

El Diario Sin Nombre

A publication of the New Mexico Human Services Department

IN THIS ISSUE

CSED Passes a Big, Big Milestone	2
Double Trouble in Eastern New Mexico	3
Roswell ISD Office is Surprised	3-4
Helping Kids to Make it a Safe Summer	4

Vol. 8, No. 8 August, 2008

CSED Begins a Pilot Electronic Data Management System

Paperwork, paperwork, paperwork! In the electronic age processing paperwork is still a big part of our job in the Human Services Department. Yet in the Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) the electronic age is making an appearance and in a big way.

Phil Herndon is a long-serving HSD employee and like most staff, he has seen how a missing piece of paperwork can bottleneck an otherwise swiftly moving income support or child support case. Herndon, however, is one of the few people in management who worked (after several years as a caseworker) on the information technology side of the HSD house and later was promoted to management where he's a CSED ROM running the two large Albuquerque offices.

"Because of Phil's special skills, we asked him to lead the Electronic Data Management System (EDMS) project from the program side," said Charissa Saavedra, CSED Director. "Phil worked closely with Jan Christine from the Information Technology Division (ITD) in the initial planning and design of the EDMS until Jan went to work on the ISD2 Replacement System."

Herndon chose the Albuquerque-South (Alb-S) CSED office to pilot EDMS for child support. "We are working on getting our old child support applications into our computer system," said Susie Mendoza, a clerk in the Alb-S office. "I scanned 12 applications into the system this morning." When asked if she is happy with her new duties, she said, "Am I excited? Yes I am. At first it was kind of confusing, but I'm getting there."

"This proposal [a system that can accurately scan hand-written documents into a computer data base] was actually written by me back in 2003 to make child support more efficient," said Herndon. "Washington State has used it for years in their child support agency. Now we have the pilot going with Tim Patterson of ITD as the project manager. He is a real hands-on person and has been essential in the implementation of the program and in-house expertise will give us the flexibility to expand the templates to more offices, even to the other HSD divisions."

Herndon said the first step is to have three important documents from new and old customers scanned into the computer system: the customer's original application (now scaled back from nine to five pages), the court order and any employer verification letters.

"Seeing the system work is kind of fun to watch," said Herndon. "One can see the scanned handwritten information on an application transferred as typed words into the computer data base. Words that don't match a spell check are highlighted for the clerk to correct by looking back over the scanned hand-written document. When this is done, the computer screens are completed and the application is now on our computer system where updates can be made in seconds instead of minutes."

When asked how much time a fully implemented EDMS could save the typical CSLA in a given day, Herndon said, "I'd say one hour a day for each caseworker. This is because now they have to walk to the file room to get each customer's file and there is a lot of faxing back and forth from the courthouse that would end if these three documents, as well as the rest of the case files were assessable from the caseworker's desk."

This could have a profound effect upon the CSED because hundreds of caseworkers could use that extra hour to work on other cases, as each worker averages a caseload of about 500.



Ramona Salvio, left, and Susie Mendoza, both of the Albuquerque-South CSED office are pioneering the new child support software that could save thousands of staff hours in the near future. Two other state agencies are already using the EDMS: Tax and Revenue and Records and Archives. These agencies like the CSED are heavily dependent on moving paperwork efficiently.

\$103 MILLION IN CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT COLLECTIONS! HOW ABOUT THAT?

Governor Richardson Applauds HSD for Reaching Child Support Milestones

In a news release announcing that the Child Support Enforcement Division, for the first time, surpassed \$100 million in collections in one budget year, Governor Bill Richardson said, "I am pleased to report we have surpassed our goals each-and-every year and have reached an all time high for both child support collections and percentage of cases with court orders." The Governor also noted that more than 65 percent of the 58,667 cases handled by the Child Support Enforcement Division now have court orders.

Other child support and income support improvements over the past six years:

- An increased CSED cost effectiveness ratio now at more than two to one;
- Stepped-up efforts to establish paternity;
- Helping struggling parents get the training and education they need through the New Mexico and Education works;
- Using every available tool to enforce child support orders: wage withholdings, license suspensions, lottery withholdings, passport denials, tax intercepts and the Governor's Fresh Start Program.



CSED leadership, old and new, are credited with helping to get the division past the \$100 million -a-year in collections. Pictured here at the Santa Fe Records and Archives Library are current directors, from left, Chris Vivian, Rio Rancho CD; Gerry Smith, Alb-N CD; Phil Herndon, District III ROM; Laura Galindo, Alamogordo CD; Terry Herrera, Alb-S CD; Dee Hammons, Clovis CD; Charissa Saavedra, CSED Director; Kathy Pape, Roswell CD; Michelle Castaneda, Santa Fe CD; Brandi Gomez, Silver City CD; Ben Marquez, Districts I and V ROM; Kurt Saenz, Districts II and IV ROM; Reina Gallegos, Las Vegas CD; Cathi Valdes, CSED Deputy Director and Bill Burk, Las Cruces CD.

Child Support Offices Receive Accolades at July County Director Meeting

Most Improved: Cases With Court Orders
First: Socorro
Second: Clovis
Third: Albuquerque-North

Most Improved: Collections per Case
First: Socorro
Second: Farmington
Third: Clovis

Most Improved: Arrears Collections
First: Clovis
Second: Las Vegas
Third: Farmington/Las Cruces/Hobbs

Most Improved: Paternity Establishments
First: Los Lunas
Second: Santa Fe
Third: Las Cruces

Highest Percent of Cases With Court Orders
First: Farmington
Second: Las Vegas
Third: Albuquerque-North

Highest Percent of Collections per Case
First: Albuquerque-North
Second: Alamogordo
Third: Clovis

Highest Percent of Arrears Collections
First: Las Vegas
Second: Farmington
Third: Roswell

Quality Assurance Reviews EDMS Implementation
Silver City: 100 percent Phase I and II
Albuquerque South
Albuquerque North
Santa Fe

Elderly Man Dumped Off at an ISD Office

The Monday morning of June 23 was like any other Monday morning for ISD County Director Lorraine Gutierrez. She walked into her Roswell office early and began her Monday morning routine, but soon she was interrupted by a phone call from the security guard. She was told that someone had just dropped off an elderly man at the front door with what looked to be all of his worldly belongings in two large, black garbage bags and a cardboard box.

Gutierrez rushed to the lobby, and, sure enough, the man was there with his possessions. “The security guard told me a woman just dropped him off at the door then muttered, ‘he’s your problem now’ and got back into her car and sped away,” said Gutierrez.

“We decided to get the man out of the lobby so we took him to our conference room and began looking through his belongings for some identification,” said Gutierrez. “We quickly learned that he was not only homeless but severely disabled. Inside one of the garbage bags we found his medications and learned that he was suffering from diabetes because we found his insulin in a Sonic Drive-in cup and other medications. We also learned that he was deaf in one ear, blind in one eye and was wearing a diaper.”

ISD staff did not know if the woman decided to drop him off at their office or the man asked her to take him there. “The man told us that it was his niece who dropped him off. He was living with her in Socorro for the past two months, but he didn’t like it and asked that she return him to Roswell,” said Gutierrez.

In the meantime, other ISD staff jumped into action calling an ambulance, the police and Aging and Long-term Services. After finding his ID, they checked to see if he was receiving ISD services. “We found that he was still on our system as a Medicaid category 40 and was receiving food stamps,” said Gutierrez. “At one time he was living in a low-income apartment down the street from our office.”

The emergency medical technicians arrived first and determined the man was not in need of emergency medical care, but the Adult Protective Services representative, after an assessment, determined the man needed home health care services. A local nursing home was contacted and explained the situation; within 30 minutes a nurse arrived and conducted her own mental and disability assessment. She too found him to be in need of nursing home care and contacted the man’s local physician to obtain the necessary medical orders authorizing institutionalization.

(Continued on page 4)

ISD Twins Have Some Clients/Staff Befuddled

Olga Aldaz and Nina Payen are identical twins. They were born minutes apart some 50 years ago. Today they work in the Income Support Division (ISD). Olga has been with ISD 22 years and is the director of the Clovis office, while Nina started five years ago and is an Administrative Secretary at the nearby Portales office.



Can you guess who’s who? Okay! Olga is wearing the HSD Logo shirt.

The twin’s likeness has confused both ISD staff and clients ever since Nina arrived in ISD. “We confused one of our ROMs several years ago,” said Olga. “I was supposed to meet with Benny Inman at the Clovis office one morning, but he stopped by the Portales office first and saw Nina there. He asked her, ‘aren’t you supposed to be in Clovis for our meeting’? On another occasion, Nina was at training attended by some County Directors. Later I heard that a couple of my co-workers were puzzled at how unfriendly I was to them during the training.”

Olga isn’t sure why people confuse the two now. “Maybe we are getting to look more and more alike as we age,” she said. When they go to a restaurant they know what is going to happen as soon as the waitress hands them their menus. “The first question always is, ‘You’ve got to be sisters’? Then the follow up question is, ‘Are you twins’?”

The twins have confused more than one client in Eastern New Mexico. Aldaz said, “I was shopping at a grocery store in Portales when a client thinking I was Nina asked me if I had gotten the paperwork she had turned in? I replied, I’m sorry but you are talking to the wrong person. The client said, ‘okay’ but kept staring at me. Finally she approached me again; this time looking at me more closely than before, she asked, ‘Are you telling me the truth?’ Then she apparently caught on and started laughing to herself.”

Nina’s experiences with the confusion have also been humorous. “On occasion I have been sent to trainings in Albuquerque and Santa Fe,” she said. “It’s very strange to be approached by HSD staff that I have never met and be greeted with a hug or big smile or listen to someone talking to me about something that I have no clue what it is about. Once I explain who I am, we all have a good laugh about the mix up.”

When asked if the two would ever consider working together in the same office? Olga said, “No, that would really be too confusing for everyone.”

(Continued from page 3)

The 84-year-old man remained at the ISD office as Adult Protective Services worked to get him into a home. Then, towards the end of the day, the man was admitted to a nursing home and the police officer volunteered to transport the elderly man there. "It was very sad for everyone here to see what had taken place here that day," said Gutierrez. "But it was awesome, too, how the whole community came together to help this poor man."

The police officer said that he was saddened by what had happened. Before he left the ISD office with the man and his belongings, he said to Gutierrez, "I've seen abandoned children before, but never have I seen an abandoned elderly person."

Albuquerque ISD Staff Help at Safety Fair

Northwest Albuquerque ISD staff were out in force on Saturday, July 12 at Coronado Mall helping fire and police agencies during a summer safety awareness fair. "They are doing a fantastic job," said Diana Speakman, a community liaison with the Bernalillo County Fire Department. "All morning long they have been fitting children with bicycle helmets. She noted that most children injuries, especially during the summer months, come from head injuries, many from bike riding.

The Bernalillo County Fire Department received a grant to purchase 1,000 kids' helmets from the Department of Health. "We want to get them out of our warehouse and to children," said Speakman.

"This has been a great opportunity to interact with children and their parents. I was glad we were asked to participate," said Juli Lindsey, Northwest ISD County Director about the event that ran from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and included a bicycle safety course supervised by police mounted on horses and other children's safety awareness activities.

Overall, Lindsey and her staff fitted 90 children with bike safety helmets, which is well worth the effort even it keeps one child out of the hospital this summer for a head-related bike injury.

In a quid pro quo, the Bernalillo County Fire Department donated 25 backpacks, pencils rulers and tee shirts to Lindsey's office for their back-to-school activities. Children visiting her office on July 28 were offered back packs and school supplies from donations made by ISD staff and Staples, Inc.



Juli Lindsey fits a bicycle helmet onto a child's head at Coronado Mall.



New Mexico Human Services Department

2009 S. Pacheco St.

Santa Fe, NM 87504

Phone: 505-827-7750/Fax: 505-827-6286

Email: Marty.Eckert@state.nm.us

We're on the web: <http://www.hsd.state.nm.us>