



July

Juvenile Arthritis Awareness
Month

National Minority Mental
Health Month

National Parks Month

UV Safety Month

7/4 Independence Day

7/30 World Day Against
Trafficking In Persons

Meet new DDS Director, Jennifer Brezée



Jennifer Daniel Brezée, who most recently served as the Senior Director of Operations at CareSource PASSE, started as the DDS director on June 10th.

Brezée has a Masters in Social Work from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and extensive Medicaid experience spanning the past 18 years. She began her career in social work and her first experience with the developmental disability population as an intern at the North Little Rock Ascent office, which was a preschool focused on early intervention treatments for ages 0-6. After graduation, she gained additional DD knowledge after becoming a high school-based mental health professional with Pathfinder, Inc. Consistently, more than half of her case load was adolescent students that were receiving special education services as well as had IEPs and 504 plans. She later left direct practice and worked at Beacon Health Options as a Clinical Manager helping administer behavioral health benefits for all Medicaid beneficiaries. With Beacon, Jennifer helped lead her team on the implementation of the Medicaid PASSEs in 2019. She served as Associate Vice President of Operations with Empower Healthcare Solutions before transitioning to CareSource PASSE in 2020, serving as Director of Network and Operations. There she led their implementation to become the fourth PASSE in Arkansas on January 1, 2022. In implementing the PASSE system, she learned even more about the service delivery of Developmental Disability Services.

“DDS is charged with connecting Arkansans with developmental disabilities and delays to services that let them lead full, productive, and meaningful lives,” Brezée said. “I am incredibly proud to join DHS and to embrace this mission, and I look forward to building on DDS’ rich history of making positive impacts on the lives of beneficiaries across our state.”

5th Annual HDC Farmer's Market



The 5th Annual HDC Farmer's Market was held on Friday, June 21st. The five Human Development Centers, DDS community partners Empower, Sales East, and Frito Lay participated. Special thanks to Gretchen Baggett for organizing this year and Yvette Swift for securing the location.



Medicaid Specialty Populations Director Melissa Weatherston and DDS Director Jennifer Brezée serve shoppers at the food tent.



Staff in Jefferson County participates in annual THV Cereal Drive

316 boxes of cereal were collected for the Annual THV Cereal Drive. Great job!

DDS staff Patricia Jenkins, Lynetta Reese, and Sheena Burton participated along with the County Administrator Lee Turner and other staff from DCO and DCFS..



DDS Virginia Green celebrated during “Pink out for Virginia Green”

Jefferson County staff celebrated Virginia being cancer free Thursday, June 6th with treats and beverages. Virginia wants the following message shared with her work family;

“I would like to thank each and everyone that kept me in their prayers during my cancer treatments. The prayers helped pull me through some tough times.”

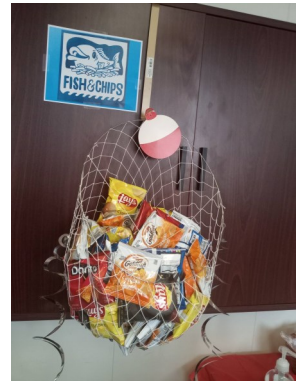
Virginia is an Administrative Specialist III with 17 years of service with DDS. Congratulations Virginia! We wish you continued good health.



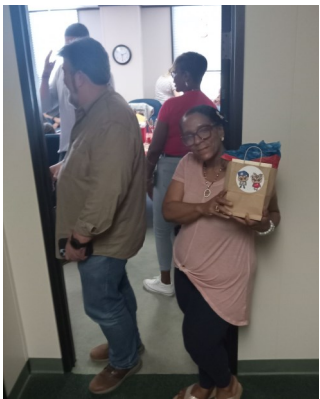
Dale Woodall *O FISH ALLY* RETIRED



After serving 39 years, 10 months with DHS, 25 of those with DDS, Dale Woodall traded in his work office for his fishing boat! At the celebration on Friday, June 28th, he was surrounded by his family, colleagues, and friends as all came together to wish him well. He will be missed by many and leaves a legacy of impeccable work ethic, friendship, steadfastness, and many stories that we'll all treasure.



Dale Woodall *O FISH ALLY* RETIRED



Meet Danielle Kimbrough

Danielle Kimbrough joined Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disability Services on February 20, 2024. She works in Children's Special Services/Title V as the Title V Family & Community Engagement Leader.

In her current role, she serves as the family liaison for the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant – Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN). She works closely with parent/family led organizations including the Parent Advisory Council, advocating for children and youth with special health care needs and providing outreach education to stakeholders statewide on the Children's Special Services program.



Ms. Kimbrough has over 15 years of experience working with at-risk populations of people, disability services, foster care, and at-risk youth. She started on the front line as a DD Waiver Direct Care Worker. After obtaining her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology, she became a Case Manager for a DD Waiver Provider. She then transitioned to DHS Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) as a Family Service Worker and a Family Service Worker Supervisor. She led the Diligent Recruitment Grant which targeted recruitment for foster families in four of the greatest needed areas of Arkansas for youth 12 and older. She later returned to Disability Services and became the Executive Director for another DD Waiver Provider, managing several programs that consisted of Child Care, DD Waiver Services, Specialized Foster Care Program, and Pre Employment Transition Services. She also assisted in the creation of a program to assist juveniles housed in residential treatment centers throughout Arkansas to obtain transition skills, work readiness, and work-based learning.

Ms. Kimbrough is truly passionate about working with at-risk populations. She makes community connections to bridge gaps in services so that all children and youth can live happy and whole lives and can transition to adulthood with all the components necessary to live independently. Over the years, her work has allowed her to speak to various organizations to provide outreach and educate the community on the needs of at-risk populations of children and youth. The fuel to this passion ignites when her efforts lead individuals to obtain what they need to become independent and when family reunification occurred while at DCFS.

Ms. Kimbrough lives a busy life between working and raising her three children who are heavily involved in sports and activities. She values time with her family and friends. She enjoys traveling the world, live entertainment, attending her local church, being outdoors, and making healthy changes in life that include healthy eating and exercise.



Comments, Suggestions, and Q&A

What would you like to learn more about or see featured? Please send all comments, suggestions, and Q&A to yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov by the 15th of the month.