Perfecting Our Performance
Delivering Excellence

In 2012 our motto and goal for the department was to perfect our performance and deliver excellent service to county residents. Our accomplishments and the challenges we faced are summarized to some extent for you to read about in this report.

Evidence of Excellence includes:

- Five (5) foster children found permanency through adoption.
- Three youth successfully completed drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, two foster care children entered college, and another foster child joined the Marines.
- The agency continued to utilize relative placements whenever appropriate to ensure children were being cared for in a familiar and safe environment.
- When considering placements for children in need, sibling groups remained together to the extent possible.
- Participation rates for employable recipients increased and the rate achieved by the Safety Net population exceeded the required rate of 50%.
- Staff and supervisors were realigned within the Income Maintenance unit to address an increase in the number of applications being filed for the Food Stamp program and to assure more equitable and efficient supervision.
- Multiple units in Services continued to be assigned reports of Child Abuse and Maltreatment investigations with the goal of timely safety assessments.
- The Department was upheld in all actions appealed to higher courts. The Attorney’s Office successfully argued and was upheld in five (5) out of five (5) instances in 2012.
- Caseworker Sarah Purdy was recognized by the community for her efforts in helping child victims of sexual assault.
- Sr. Caseworker Barbara Brennan was recognized by the County Board of Representatives and her coworkers as an Outstanding County Employee.

Challenges include:

- Homelessness,
- Consistently meeting Federally mandated Employment Participation Rates
- Having adequate community resources available to meet the needs of children and families.

An extraordinary and unforeseen challenge occurred mid-year when the Commissioner went out on an extended medical leave. This challenge was met head on by the Management Team, led by Deputy Commissioner Eve Bouboulis. The teamwork and leadership shown by all the members of the team during a difficult time is to be commended. I appreciate the efforts made by staff to assure the Department operated effectively and efficiently during this period. So it is with sincere appreciation to the entire Management Team – Eve Bouboulis, Liz MacNaught, Lisa Grampp, Wendy Fink, Samantha Augur, Steve Ratner, Stephen Baker, Tina Lorenzen, Cheryl Sparks, and Melody Porter – that I can report to you that we were successful in meeting our goal of Perfecting Our Performance and Delivering Excellence as evidenced throughout this report.

Joyce L. Boyd, Commissioner
Managed Care

Medicaid Managed Care offers many New Yorkers a chance to choose a Medicaid health plan. Managed Care plans focus on preventive health care and provide enrollees with a medical home for themselves and their families.

Managed Care is mandatory in Otsego County for many individuals on Medicaid, and 89% of all recipients eligible to be in Managed Care were enrolled in one of two of the county’s managed care plans in 2012. The State plan is to move as many categories of individual from Medicaid to Managed Care plans over the next few years as part of the MRT recommendations. In the end, very few individuals will remain on traditional Medicaid (Fee for Service) as we know it.

MEDICAID

The Medicaid program includes not only traditional Medicaid but also Managed Care, Family Health Plus and SSI Medicaid. In 2012, the Medicaid unit processed 2578 new applications. At the end of 2012, 9,859 County residents were in receipt of medical assistance through one of the above four programs.

The Governor established the Medicaid Design Team (MRT) in 2011 made up of stakeholders and experts who were charged with reforming the Medicaid system and reducing costs. 78 recommendations were made and are being initiated over time. The goal is that the recommendations reduce costs without any cuts to program eligibility.

Some of the 2012 program changes that occurred in Medicaid, some of which are related to the MRT recommendations, are as follows:

- Personal Care services covered by the Managed Care plans for certain individuals
- Reported household and income changes are looked at a recertification, streamlining work and staff time to some degree
- Prior authorization and payment requirements were put into place for admission to out of state non-specialized skilled nursing facilities
- Expansion of attestation of income, resources and residence at renewal and attestation of interest income at application for FHP for certain Medicaid applicants
- Automated enrollment into the Medicare Savings Program under the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008
- Automated Medicaid renewals for individuals with fixed incomes in the aged, blind and disabled categories
- Increase in Medicaid income standards for children ages 6-18
- Streamlined procedure for children transitioning from Medicaid to the Child Health Plus (CHP) program
Housing Services

The housing caseworker is responsible for dealing with the homeless population by doing independent living plans, premove/postmove inspections for security deposit agreements, furniture assessments, moving expenses; and serves as the agency representative between landlords, clients, and workers. The housing caseworker assists Opportunities for Otsego (OFO) and the Salvation Army in arranging temporary and permanent housing for the homeless and transient population.

We continue to contract with OFO for the services of their homeless shelter Opportunity House located in the city of Oneonta. The contract with OFO continues at $75.00 per diem per individual in order to provide housing and case management services. The housing caseworker maintains statistics regarding where clients are housed, for how long, and the cost of temporary housing in a Homeless Log on the Excel program. This gives supervisors quick and easy access to information concerning temporary housing in Otsego County. In addition to the above, the housing caseworker also determines eligibility for the 200% TANF Temporary Housing Assistance Program. She serves on the Otsego County FEMA Board, the Housing Advisory Committee, and the Lantern Hill Agency Trailer Project. The housing caseworker also serves on the Continuum of Care committee.

The Department issues letters of guarantee to cover security deposits in most cases. However, in 2012 we paid 19 cash security deposits totaling $13,725.00 from 100% TANF funds. In addition to TANF, 3 security deposits totaling $1,406.00 were paid from Safety Net Assistance.

The Housing Caseworker serves as the local district’s Human Trafficking Liaison and is the contact for all schools in the area regarding homeless children. The Housing Caseworker also serves in the capacity of DSS Domestic Violence (DV) Liaison.

The liaison is responsible to interview any temporary assistance client that requests to see the DV Liaison. She then does a credibility assessment and determines if any waivers from Welfare Reform eligibility requirements are appropriate. All referrals and paperwork must be handled in a highly confidential manner.

OFO is also our contractor for Domestic Violence Services to include: Violence Intervention Program (VIP), Residential Domestic Violence Shelter and 24-hour Domestic Violence Hot-Line.

Domestic Violence Statistics in Otsego County

- Opportunities for Otsego assisted 66 individuals with emergency residential domestic violence housing in 2012.
- OFO 24-hour Domestic Violence Hot-Line received 1,462 calls leading to opening 111 new cases.
- 973 individuals received legal advocacy services
- OFO VIP services provided 3,112 therapy/counseling sessions to victims of violence in Otsego County.
- 2,615 referrals were made to victims for community programs and support services.

24 HOUR HOTLINE:

(607) 432-4855

Collect calls are accepted.
This unit processes applications for Temporary Assistance (TA) and Food Stamps (SNAP). In 2012 the unit processed 3262 applications. This is an increase from the previous year, but at a lower percentage from previous years increases. The SNAP caseload continues to grow as it has been made more accessible through program changes that were implemented throughout the year. Additionally, this unit is also responsible for the issuance of Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) benefits to individuals and families.

Changes, new initiatives and updates in 2012 include:

- In January we started planning for a reorganization of the Medicaid/Food Stamp (MA/FS) and HEAP units. Due to the growth of Food Stamps, more Examiners are needed in the MA/FS unit. An Examiner was transferred to the MA/FS unit from the Medicaid (MA) unit. Clerical supervision was reorganized and one of the clerical supervisors was reassigned to supervise the HEAP unit. This brought equitable and more efficient supervision to the TA unit, since in prior years one of the two TA supervisors had supervised the HEAP unit as an additional responsibility.

- In March, more changes were made to the MyWorkspace application, allowing SNAP recertifications to be processed electronically and more efficiently.

- In June the FS program streamlined the verification process for eligibility for benefits. Again, this made access to the programs more simple and efficient.

- The TA basic grant allowance was increased in two phases, one in July and one in October. This resulted in two increases in case benefits during 2012. For these same households the increase in the cash benefit resulted in a decrease in the household’s FS benefit.

- In August, changes in Child Support referral procedures were made to simplify the referral process.

- Effective August 29, 2012 the Food Stamp (FS) program was renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

- In October a grant received by the Community Action Partnership for Madison County, expanded their Nutrition Outreach Education Program (NOEP) to Otsego County residents. The program assists potentially SNAP eligible residents by assisting them in the application and documentation collection process for the SNAP program.

**Employment**

This unit works with adults in receipt of or applying for Temporary (cash) Assistance. This includes adults who are ready and able to work, those are not but have the potential to become ready and able, and those who are not expected to become ready and able but are expected to maintain any necessary medical treatment while on assistance.

The unit does attempt to divert individuals to other appropriate programs. This can include Unemployment Benefits, New York State Disability, Workers Compensation and programs administered by Social Security, for instance.

The County is required to meet a participation rate for Temporary Assistance cases which consist of Family Assistance (families) and Safety Net Assistance (single individuals or childless couples). That rate is 50% for each group. The rate was met and exceeded for the Safety Net group. It was not met for the Family Assistance group but was higher than the previous year. While we continue to work on improving the rates, it is difficult because of how the rate is calculated. Individuals who are not ready and able to work are counted in the overall rate, which brings the actual participation rate down.
The Child Day Care Subsidy Program offers eligible households assistance with child care costs. Child care costs can be a substantial expense for working families. Without this assistance many families would be spending much or all of their paycheck on their child care costs. Approved families must recertify every six months and may do so by mail.

The Child Care subsidy program serves families whose gross income falls below 200% of the poverty level. In 2012, the maximum gross income limit for a family of four for this program was $46,100.00. In 2012 the average number of children served per month was 223. The average number of families served per month during 2012 was 126.

Eligible subsidy families are required to pay a portion of the weekly child care cost. This is called a family share and is determined based on the household size and gross household income. The household must pay a family share of at least $1.00 per week unless the family is receiving Temporary Assistance, then the family share would then be zero. Temporary Assistance (TA) recipients that are employed receive child care subsidy to ensure employment is maintained. Families that are receiving TA for the child, i.e. grandparents or other family members and foster parents that are working can also apply and receive subsidy.

In 2012 changes were made to the county’s Child and Family Service Plan one of which was to increase the weekly family share percentage slightly. This change minimally increased the amount of the child care cost the parent would be responsible to pay each week. Another change was that the program would no longer pay for child care while a parent was in a training program. This was because of decreases in funding.

In 2012 Catholic Charities of Delaware and Otsego County, Child Care Connections, (CCC) continued to provide assistance to the families searching for safe and appropriate care.

The cost of Day Care continues to be a sizeable expense for many families. The Child Care Block Grant funding remains an essential part of helping adults to remain employed.

### SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Number Completed</th>
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<td>Front End Detection system (FEDS)</td>
<td>Field investigations at application and re-certification</td>
<td>331</td>
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<td>Eligibility Verification Reviews (EVR)</td>
<td>Investigating complaints of suspected fraud and abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intentional Program Violation (IPV)</td>
<td>Arrests</td>
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Service of Papers
262 papers served for Family Court and Child Support

Contact Catholic Charities at (607) 432-0061
To inquire about current list of certified day care providers or becoming a day care provider
Child Protective Services (CPS)

24 Hour Hotline: 1-800-342-3720 – Community Line

CPS staff are responsible for the investigation of all reports that are received from the New York State Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) to include court ordered investigations. In 2012 there were 1012 reports assigned by the SCR to the Otsego County CPS unit for investigation. This is an average of 84.3 reports a month. The monthly totals ranged from 55 reports in the month of December to 102 reports in the months of March and May. The number of reports rose from the two previous years which had 983 in 2010 and 988 in 2011.

The CPS unit serves as a member of the Otsego County Multidisciplinary Team. New York State mandates that certain types of investigations be handled using the Multidisciplinary approach. To assist with these investigations, the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) is used as a child friendly environment to conduct interviews for such investigations. In 2012, 100 children were interviewed by the multidisciplinary team with 76 of the interviews occurring at the CAC. As part of the Multidisciplinary Team CPS also assisted law enforcement 27 times with referrals for investigation of sexual abuse or severe abuse of children, by individuals who were not in the parental role.

The Otsego County Services unit has been working on innovative strategies to meet the ever increasing needs for investigation of reports of Child Abuse and Maltreatment in Otsego County. Caseworkers from other units are continuing to be assigned investigations to complete to help assure that the needs of the children and families are being met in a timely manner. The cross training method is helping this process as there are trained CPS workers in the different units.

Protective Services for Adults (PSA)

Protective Services for Adults (PSA) is a program to assist vulnerable adults. To be eligible, there must be a mental and/or physical impairment that causes an individual to be unable to provide for his or her own basic needs or to protect themselves from harm.

PSA had an average of 73 ongoing cases monthly for 2012. This caseload consists of supportive and protective services, guardianships and financial management. Financial management is a large part of the PSA caseload, 71 cases were maintained through 2012. There were 5 guardianship cases in 2012.

In addition to the ongoing caseload, there were 173 referrals in 2012. These referrals require investigation to determine emergent and non-emergent needs, as well as assessment for ongoing protective service needs. Utility companies also make referrals when they have customers who may need assistance.

Beginning in 2011, PSA was invited to participate in a monthly free food program from April to October. This continued in 2012 and PSA staff distributed free food to over 50 households throughout the County. In addition a weekly, smaller free food program started, which serves about 20 households rotated throughout the month.

In 2012 PSA had two interns assigned to the unit whom assisted caseworkers and staff, as well as completing assigned tasks on their own.

One out of every 14 Americans over the age of 60 may be suffering from some sort of abuse. And for each case of elder abuse reported, five more cases go unreported. But you can help by going to www.ocfs.ny.gov/main/psa to learn more about reporting and assisting elderly in need or call (607) 547-1700 to speak with Otsego County Protective Services for Adults.
The School-Based Preventive Program has been a collaboration between the Otsego County Department of Social Services and area school districts for many years. The program was set up to have a Caseworker located in the school districts to allow children and families early and efficient access to the Department’s child welfare services. Caseworkers provide services that assist families to reduce the risk of Child Abuse and maltreatment, keep children in their homes, thus reducing foster care placements and providing intervention with children at risk of becoming or involved in the Juvenile Delinquent or Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) programs.

The Caseworkers have offices that are located in the school and they are part of the teams at the schools that support specialized needs of children and families. School-Based Caseworkers attend school meetings and are members on school committees that work together to meet the unique needs of families in that district. Referrals for this program mainly come from the school, Child Protective Services and the Probation Department. Referrals also may come from Medical staff at the area hospitals, Mental Health providers, other service providers or can be self referrals.

In 2012, the School-Based Preventive Program had 8 caseworkers located in schools in Otsego County. The schools that have Caseworkers located in their districts were Unatego, Schenevus, Edmeston, Richfield Springs, Cherry Valley-Springfield and Milford. The School-Based Preventive unit received a total of 71 new referrals in 2012. Of the referrals received 14% were received from schools, 25% were received from other sources and 51% received from the Child Protective Services Unit. The Caseworkers also provide services to families on a short-term basis that may not result in a case being opened for services. This happens when the problem the family is presenting with is resolved expeditiously due to early intervention.

At the end of December, 2012 the Schenevus School had to relinquish their contract with Otsego County for a School-Based Caseworker due to current financial difficulties. Even though many school districts have been forced to reduce their budgets, the department was able to maintain this programming with the remaining five area school districts and are continuing efforts to recruit other school districts in the county that are not currently participating in the School-Based Program.
Foster Care

During 2012 the Otsego County Department of Social Services’ foster care unit and adoption unit have been very busy helping children achieve permanency through many different means. Five children were adopted in 2012 and an additional 7 children were freed and placed for adoption with the adoption proceedings pending appeals. Several children were placed with relatives to provide them with permanency and prevent placement into foster care. Out of those children placed with relatives two large sibling groups were able to stay together with family members. One group of four siblings were placed with their paternal aunt. The other sibling group of six children were placed with relatives, four males with a maternal aunt and two females with their maternal grandmother. The agency also was able to help three children gain access to drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities, all of which have been discharged successfully after placements lasting between 90 days to 9 months.

The Department continues to work on Independent Living Skills with all children in foster care over the age of 14. Two foster care children began college in 2012, one of which maintained a GPA over 3.5 through his first year of school and received the State University of NY Office for Opportunities Programs’ Certificate of Achievement for Outstanding Academic Performance, an award from the SUNY of Canton Athletics Department for Outstanding Academic Achievement, and the SUNY of Canton Pillars of Character Award. One young man signed himself out of foster care in 2012 and successfully joined the Marines. He continues to remain in contact with his foster family as a support and future resource for him.

When families are in crisis, children are often successful when placed with relatives or family resources.

Transportation

In 2012 we welcomed a new Transportation Coordinator, Jessica Regg. Jessica was a Community Services Worker in our Services unit previous to this promotion.

The Department of Social Services maintains a fleet of an average of 22 vehicles. The department declared three 2005 Chevy Impala Sedans with mileage over 170,000 as surplus and purchased four 2012 Ford Fusion 4 door sedans. The 2012 maintenance and repairs cost for the entire fleet totaled $17,481.28. This equals the approximate average MSRP price of one new four door sedan.
INCOME MAINTENANCE
FAIR HEARINGS

Individuals applying for or receiving Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps, Medicaid, HEAP and Child Care Subsidy have the right to request a Fair Hearing on any action taken on their case.

As we receive notice that an individual or household requests a Fair Hearing, the case action and determination, in question, are thoroughly reviewed by supervisor. If, based on that review, it is determined that the Department's original determination was not correct, the client is made aware that the action has been corrected.

If the original determination was correct, the client is contacted for a case conference. The conference may be done in person or by phone. At the conference the DSS representative explains the nature of the action taken, the regulations governing that action, and discusses what, if anything, the client can do to resolve the issue. Many Fair Hearing requests are resolved through this process. If not resolved, the facts of the case are then heard in the presence of a State Administrative Law Judge, with the client and Department staff presenting their information and documentation. Generally, the Law Judge then renders a decision in 4-6 weeks.

In 2012, there were 77 requests made for Fair Hearing. Of those, 17 were actually heard by the Law Judge and the Department was upheld in its decisions on 13 of those decisions. 36 of the 77 requests were withdrawn by the clients. In 23 cases the client did not show up for a scheduled hearing.

ATTORNEY OFFICE

2012 was a busy year for an already busy Attorney’s Office. Overall a 9% increase over the prior year was seen in the number of cases filed.

The attorneys assist in carrying out the mandated duties of all the various parts of the Department of Social Services by representing the Commissioner of Social Services, through subordinate employees, both in and out of court. The office consists of two full-time Social Services Attorneys and one Legal Secretary who work out of the office of the County Attorney. These same attorneys are also designated Assistant County Attorneys and prosecute certain other types of cases in Family Court, including Juvenile Delinquency and Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) cases.

The attorneys are responsible for prosecuting petitions filed in Family Court by the Department of Social Services. These include child abuse and neglect cases, where the Department seeks the aid of the court in providing services to parents accused of abusing and/or neglecting their children, sometimes requesting a removal of children to foster care. There were 28 such cases filed in 2012. The attorneys also present to the court child and spousal support petitions seeking reimbursement for Public Assistance and/or Medical Assistance (Medicaid) from legally responsible relatives. Hundreds of support petitions are filed each year.

Although not filed by the Department of Social Services, Juvenile Delinquency and Person in Need of Supervision cases are also prosecuted in Family Court by these same attorneys, acting in their capacity of Assistant County Attorney. In most cases, the Department of Social Services will be directed by the Family Court to provide supportive services to those families, to assist in correcting the problems that led to the petition being filed. There were 11 Juvenile Delinquency and 10 PINS petitions filed in 2012. This does not include any cases that are “adjusted” (settled) by the Probation Department pursuant to its duties, without referral to Family Court.

Further, in many custody/visitation and family offense (domestic violence) cases filed in Family Court by parties other than the Department, the judge will order the Department to perform an investigation of the parents for possible child abuse or neglect. In those cases, the attorneys advocate for the findings of the Department. There were 56 custody/visitation and 35 family offense petitions filed in 2012 which involved the Department of Social Services, upon the order of the Family Court.

Continued on back cover
**RESOURCE & RECOVERY**

**Resources**

When the client has an active Third Party Health Insurance policy, coverage is verified and then entered onto the EMedNY system. By entering the Third Party Health Insurance, providers bill the Third Party Health Insurance prior to billing Medicaid. According to the Cost Avoidance Report obtained from New York State Department of Health Office of Medicaid Management, the savings not paid by Medicaid due to Third Party Health Insurance in 2012 was $1,448,638.56.

**Burials**

Indigent Burial Applications are approved and processed. When the deceased has no legal responsible relative, no one willing or able to pay for funeral expenses, the funeral director will request Otsego County Department of Social Services to help pay for the funeral expenses. The rates and services allowed are based on Resolution No. 85-2007.

Burial Liens are filed on rare occasions. At the time of death, if there is a surviving spouse, the spouse is financially responsible to pay the funeral expenses. If the spouse does not have the means to pay for the expenses, the funeral director may contact Department of Social Services requesting an Indigent Burial. If the client owns real property, a burial lien is filed in Otsego County Clerk’s Office specifically for the amount of the funeral expenses.

In 2012 the Department assisted with 28 cremations and 9 traditional burials. Expenses totaled $76,705.71 Average cost per burial was $2,073.

**Recoveries**

According to Social Services Law, Recoveries must be pursued from the estate of an individual in receipt of Medicaid at the age of 55 years or older. No recovery is made if there is a surviving spouse or dependant and/or disabled child. Affidavit of Claims are filed in Surrogate’s Court against the estate for the amount of Medicaid expended. If no estate is or will be administered, assets are recovered by Affidavit, which most frequently include nursing home personal accounts and small bank accounts.

In 2012 $325,159 was recovered as follows:

- $198,126—Estates
- $77,797—Mortgage Liens
- $20,141—Medicaid Repay
- $18,105—Lawsuits
- $4,961—Burial Repays
- $3,808—Burial Overpayments
- $2,221—Temporary Assistance Liens
The Accounting unit is responsible for all fiscal transactions made by the department as well as budget preparation and oversight, filing claims for Federal and State reimbursements, payments to contractors and payroll.

For 2012 expenditures were $23,313,877. Total revenues, State and Federal reimbursements and repayments, totaled $14,437,965. The local cost to the County was $8,875,912.

The Accounting unit is responsible to generate claims seeking Federal and State reimbursements. Claims are filed monthly in both the program and administrative areas. By obtaining Federal and State funding, the County is able to provide required mandated services utilizing the least amount of local tax dollars as possible. In addition to these monthly claims, we process several special project claims seeking reimbursement for expenses related to problems unique to rural areas. An example of this would be the Community Solutions for Transportation grant to assist Otsego County residents with transportation in order to obtain or retain employment.

The Department of Social Services receives an annual allocation called the Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS). Together with the Management Team, the Accounting unit is responsible to develop a plan for approval by the State regarding how to use portions of this funding to best serve the residents of Otsego County. For 2012, our total FFFS allocation was $2,411,179. New York State mandates that some of this money be used for child welfare expenses. The local Department of Social Services has chosen as allowed by Federal guidelines to use this funding to help support programs operated by agencies such as Big Buddies, Family Services Association, Catholic Charities and Opportunities for Otsego that provide services for children and families. FFFS is also used to support employment programs to help public assistance recipients return to the workforce. In addition, the Department chooses to subsidize the Daycare Block Grant with FFFS in order to allow more families to receive assistance through the daycare subsidy program.

The Child Support Unit assists custodial parents seeking child support services in obtaining court ordered child support for their children. The program will establish paternity, establish and enforce financial and medical support orders, and provide services in a timely and professional manner focused on children.

Otsego County Child Support program collected over 5.4 million dollars on behalf of custodial parents/guardians for the year 2012. This amount represents dollars collected on private cases and also on behalf of children receiving public assistance, Medicaid and foster care services based on referrals from the various units within the Department.

The Child Support Unit enforces child support orders that meet certain criteria through a variety of administrative actions including income executions, Driver’s License Suspension, Tax Refund Offset, Property Executions to freeze bank accounts, Lottery Prize Intercept, Passport Denial, intercept of personal injury claims and referrals to Department of Taxation and Finance for property seizures.

In 2012 supervision of the unit was restructured by merging the child support unit with the accounting unit, eliminating the need for a Sr. Support Investigator position. Supervision of the unit is now provided by the Principal Account Clerk Typist of the accounting unit and the Director of Administrative Services.
The purpose of the Staff Development Program is to support our employees and strengthen the agency’s ability to meet its mission, challenges, and goals, by creating better outcomes for staff and the individuals and families we serve.

Staff development ensures that training activities are planned, delivered, and tracked to help guide employee and organizational development. Training histories are maintained for each employee in the Department and training reports are available for staff and supervisors. Staff development policies help employees become knowledgeable about professional standards and opportunities.

The Department provides these trainings in the most cost effective means so staff can receive information/directives from the state, learn new procedures and systems, and gain insight into best practice in their program areas. These trainings are completed through state sponsored classroom trainings, local in-house classroom trainings, teleconferences, webinars and computer based trainings.

The Staff Development Coordinator (SDC) continues to provide new employee orientation to new staff, registers staff for all appropriate trainings, creates trainings, and ensures compliance with the County’s Employee Evaluation Program. The Department also supported four (4) Interns through the Staff Development unit, the majority were placed in the Services unit. The SDC worked with OCFS on computer security to ensure client confidentiality while ensuring staff had the appropriate access to complete job duties. The SDC continues to be a member of the Management Team and participates in areas surrounding the Department’s budget, consolidated services plan, program improvement plan and Department procedures and policies.

During the year 2012, the Department supported a total of 154 staff members (total on payroll for 2012), who attended a total number of 1,717.20 hours of In-house training (including staff meetings & non-state sponsored trainings) and a total of 3,530.75 hours of state sponsored training programs. Many of the state sponsored training programs are required by the Federal Government, State Government and this Department. The number of total training hours is down in part to a decrease in staff turnover resulting in less staff attending the longer mandated core training programs. A listing of all the trainings that Department staff attended during 2012 is available upon request.
Outstanding County Employee

It is a pleasure to announce that Barbara Brennan was selected as an Otsego County Outstanding Employee in 2012. Barbara, a Senior Caseworker for the Department of Social Services was selected by the Intra Employee Relations Committee. Barbara is a devoted, faithful employee of Otsego County and has been for many years. She is certainly deserving of this award.

Barbara was recognized by the Board of Representatives on February 1, 2012 in the County Board Room. She received a designated parking spot for six months and her name was placed on the Otsego County Outstanding Employee plaque, which is located in the main lobby of the County Office Building located at 197 Main Street Cooperstown.

Violence Intervention Program Award

Sarah Purdy, Caseworker, in our CPS unit received a recognition award from Opportunities for Otsego Violence Intervention Program for her dedication to helping child victims of sexual assault. Ms. Purdy accepted the award at a candle light vigil ceremony April 17, 2012 as part of the “Take Back the Night” walk to end victims of violence held in Oneonta, NY. Her acceptance speech was a collaborative effort between herself and prior award recipient Attorney Steven Ratner.

Retirements

Kathleen Robinson started working for the Department of Social Services in May 1985 as a Caseworker. In August of 1990 she accepted a promotion to Senior Caseworker before becoming a Grade B Supervisor in June of 1999. After 27 years of dedicated service Kathy retired from our department.

Irene Parker also retired from our department this year. Ms. Parker began as a Typist in April of 1985. In May of 1990 she became our Transportation Coordinator; a position she held for 23 years until her retirement in September 2012.
Attorney’s continued from page 9

The attorneys represent Adult Protective Services when court action is needed to protect the safety of an adult. This generally occurs in Supreme Court when a guardianship petition is filed upon allegations that a person is unable to manage his or her own affairs and needs a guardian to be appointed.

The attorneys also represent the Department in resource recovery efforts. As described elsewhere in this report, a total of $325,159.00 was recovered in 2012.

Finally, all appeals to higher courts involving the Department of Social Services are handled by the attorney’s office. There were 5 such appeals argued and decided in 2012. The attorney’s office was affirmed (prevailed) on all five.

As an aid to both the attorneys office and Services staff a Legal Secretary works in the attorneys office to assist with drafting petitions, keeping the state computer system up to date and accurate based on court orders so that state and federal reimbursements are maximized, and interpreting administrative directives and recommending processes to ensure compliance with the same.