals. It also includes the opportunity for private family time in every conference or meeting, should the family want it.

Recognizing that some children and young adults face serious barriers to well-being from multiple complex issues that cross traditional service systems, DHS developed a group of "whatever it takes" service delivery programs that pull together a child's natural supports as well as representatives from all appropriate systems. These multi-system programs provide a comprehensive plan that includes a full continuum of services and tangible assistance when normal services fall short.

"Our goal is to ensure that families have easy access to a seamless and comprehensive network of services, in settings that are accessible and in ways that foster independence," explains Cherna.

CYF's 1998 name change also invoked an ongoing priority: to ensure a safe, permanent family for every child. Starting with the addition of hearing officers in 1999, Family Court and DHS have cooperated closely to make sure that out-of-home placements are in the least restrictive setting, closely monitored, and focused on permanency outcomes. Through an emphasis on practices such as family finding, kinship care has become the preferred solution: siblings are kept together whenever possible. Permanency plans are developed concurrently with placement. Working closely with Casey Family Programs, a national foundation dedicated to permanency, DHS has succeeded in safely reducing placements and keeping children in their homes.

And in 2011, with the support of Casey Family Programs, DHS implemented a system of Permanency Roundtables. The team effort focuses caseworkers and supervisors on issues preventing children from achieving permanence in their living situation.

As a result of these and other efforts, Allegheny County has dramatically reduced foster placements.

At the end of 2012, prevention and planning services for dependent children were gaining ground. Children's placement outside the home had been reduced by 60 percent from 1996 to 2012 in Allegheny County. Half of all local placements are now with relatives, compared to only 26 percent nationally. Data calculated in 2012 demonstrate that the median length of stay for children placed in out-of-home care decreased a full two months since 1996. Most important, children are safer. Since 1997, Allegheny County's child fatalities of those under care have been much lower than the national average.

Youth aged 16 and over in foster care are in particular need of supports as they make plans for adulthood. While CYF had addressed their needs since 1996, in 2006 the Department created the Independent Living Initiative (ILI). The initiative helps qualified foster youth make plans for post-secondary education, financial aid and housing, and has become a nationally recognized model. Fewer than three percent of foster children attend college nationally. In Allegheny County, 11 percent of the 600 ILI youth who began post-secondary studies completed their education with continuing support from DHS.

An important part of DHS's family-centered approach is celebrating success. Family reunification recognition and youth achievement celebration ceremonies focus community attention on positive achievements. "[DHS] is consistent in incorporating a broader community," summarizes David Sanders, who has worked closely with the county as an executive vice president at Casey Family Programs. "They've aggressively addressed the whole community in making sure that children are safe."

ALLEGHENY COUNTY MUSIC FESTIVAL

2007

Community Outreach

Over the past century, child welfare organizations attempted to inform the community of their activities, but rarely issued invitations for the public to support them. Judge Gustav Schramm's paternalistic 1940s reports on children in Juvenile Court provided few opportunities for public engagement.

Beginning in 1996, when it was housed in the Department of Children and Youth Services, the Office of Community Relations has worked on comprehensive internal and external communications about human services. In addition to the highly successful Director's Action Line, the office handles media inquiries, creates program and educational publications, spearheads public awareness campaigns, plans resource events, manages the Link (an aging and disabilities resource center), and leads fundraising efforts to provide alternative non-governmental support for children involved with the Department.

The Office also invites Allegheny County residents to celebrate and contribute to the work of DHS. Among the most popular of these programs have been the Allegheny County Music Festival, an open-air summer concert with proceeds benefitting DHS and children in juvenile probation; an annual Holiday Project and gift drive; and Project Prom, which provides formal attire for youth in families receiving DHS services.

The Music Festival Fund has raised close to $600,000 and served 2,600 children since 2000. All of these programs underscore the twofold message: DHS serves every resident of Allegheny County, and each of them contributes to its overall success.

Afterword by

MARC CHERNA
DIRECTOR, ALLEGHENY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

In one sense, our holistic focus on family shows that child welfare practice in Allegheny County has come full circle in the past century. Florence Lattimore's passionate argument in the 1907 Pittsburgh Survey—that the needs of the entire family affect the well-being of its children—is acknowledged in a new and systematic effort to integrate all of DHS's offerings. But there is an important difference in attitude. Today's DHS emphasizes the strengths, rather than the needs, of the families it serves, with a focus on their individual capabilities.

We've been moving toward a seamless integration of all our services for families since 1997, and, after 16 years, we see the needle moving. The outcomes for the children and families we serve have demonstrably improved, due to our increased engagement and collaboration with them, within our department and our provider network and with other professional partners, including the courts and schools. We have a clear mission and consistent values, developed with community participation, that guide all of our work. We have integrated our administrative functions to simplify our work with providers and share appropriate data across systems so that no child—indeed, no family—is left behind.

Drawing on models of family engagement and assessment tools that emphasize family strengths, DHS committed to a systemwide case practice model predicated on Conferencing and Teaming beginning in 2013. Over the next five years, we will broaden and enhance its usage throughout the Department and our provider network, engaging participants to actively discuss and plan their futures. Designed on the idea that increasing personal responsibility improves outcomes, the vision for service planning and integration will better serve families.

Patricia Valentine, Deputy Executive Director for Integrated Program Services, says it best:

> *"Much of what we're doing on the service side . . . is trying to look at the DHS experience from a consumer's or family's point of view. We need to ask ourselves: What would we want our experience to be? We would not want to have to repeat ourselves over and over. If we were involved in multiple services, we would not want to be pulled in different ways and not be offered services in an integrated fashion."*

The reforms provide opportunities to strengthen not only families, but also the county as a whole. DHS must continue to analyze and refine services that deliver the best outcomes. By focusing on universal services, owned by the community and available to all families, DHS can move beyond the old debate of whether government should take care of its needy, to focus on how to help the community take care of itself.

TIMELINE

A review of significant child welfare–related events in Allegheny County

1974

Congress passes the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act

1977

CWS becomes Children and Youth Services (CYS)

1995

The Independent Committee to Review CYS, chaired by Dr. John Murray, issues the "Murray Report," which recommends a series of critical changes to CYS

1996

Marc Cherna hired as CYS Director, begins on February 26

Director's Action Line debuts

Adoption Legal Services Project, a public/private partnership with Reed Smith LLP, created to expedite adoptions

The Committee to Prepare Allegheny County for the 21st Century (ComPAC 21), recommends the integration of the county's social service agencies

1997

Marc Cherna becomes director of newly created Department of Human Services

Human Services Integration Fund provides funds for DHS restructuring

First DHS website launches

1998

First of three System of Care grants in Allegheny County begins operation

CYS renamed Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF)

Allegheny County Hearing Officers Project launches

Parent's Handbook published

2000

Data Warehouse created

Allegheny County Music Festival (and Fund) created

First Families United Celebration occurs

2001

Multi-system approach implemented to address needs of children with multiple human service needs

2002

CNN NewsNight with Aaron Brown lauds the turnaround in Allegheny County's child welfare system and its recognition as a national model

2003

On Paula Zahn NOW, Richard Wexler promotes Allegheny County's child welfare system as a "model system" for other municipalities to emulate, due to its emphasis on family preservation

Project Prom initiated

2005

ABC World News Tonight examines Allegheny County's family-inclusive approach toward keeping children safe and preserving families

2006

Adoption Legal Services Project receives award from Ash Institute for Democratic Governance & Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government

ABC World News Tonight features Allegheny County's child welfare system family preservation efforts, designed to reduce need for foster care

National Family Preservation Network proposes that other systems model CYF's practice of utilizing innovative, evidence-based practices to improve outcomes

Independent Living Initiative (ILI) created to assist youth aging out of the child welfare system

2008

Stewards of Change conducts a case study examining how DHS created an interoperable system to support child welfare

Key Information and Demographic System (KIDS) launches

Youth Support Partners unit begins operation

2009

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel conducts an investigative report and concludes that Milwaukee's child welfare system could benefit from modeling Allegheny County's system

2011

Next phase of integration begins with appointment of Executive Deputy of Integrated Programs

Allegheny County Music Festival honored by Harvard University's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation

Quality Service Review process begins

2013

The U.S. Government Accountability Office analyzes the DHS Data Warehouse, nationally recognizing its successful balance of data sharing and privacy protection

Conferencing and Teaming begins

DHS VISION

To create an accessible, culturally competent, integrated and comprehensive human services system that ensures individually tailored, seamless and holistic services to Allegheny County residents, in particular, the county's vulnerable populations.

DHS PRINCIPLES

All services will be:

- High quality, comprehensive and accessible.
- Individualized and designed to be respectful of the unique cultural characteristics of each individual and/or community.
- Integrated and offered through a team approach that recognizes the capacity of individuals and families to identify their own strengths, needs and goals; create relationships and natural supports; and take steps necessary to accomplish these goals.