



*Working together to make the future of Orange County brighter...*



# ANNUAL REPORT

2007-2008

Orange County, North Carolina  
Department of Social Services



*Board of Directors:*  
*Joe Robbins, Chair*  
*Harold Russell, Vice-Chair*  
*Valerie Foushee*  
*Pat Garavaglia*  
*Albert Williams*

## *Director's Message*

The Orange County Department of Social Services is a critical and fundamental part of Orange County. With a mission to protect the vulnerable and assist the impoverished, the agency provides a safety net that touches the lives of more than 10,000 county residents each month. The Department provides a vast array of services under this umbrella that serve all populations through all phases of life; one program run by the agency provides expectant mothers with prenatal care while other programs provide services for aging adults who need special care.

State and federal programs such as Food Stamps and Medicaid administered by the agency continue to fill gaps in income for the working poor. Statutorily mandated preventative and protective services like Adult In-home Services, Adoption, Child Protective Services and Guardianship provide ongoing support for the county's most vulnerable residents. In addition to these programs and services, Orange County continues to look for new opportunities to meet the increased needs of residents. Last year, the continuation of Work First Demonstration Grant funding from the state allowed the agency to further develop a specialized training program for unemployed Orange County residents with minor children. Orange County continues to have one of the top Work First programs in the

state, and more than one hundred people utilized this program to secure jobs last year. The continued presence of DSS Social Workers in the Orange County School System has helped assess the needs of hundreds of children in a familiar setting and provide early intervention and wrap around services to help strengthen families.

The Department of Social Services owes its success to the wonderful staff that strive to provide excellent services, a conscientious Board that always advocates for staff and clients, supportive county leadership, and fantastic community partners. In addition, the generous donations of groups and individuals allow the agency to continue and expand the types of services offered to residents. It is therefore with sincere gratitude that the Orange County Department of Social Services presents the program highlights and accomplishments in this 2007-2008 Annual Report.

*Nancy Costen*



# Administration



Richard E. Whitted Building



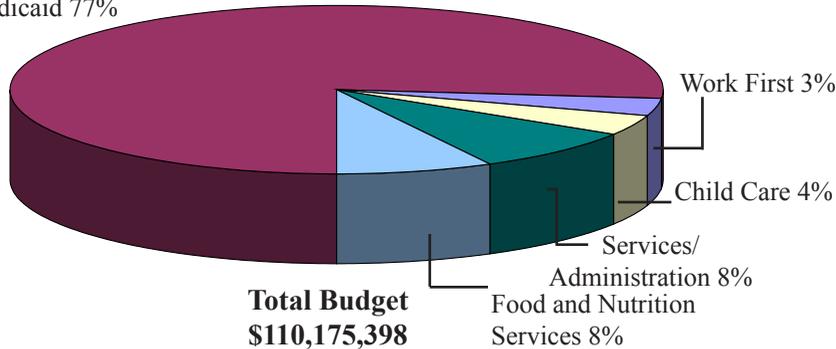
Southern Human Services Building



Skills Development Center

## Social Services Budget 2007-2008

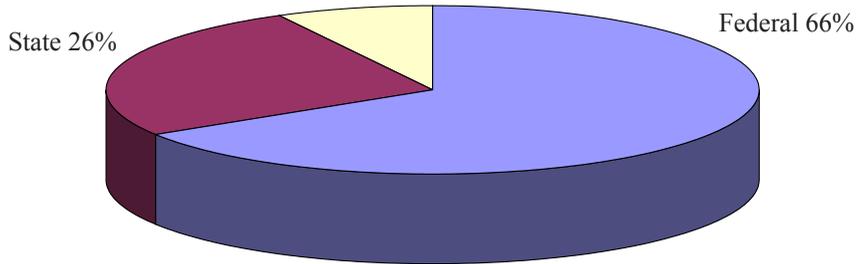
Medicaid 77%



**Total Budget**  
**\$110,175,398**

## Share Comparisons 2007-2008

County 8%



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## *Economic Services*

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### **Food and Nutrition Services**

The Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Program is a federal program that provides a monthly allotment of FNS benefits issued via Electronic Benefit Transfer cards (EBT cards) that can be used like debit cards. FNS benefits may be used to purchase most foods at participating stores.

- 3,057 households were served monthly (average)
- 6,433 individuals were served monthly (average)
- \$7,827,842 in FNS payments were issued to local grocery stores

### **Emergency Assistance**

Families who are experiencing a financial emergency may be eligible for financial help to pay for housing, utilities, food, gas, and/or medicine.

- Over 3,900 people were assisted
- \$513,024 total in payments were issued
- 57% of funding went toward paying clients' electric payments

### **Medicaid**

Medicaid is a health insurance program for certain families and individuals whose income makes it difficult for them to afford health care. It is a publicly funded program governed by federal and state laws.

- 6,935 households were served monthly (average)
- 8,731 individuals were served monthly (average)
- 6% increase in caseload occurred from 2007-08

### **Health Choice**

North Carolina Health Choice (NCHC) is North Carolina's health insurance program for children ages 6-19 who have no health insurance and whose family's income prevents them from affording health care, but who are ineligible for Medicaid.

- 878 children were served through Health Choice

### **Medicaid Transportation**

Transportation services are available to Medicaid recipients to enable them to get to and from medical appointments.

- 6,247 trips were made to or from appointments

### **Low Income Energy Assistance Program**

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) provides for a one-time cash payment to help eligible families pay their heating bills.

- 1,800 individuals and families were assisted
- \$69.91 was the average payment per family
- \$125,842 in total payments were issued

### **Financial Counseling**

Financial counseling services provide financial literacy training and household management to recipients of Emergency Assistance.

- Over 290 families received counseling services

### **Work First**

Work First is North Carolina's TANF (Temporary

.....*Self-Sufficiency*.....*Pride*.....*Stability*.....*Strength*.....



## *Economic Services*

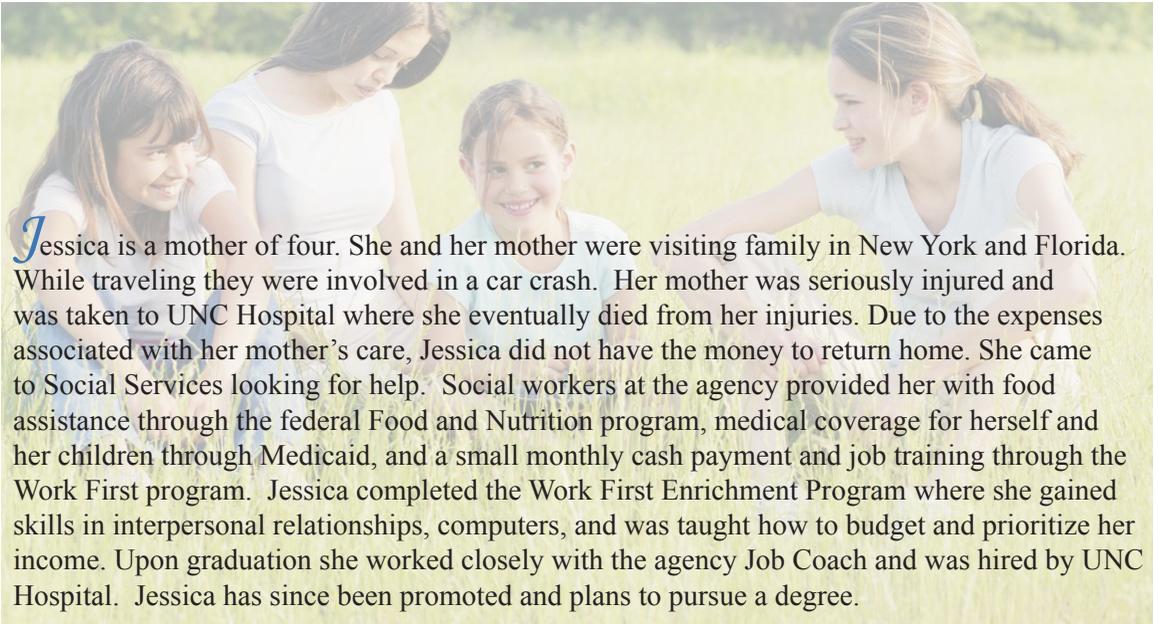
Assistance for Needy Families) plan to help families move from welfare into jobs. Work First provides assistance with job search, vocational training, day care, transportation and time limited cash assistance to families with children under age 18 who meet income and resource guidelines.

- 905 clients received Work First assistance monthly (average)
- 131 participants found employment
- 21 families received a vehicle

### **Orange County Skills Development Center**

The Orange County Skills Development Center (JobLink), located at 503 West Franklin Street in downtown Chapel Hill, offers labor market information, provides access to career training and job placement services, and serves as the connection between employers and qualified workers.

- 450 clients found job placements
- 2,590 people received further education and training



Jessica is a mother of four. She and her mother were visiting family in New York and Florida. While traveling they were involved in a car crash. Her mother was seriously injured and was taken to UNC Hospital where she eventually died from her injuries. Due to the expenses associated with her mother's care, Jessica did not have the money to return home. She came to Social Services looking for help. Social workers at the agency provided her with food assistance through the federal Food and Nutrition program, medical coverage for herself and her children through Medicaid, and a small monthly cash payment and job training through the Work First program. Jessica completed the Work First Enrichment Program where she gained skills in interpersonal relationships, computers, and was taught how to budget and prioritize her income. Upon graduation she worked closely with the agency Job Coach and was hired by UNC Hospital. Jessica has since been promoted and plans to pursue a degree.

.....*Self-Sufficiency*.....*Pride*.....*Stability*.....*Strength*.....



## Family Services

### Child Care Subsidy Program

The Child Care Subsidy Program provides low-income families with information and financial resources to find and afford quality child care for their children. Resources enable families to make informed choices regarding child care providers.

- 1,302 children received quality care
- 123 licensed child care providers participated
- 72% of cases were to support parents' employment
- Over \$4.6 million dollars were spent to subsidize child care

### Child Protective Services (CPS)

The CPS staff investigate reports of abuse, neglect and dependency, and provide services to families.

- 1,153 children were assessed for abuse and/or neglect allegations
- 144 children were in DSS custody monthly

### Adolescent Parenting Program

The Adolescent Parenting Program provides services and support to teenage parents who are working towards remaining in school, delaying a second pregnancy, improving parenting skills, preparing for employment, avoiding abuse and neglect, and improving the health status of mother and child.

- 38 teens participated
- 11 teens successfully graduated

### Adoption/Foster Care

The goal of foster parenting is to provide temporary care to the child while working toward reuniting the child with his/her birth family. Foster families help children feel secure and assist the child with the tasks of normal development. They also support the child's birth family toward reunification. When children are not able to return to their parents, adoption gives children in need of a loving family a permanent home.

- 11 adoptions were completed
- 49 licensed foster homes were available

### LINKS

The LINKS Program provides services to youth in DSS custody ages 13 through 21. The focus is to help them prepare for lives as healthy adults by learning about budgeting, maintaining a household, and emphasizing the importance of education.

- 78 young adults received services
- 7 youth graduated from high school

### School-based Social Workers

Through a partnership with the Orange County School System, the Department of Social Services provides trained social workers to work in the schools to provide preventative social work services to children and their families.

- 1,689 children received services

.....Love.....Hope.....Permanence.....Support.....



## Family Services



Rhonda and her children were homeless and living at Project Homestart when she was hospitalized for an incident triggered by lack of medication for her mental illness. She was referred to Child Protective Services for low-risk neglect due to concerns about her ability to supervise and care for her children in her current mental state. The social worker assigned to the case worked with Rhonda's brother to have the children stay with him while Rhonda was in the hospital. Rhonda was discharged and the family was referred to case management to prevent future issues. A case plan was developed that focused on medication management and therapeutic services. Rhonda also needed after school care for her youngest child, and she agreed to more open communication between herself and the fathers of her children. The social worker connected Rhonda to the UNC STEP Clinic for mental health case management and counseling. DSS provided after school care for the youngest child and assisted in providing bus tickets, school supplies, and transportation. DSS also continued to work to build a network of support for Rhonda and the children. Through these efforts, Rhonda applied for and secured a Section 8 housing voucher to provide a more stable home for her children. She followed through on recommendations from the team and took the initiative in securing additional services and resources for her children. She attended her appointments at the UNC STEP Clinic and used the opportunity to talk with professionals about her illness and care. At the final Child and Family Team meeting the family and service providers worked on developing a plan to continue to support Rhonda. Rhonda stated that she was sorry to see DSS leave because they had given her so much help.

.....Love.....Hope.....Permanence.....Support.....



## *Adult Services*

### **Adult Care Facility Monitoring**

Adult Care Facilities in Orange County are monitored to ensure compliance with all applicable laws.

- 11 facilities containing 261 beds were monitored

### **Representative Payee Services**

Representative Payee Services assist elderly and disabled residents with money management services when they are unable to pay their own bills.

- 21 adults received assistance to manage their own funds so as to pay bills.

### **Enhanced Personal Care Services**

Personal Care Services are provided to Medicaid eligible residents in adult care homes having extensive needs for personal care assistance. Case management services are also provided.

- 56 adults who were in need of assistance with personal care were provided services.

### **Guardianship Services**

For adults who have been adjudicated incompetent by the court, directors of social services agencies often serve as guardians when no other adult individual or corporation is available and willing.

- 24 adults received Guardianship services.

### **Adult Protective Services**

Elderly and disabled adults may be vulnerable to

abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The Department of Social Services receives and evaluates reports to determine whether elderly and/or disabled adults are in need of protective services and what services are needed.

- 45 adults were assessed for abuse, neglect and/or exploitation allegations.

### **Community and In-Home Services**

In-home services are intended to assist individuals who have functional, physical and/or mental impairments with essential daily activities in the areas of home management and personal care tasks, enabling them to be maintained in their home settings for as long as possible.

- 101 adults were provided in-home services through the Community Alternatives Program (CAP) to avoid inappropriate placement into a nursing home.
- 33 adults received services in their homes and were maintained with health support rather than entering a Group Home.

### **Placement Services**

Adult Placement Services help aging or disabled adults find appropriate living and healthcare arrangements when their health, safety, and well-being can no longer be maintained at home. Placement arrangements are made in adult care homes, nursing homes, other substitute homes, residential health care settings, or institutions.

.....*Independence*.....*Dignity*.....*Self-Determination*.....



## Adult Services

- 41 adults received assistance in finding appropriate group facility arrangements when they could no longer live in their own homes.

### Special Needs Registry

The Special Needs Registry is a voluntary database containing information about individuals in Orange County with special needs who may require assistance in the event of a disaster.

- 50 adults were voluntarily listed on the registry.

### Veterans' Affairs

The Veteran's Services Office assists veterans and

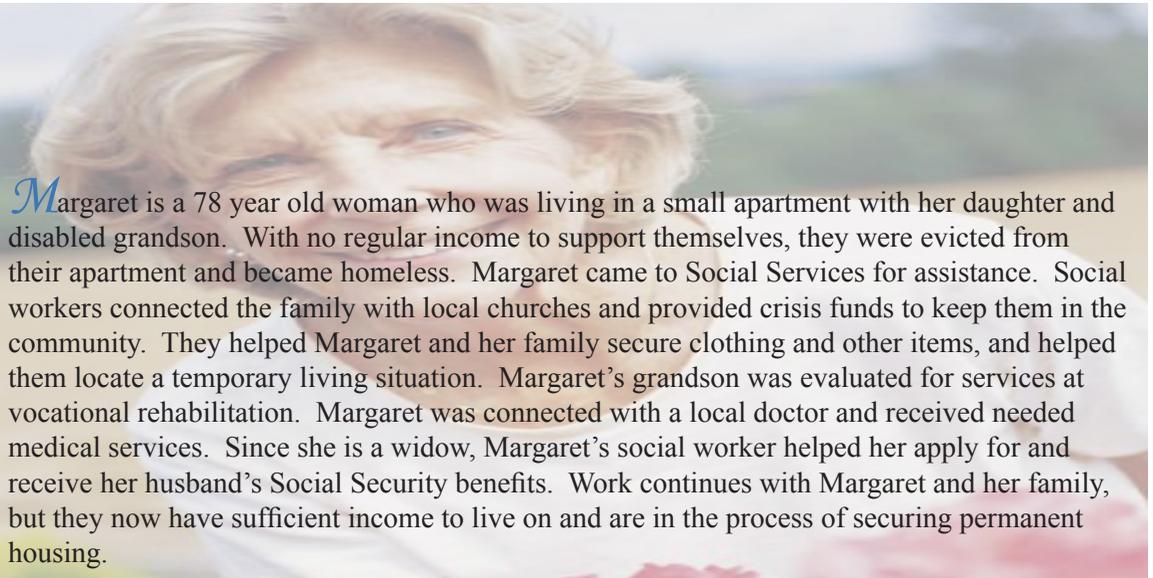
dependents in obtaining, retaining, or reinstating compensation, pension, medical, education, training, loan, insurance, and other applicable benefits and services.

- 79 veterans and/or their families received assistance to obtain pensions and other compensation.

### Services to the Blind

Services for the Blind provides service and program connections to visually impaired residents of Orange County.

- 89 adults received services.



*M*argaret is a 78 year old woman who was living in a small apartment with her daughter and disabled grandson. With no regular income to support themselves, they were evicted from their apartment and became homeless. Margaret came to Social Services for assistance. Social workers connected the family with local churches and provided crisis funds to keep them in the community. They helped Margaret and her family secure clothing and other items, and helped them locate a temporary living situation. Margaret's grandson was evaluated for services at vocational rehabilitation. Margaret was connected with a local doctor and received needed medical services. Since she is a widow, Margaret's social worker helped her apply for and receive her husband's Social Security benefits. Work continues with Margaret and her family, but they now have sufficient income to live on and are in the process of securing permanent housing.

.....*Independence*.....*Dignity*.....*Self-Determination*.....





# Improving the future

## Highlights 2007-2008

- The Emergency Assistance program provided 3,900 families with assistance paying rent and utilities.

- The Adolescent Parenting Program enabled 11 teenage mothers to graduate from high school.

- The Work First program provided services that helped 131 clients find employment and move off assistance.

- The Wheels for Work program provided cars for 21 participants.

- 134 elderly Orange County residents received in-

home services instead of entering Nursing or Adult Care Homes.

*"I would like to thank you so much for helping out with my kid's Christmas. They were so happy with all the nice clothes and my eyes watered with tears every time they opened a gift!"*

- Funding for child care subsidy increased from \$4,303,412 to \$4,638,361 in 2007-08. The number of children served increased from 1,138 to 1,302.

- 11 adoptions were finalized in 2007-2008, providing safe and loving homes to children in need.

- The Work First Program and Intake Unit were recognized at the North Carolina Social Services Association's (NCSSA) Sixth Annual

.....Opportunity.....Partnership.....Achievement.....



*re of Orange County, one person at a time...*

## *Highlights 2007-2008*

Best Practice Awards Luncheon. The Best Practice Awards were designed to showcase the innovative, successful and unique programs within North Carolina Departments of Social Services and to share that information with other counties and the public. The “Work First Enrichment Program,” one of several components of Orange County’s Work First Program, received a Best Practice Award in “Empowering Clients to Self-Sufficiency. The agency received a second Best Practice Award in the area of “Innovations In Services To Customers” for “Financial Counseling in Emergency Assistance,” one of the many services offered through the Intake Unit.

- The agency recovered \$38,698 in overpayments to clients through Program Integrity efforts.
- In December 2007, DSS expanded its holiday

program to include “Share Your Holiday” and “Orange County Toy Chest”. In “Share Your Holiday”, sponsors from the community were paired with low-income, at-risk children or elderly/disabled adults. By purchasing gifts from individual wish lists, 223 different sponsors helped to make the holidays much brighter for 508 Orange County children and elderly/disabled adults. The Orange County Toy Chest, in partnership with Toys for Tots and area businesses, allowed low-income parents an opportunity to select 2-3 gifts per child. More than 10,000 toys, books, and items of clothing were donated to the Toy Chest. During the week of operation, DSS staff and volunteers helped to provide gifts to over 2,000 children.

*..... Opportunity..... Partnership..... Achievement.....*



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Place  
Stamp  
Here