

Department of Human Services

2008 Annual Report



Brian M. Hughes
Mercer County Executive

Marygrace Billek
Director, Department of Human Services

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June 2009

Dear Residents and Friends:

It is hard to believe that almost three years have passed since my appointment as the Director of the Department of Human Services. Serving as Director has been the most challenging and rewarding experience in my more than 20 years in the field. Given the number of high-quality, value-added initiatives performed by our employees, it is quite a task to summarize all accomplishments for 2008.

I am especially proud of the depth and breadth of services provided to Mercer County residents. Many people do not realize that, on a daily basis, Human Services touches the following populations in one form or another: senior citizens, children, adolescents, adults, those requiring addiction treatment, those seeking mental health services, community-based nonprofit agencies, the disabled, consumers of library services, youth in detention, and those benefiting from skilled geriatric care.

Cognizant of our mission to ensure that a coordinated system of human services is available to every resident of Mercer County with particular emphasis on those most in need, I must say that 2008 was particularly challenging given national as well as regional downturns in the economy. It was, and continues to be, our goal to identify and provide services that are most needed in the community. To this end, I encourage you to let the Department of Human Services know how we can be of greater service.

On behalf of the Department of Human Services, it is with great pleasure that I present our annual report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marygrace Billek".

Marygrace Billek
Director

Vision Statement

The Mercer County Department of Human Services is a leader in promoting service excellence, maintaining the highest standards and achieving the best results. Our staff is highly motivated, skilled and dedicated in meeting the diverse needs of Mercer County residents.

Mission Statement

The Mercer County Department of Human Services fosters a comprehensive human service delivery system that enhances the health, safety and quality of life for all residents of Mercer County. Our goal is to create an environment of public trust by empowering and strengthening individuals and families, advocating for sound policy, mobilizing resources, and acting as champions for those citizens who are most vulnerable and in need of services.

Director's Office

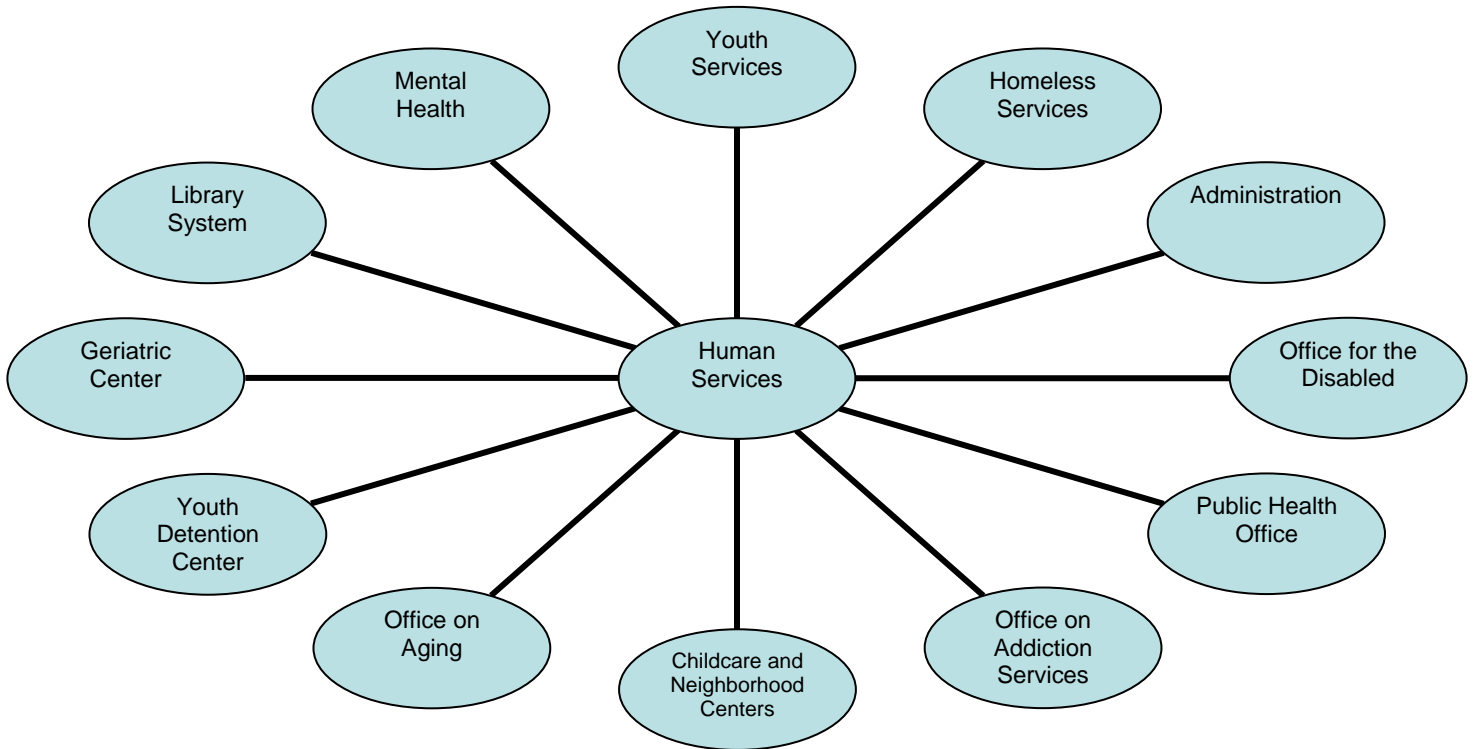
Marygrace Billek, Director

The Department of Human Services is a large, multi-service organization that was reorganized in 2004 to function more effectively and efficiently. The Department is comprised of the Director's Office, where planning and policy development; payroll; contract administration; and the daily management of the department occur, including the direct supervision of the Mercer County Library System, the Mercer County Youth Detention Center and the Mercer County Geriatric Center; the Community Services Division; and the Health and Behavioral Health Division.

The Department's Community Services Division houses five offices: Division of Youth Services, Office on Aging, Office of Homeless Services, Office for the Disabled and Office on Childcare and Neighborhood Centers. In addition, the Division of Community Services is a liaison to the Mercer County Board of Social Services, the One Stop Career Center and the Workforce Investment Board.

The Department's Health and Behavioral Health Division houses three offices: Division of Mental Health, Office on Addiction Services and the Public Health Office.

Chart 1: Department of Human Services' Components



The Department houses other entities as well. To assist with decisions on funding appropriations, more than 20 boards and commissions and their subgroups provide needs assessments, identify underserved populations and make funding recommendations for service areas. They will be detailed in each Office or Division profile in this report.

These boards and commissions supported the Department in decisions made to contract more than \$13 million in services for Mercer County residents. More than \$9.3 million was contracted by the Community Services Division, while the Behavioral Health Division contracted about \$3.8 million in services.

Chart 2: Funds contracted by the Community Services Division

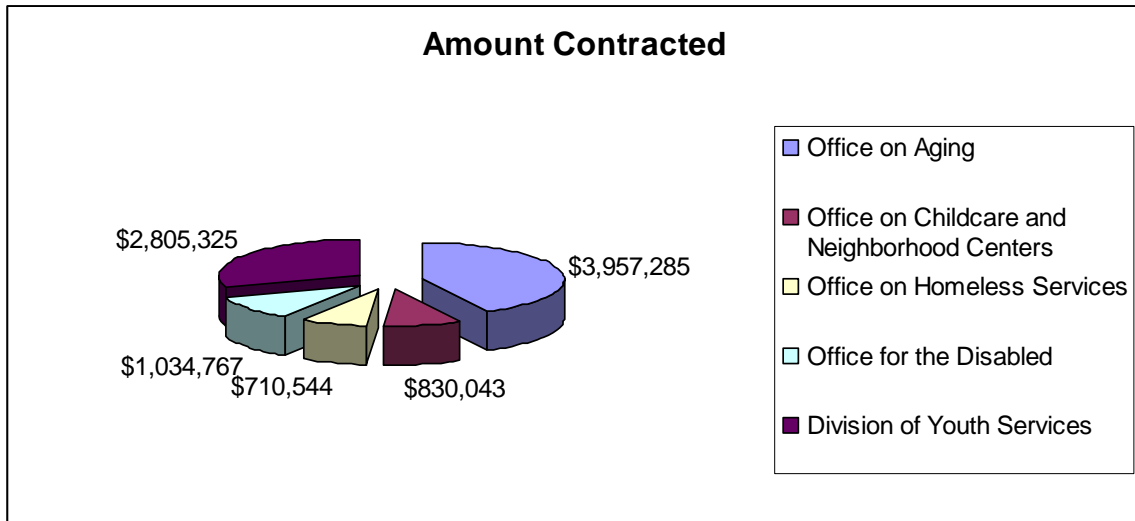
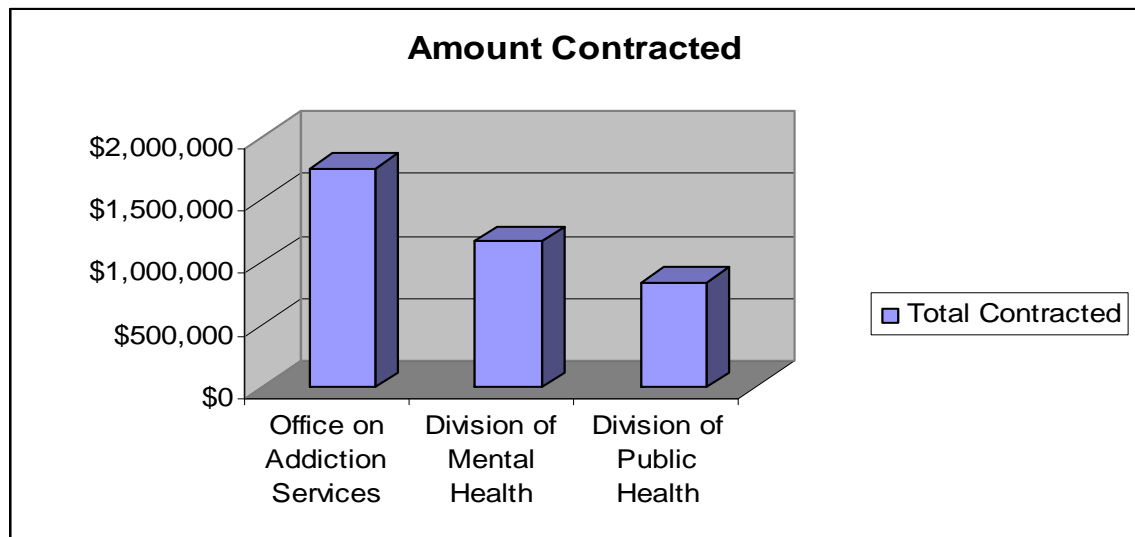


Chart 3: Funds contracted by the Behavioral Health Division



The commissions that directly report to the Director are the Mercer County Commission on the Status of Women (Women’s Commission) and the Mercer County Commission on Abused, Neglected and Missing Children.

The Women's Commission supports Mercer County in the development of policies and programs concerning women and acts as a liaison to community organizations, associations and groups working to improve the status of women in the county. Each year, the Women's Commission is involved in community events and hosts a luncheon where women are honored for their volunteer work in the Mercer County community.

The Mercer County Commission on Abused, Neglected and Missing Children initiates the development of programs and services that enhance the physical, emotional and social well-being of children in Mercer County. The commission also educates on issues relating to the welfare of children; provides a forum for professionals and volunteers to coordinate resources; and advocates for programs and policies to improve the quality of services for youth in Mercer County. It participates in events each year, including its Cherish the Children Awards Dinner, where volunteers who work with children are honored.

2008 Highlights

To help agencies receive funds for services, the Mercer County Department of Human Services hosted a grant writing training seminar in December. Pat Bohse, president of Bohse and Associates Inc., and Director Billek presented to a group of more than 80 service providers at the all-day session. Attendees represented the service areas for homeless, mental health, disabilities, public health, addictions, aging, child care and youth services. Attendees expressed their satisfaction with the presentation, and 93% of those who returned a survey indicated they would attend another session if offered.

The Department reached the community through its commissions as well. In May, the Women's Commission and the Zonta Club of Trenton celebrated the International Day of Families by sponsoring an art and essay contest. Eight youth from kindergarten through grade 8 were recognized for their artwork and essays depicting what family means to them. This second annual awards ceremony was held at the Lawrence Library, where the children's entries were hung for two displayed for all patrons to see.

One month later, the Women's Commission was a sponsor of the 11th Annual Drug Free Community Festival at South River Walk Park in Trenton. The purpose of the festival, hosted by Catholic Charities in partnership with government and community agencies, was to promote a healthy lifestyle to families within the Trenton Latino community. About 400 area residents attended this free event.

In December, the Women's Commission joined with another area agency, Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Mercer County, to host two speaking engagements about domestic violence. Jackson Katz, one of America's leading anti-sexist male activists, was the guest speaker at the events geared specifically toward men and boys. About 100 people attended the events.

On its own, the Women's Commission hosted its 11th annual luncheon in November. The purpose of the luncheon is to recognize area women who volunteer in the Mercer County community. In 2008, three women and one high school student were acknowledged.

In other commission news, the Mercer County Commission on Abused, Neglected and Missing Children was active as well. 2008 marked the 22nd year that the Cherish the Children Awards Dinner Banquet honored dedicated volunteers and professionals of Mercer County who work to better the well-being of children.

One month after the Cherish the Children dinner, the Mercer County Commission on Abused, Neglected and Missing Children sponsored the “Positive Choices” teen conference with the use of a grant from the State of New Jersey as well as commission resources. The conference, held at the Medical Arts Campus of Trenton Central High School for the third year, reached about 400 teens, about 300 from Medical Arts Campus and 100 pregnant or parenting teens from Trenton Central High School. Area agencies assisted with the conference by providing presentations on these topics:

- Drug and alcohol awareness
- Gangs
- Child support and paternity
- Decisions about sexual activity and the consequences of diseases
- Relationship violence
- Tattooing and body piercing
- Anger management
- Internet safety
- Health screenings

In June, the Commission on Abused, Neglected and Missing Children was a sponsor of the 11th Annual Drug Free Community Festival along with the Women’s Commission. In October, the commission presented two programs: Family Fun and Safety Day and its annual multidisciplinary training (MDT).

Family Fun and Safety Day was sponsored with the Mercer County Firemen’s Association to highlight Fire Safety Week and provided a day of family fun, free of charge. About 500 children and parents attended the event, which was held at Mercer County Park. The Firemen’s Association provided safety demonstrations while the commission provided games, horse rides, face painting and a magic show.

Just a few weeks after Family Fun and Safety Day, the commission sponsored its MDT with Lisa Aronson Fontes, Ph.D., of Union Institute and University, as the guest speaker. Dr. Fontes has dedicated more than 15 years to making the social services and mental health systems more responsive to culturally diverse people affected by family violence.

Dr. Fontes’ topics at the training were interviewing clients across cultures, and how to work with diverse families with victims of child abuse. Sixty-five people attended. Twenty percent of attendees were from Mercer County schools; 25% were from law enforcement (police, sheriff’s office and prosecutor’s office); and 55% were from various county agencies that work with children.

Mercer County Library System

Ellen Brown, Director

The Mercer County Library System (MCLS or Library) recognizes that access to information empowers individuals with knowledge and opportunity. The Library is committed to providing materials and services that satisfy the educational, informational, recreational and cultural needs of the diverse community and strives to encourage a lifelong interest in reading. Its nine branches function as community activities centers, community information centers, children's development and learning centers, community cultural centers, recreational and leisure resource centers, and formal education support centers.

Funding for the MCLS is secured through a dedicated library tax payable by every resident or person owning property in the seven municipalities that have chosen to belong to the system. Those municipalities are East Windsor, Ewing, Hightstown, Hopewell, Lawrence, Robbinsville and West Windsor. The City of Trenton, Princeton Township, Princeton Borough and Hamilton Township do not participate in the MCLS. Those municipalities support their own public libraries; however, there are reciprocal borrowing agreements established with Hopewell and Pennington Boroughs and the Plainsboro Public Library.

Like the Department of Human Services, MCLS has a commission to assist its administration. The Library Commission functions in an advisory capacity to the County Executive in the overall policy-making and programming of patron services in the Library's branches. The commission also works with library administration and may work with the various nonprofit organizations, such as the Friends of the Library groups, township committees and library associations, to facilitate special programming and events to Mercer County Library patrons.

The following are some interesting Library statistics for 2008:

- There were 719,852 items in the systemwide library collection.
- There were 87,219 active borrowers.
- There were 11,318 new registered patrons.
- There were 3,158 children's programs offered to a total audience of 72,448.
- There were 725 computer classes with 3,256 attendees – including the public and the County employees that have been trained.
- There were 1,069 adult programs with attendance of 11,947.
- There were 1,796,003 items circulated.
- There were 1,201,951 visitors to the branches.
- There were 2,809 public notaries performed.
- There were 180,637 number of PC uses by the public.
- There were 134,764 reference questions answered.
- There were 5,312 uses of community rooms by outside groups.
- There were 2,809 Literacy Volunteers of America tutoring sessions.

- The amount of funding provided by the Friends of the Library, Library Association or Township Library Committees, used to supplement children's and adult programming and to enhance landscaping, was about \$90,000.

The Library reported revenue of \$254,994 in fines and fees; \$70,000 from Mercer County Community College for library IT support; and \$153,739 from Library State Aid for total revenue of \$478,733.

2008 Highlights

The MCLS obtained a five-star rating from *Library Journal*, a magazine read by more than 100,000 library directors, administrators and staff in public, academic and special libraries. The award, although bestowed in the magazine's February 2009 issue, was based on 2008 services. *Library Journal* chose 7,115 public libraries from across the country and, of those, selected 256 to be awarded three, four or five stars. This rating system grouped libraries by their budgets and was based solely on four per capita service areas: number of patron visits; number of attendees at programs; number of PC uses by the public; and number of items circulating. MCLS was awarded a five-star rating, listed in the top 10 of its budget category. The budget category was \$11 million to \$29 million; the Mercer County Library budget is closer to \$12 million. Although the Library was on the low end of the budget category, it managed to score in the top 10 for service output.

Only three libraries in New Jersey were awarded five stars and three others were rated with three or four stars. This was a huge honor for MCLS because it meant that patrons were using Library services and the Library was meeting, and in many cases exceeding, patron needs with the services and programs provided.

Another success from 2008 was MCLS's summer reading program. In 2008, 5,138 children – a more than 21% increase – registered for the seven-week program, compared with 4,242 children in 2007. The Library offered 675 programs to a total audience of 17,473 children. These figures were well above the 2007 figures of 610 programs and an audience of 15,942. Collectively, Mercer County children and teens – including those at the Youth Detention Center, where weekly summer reading events were held – read more than 92,012 books in 2008, a huge increase compared with the 80,105 books reported in 2007. Volunteerism was also increased during the 2008 reading program.

To improve services offered to patrons, MCLS upgraded its catalog and patron software to Symphony, a more sophisticated version of the software that the Library had been using. Symphony has greatly enhanced the Library catalog. It can customize the catalog so that patrons can search for items, place holds and search related seasonal, medical or educational information. The Library also can customize bibliographies and popular searches and notify patrons via e-mail when new items in a variety of genres are added to the catalog. In addition, the upgraded system allows for sending courtesy notification to patrons of their outstanding items three days prior to the due date.

Mercer County Youth Detention Center

Llional Henderson, Superintendent

The Mercer County Youth Detention Center (MCYDC) ensures the safe and secure confinement of juveniles whose appearance in the juvenile and/or adult courts of the County of Mercer is necessary. Standards for care, custody and programming are set by and monitored by the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS), the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) and the American Correctional Association juvenile standards for detention facilities. These standards provide guidelines necessary to enhance the safety of the facility while providing support for a pro-social and positive total learning environment.

MCYDC not only provides physical needs such as shelter, clothing, food, medical assistance and education, but also establishes a staging ground for those youth in need of services and treatment. The facility offers a variety of programs and services, which include participation in a drug and alcohol awareness program, religious services, psychological and psychiatric support groups, mentoring, and Planned Parenthood and anger management programs. The MCYDC provides a full day and accommodates all levels of educational competencies and needs via the Mercer County Special Services School District teaching staff, who engage youth in educational activities year round.

The daily average headcount was significantly less in 2008 than 2007, signifying systematic growth in the County response to working with the family court, multi-disciplinary team, DYFS, Mercer House and in-home detention through the Juvenile Detention Alternative.

2008 Highlights

All the custody staff met the JJC requirements for training during 2008, and 92% of staff received more than 24 hours of training. This was able to be accomplished while meeting, for the first time in three years, the JJC staffing ratio and with 28% less overtime than the prior year, while still operating at the appropriate staffing requirements.

Also in 2008, there were fewer incidents of use of restraint. This was a direct result of de-escalation technique training that instructed all staff on how to manage difficult situations.

The implementation of The Choice Game™ was very instrumental in the improvement of MCYDC culture and significantly reduced gang violence and activity by 89% last year. This analysis was based upon comparing 2008 to 2007 incident reports.

The game's curriculum helps build strong moral decision-making skills for young people through use of an interactive computer environment. The story lines and the language help young people in each version make decisions and deal with the consequences of their choices. Actors such as Stephen Baldwin, Joe Mantegna and Malcolm-Jamal Warner all help the young person to realize that today's decisions can have far-reaching consequences. Even the most disinterested young people enjoy this creative and engaging new way of learning about what could happen to them and their friends.

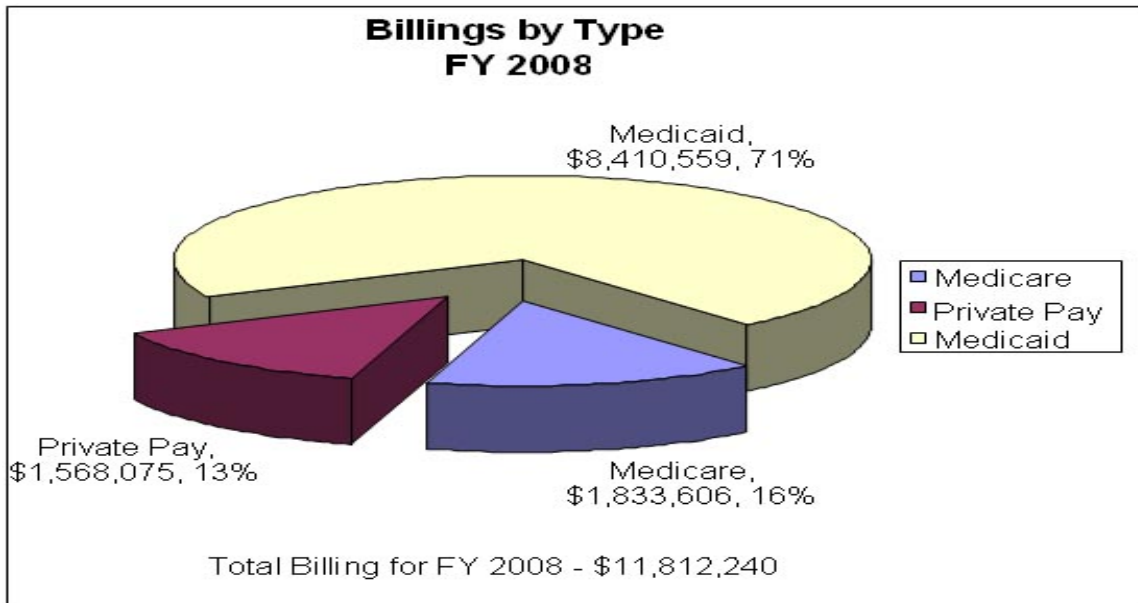
Mercer County Geriatric Center
Robert Ecroyd, Administrator

The Mercer County Geriatric Center is a nursing center that specializes in sub-acute care, short-term rehabilitation and long-term skilled nursing. The Center also offers respite care, an Alzheimer/dementia unit, wound care management, intravenous therapy and social services support.

The past year was full of great challenges and achievements for the Mercer County Geriatric Center. In 2008, the skill level of the clinical staff again enabled the Center to expand its focus to an even broader patient base. Resident-centric health care delivery enabled the Center to encompass those who require more intensive rehabilitation and complex medical care than was typical in skilled nursing facilities in years past. These may be shorter-term patients who fall under the Medicare umbrella; who have spent some time in a hospital for surgery, injury or debilitating illness; or patients who have spent time in the hospital because of a chronic illness and have been stabilized enough to be transferred to the Center for long-term care.

The Center utilizes 180 beds distributed among three nursing units. During 2008, the occupancy rate averaged about 82%, a slight decrease from last year's 83% occupancy rate. Total billings for the year, however, came to about \$11.8 million. This constitutes an increase of about \$750,000 compared with billings in 2007.

Chart 4: Billings by Type at the Mercer County Geriatric Center



2008 Highlights

Reaching goals requires vision and determination. Successes spawned by vision and determination are the milestones marking ongoing efforts to make a difference in the lives of the residents of the Mercer County Geriatric Center.

The Center made unprecedented improvements in clinical care to patients, internal operating systems and the physical upgrading of the facility in 2008. The following are examples of programs and accomplishments that exemplify the broad commitment of the staff to the quality of care given to the residents of the Mercer County Geriatric Center.

Patient Care and Initiatives

- The administration implemented a new policy and procedures on anticoagulation to ensure the safe handling of anticoagulants, through better communication between the nursing staff and attending physicians.
- The administration implemented a new policy on methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, commonly called MRSA, to limit the transmission of this organism among staff, residents and their families.
- The administration created the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, a specialized committee that oversees medication use in the facility.
- The administration created the Medical Staff Office, which made closed records accessible to physicians 24 hours a day to enhance patient care.
- The administration contracted with an excellent, new therapy company, which improved the satisfaction of residents in regard to their overall health. This also increased the nursing staff's role in restorative nursing through training.

Training and Education

- The administration established a program and educational initiative to improve the skills of all of its staff nurses. The Gerontological Nursing Education Program was a 10-week series of seminars that was available at no charge to all full-time nurses employed at the Mercer County Geriatric Center. About 120 hours were devoted to this training in 2008.
- The majority of staff members attended many training and/or professional development conferences and attended in-service education programs. More than 7,300 hours were spent by the nursing staff at trainings.

Building Improvements

- All resident rooms, administrative offices and the lobby were renovated and modernized.
- An addition to the Klockner Wing was completed. The addition consisted of a glass-enclosed atrium extending out from the Alzheimer's unit activities room.

Recognition

- Few deficiencies were found during the annual Medicare and Medicaid inspection by the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services.
- The Mercer County Geriatric Center received the Community Greening Award from the Philadelphia Horticultural Society.

Office on Addiction Services

Camille Bloomberg, County Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Coordinator

Established in the 1970s, the Mercer County Office on Addiction Services is the agency responsible for the planning, administration and coordination of alcohol and drug-abuse services in the county. The Office's vision is to provide information, referral and funding for indigent adult and adolescent Mercer County residents for a continuum of care including, but not limited to:

- Drug/alcohol prevention and education
- Intervention
- Outpatient care, including intensive outpatient services
- Detoxification
- Residential treatment
- Post-residential continuum of care
- Halfway house treatment
- Transitional housing
- Intoxicated driver resource center

Under the Office is the Mercer County Advisory Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, also commonly known as the Local Advisory Committee on Alcohol and Drug Addiction. This citizen advisory committee's purpose is to serve in an advisory and policy development capacity to the delivery of alcoholism and drug-abuse services in Mercer County. There are two sub-committees of this board: the Mercer County Organization of Addiction Treatment Services and Education and the County Alliance Steering Committee.

The Office on Addiction Services also facilitates the Mercer County Co-Occurring Task Force in conjunction with the Mercer County Division of Mental Health to address the needs of consumers who are affected by both substance abuse and mental health disorders.

In 2008, more than \$1.3 million was allocated through the Office on Addiction Services to assist Mercer County residents with addiction issues. Through competitive contracts, more than \$662,000 of County funds provided services, including:

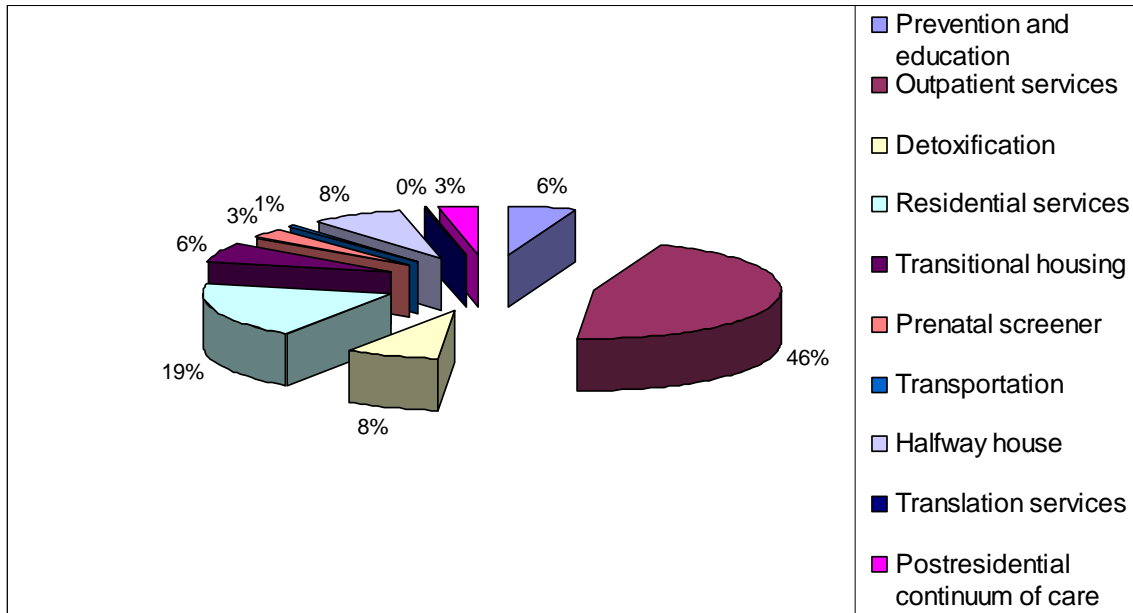
- 572 hours of addiction prevention and education services
- 7,016 hours of outpatient addiction services
- 1,476 bed days of residential addiction treatment services
- 498 bed days of halfway house treatment services
- 12 bed days for adult inpatient detoxification
- Transitional housing for eight recovering women and their children

This funding also provided the salary for one full-time prenatal screener.

Through grant funding, more than \$660,000 provided services including:

- 1,331 student assistance counseling units for addiction prevention and education
- 117 interpretive sessions for translation services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing
- 1,177 days of halfway house services
- 1,191 units of outpatient addiction services and 3,198 days of intensive outpatient services
- 878 bed days of residential treatment services
- Post-residential continuum of care for 40 adolescents and their families
- Transitional housing for 10 recovering women and their children

Chart 5: Percentage breakdown of 2008 Office on Addiction funds spent



Also under the Office on Addiction Services is the Municipal Alliance program, a network of volunteer-driven, municipally based education and awareness programs that are administered in all 21 New Jersey counties and specifically in 12 municipalities in Mercer County. The municipalities are East Windsor/Hightstown, Ewing, Hamilton, Hopewell Township, Hopewell Borough/Pennington, Lawrence, Princeton Township, Princeton Borough, Trenton and West Windsor/Plainsboro. For municipalities to participate in the program, they must apply to the Office on Addiction Services for funding.

The purpose of the Municipal Alliances are to assess needs, set priorities, develop plans and implement programs that form the foundation of New Jersey’s substance abuse prevention programs statewide. Funds of \$425,085 were awarded from the Governor’s Council on Addiction and Drug Addiction for implementation of the County of Mercer’s Municipal Alliance program that focused on:

- Drug abuse resistance and prevention education
- Direct interaction education addressing uniqueness of each child
- Peaceful conflict resolution and identification techniques of trusted adults for resisting negative peer pressure
- Information and education

More than 9,800 youth ranging from grades 1 through 12, community members and families received services through the Municipal Alliance program in 2008.

2008 Highlights

The Mercer County Co-Occurring Task Force held a conference in October for professionals and consumers. The topic for consumers was “Mental Illness & Addiction: What Is It and Why Me” presented by Dr. Marc Woodford of The College of New Jersey. The topic for professionals was “A Psychiatric Overview of the Spectrum of Traumatic & Related Disorders: From Early Childhood to Veteran Reentry” presented by Dr. George F. Wilson of Princeton House Behavioral Health. About 120 professionals and consumers attended the conference. Through this conference, the task force provided increased clinical skills to professionals and advanced skills to consumers.

The Office on Addiction Services, including its Municipal Alliance program, facilitated a countywide needs assessment to determine the top four priorities for treatment programs. The conclusions derived from this planning process indicated that the funding strategies from previous years – outpatient and intensive outpatient treatment, detoxification, residential treatment, halfway house services, extended care services, and early intervention/education – should be maintained. Evidence, however, suggested that special populations, such as aging adults (those 65 years or older and their caregivers); returning veterans and family members; women, including pregnant women; individuals with co-occurring disorders; individuals who are disabled; and criminal offenders should be given special consideration in the development and implementation of treatment programs.

With the consideration of the needs assessment results, the Office on Addiction Services completed its 2010-2012 Comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services Plan for Mercer County and distributed it throughout the county. The idea of the plan is to link prevention and treatment strategies at the State, County and local levels.

This plan has been published since 1986, and is the basis for ongoing decision-making by the Office on Addiction Services and the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders. The plan establishes priorities for the funding of alcohol and drug-abuse services for the citizens of Mercer County and provides a basis for the allocation of funds. Also, the plan provides linkages to resources that serve those with addiction issues and their families.

Division of Mental Health

Michele Madiou, Administrator

The Division of Mental Health provides planning, oversight and coordination of mental health services throughout the county. The Mental Health Administrator serves as the liaison between the County and the State by contracting for and monitoring services.

Under the Division, there are several bodies that work on behalf of Mercer County residents:

- Mental Health Board, which provides community-based oversight and guidance for mental health services
- Traumatic Loss Coalition (TLC), which sponsors training and opportunities for public awareness concerning suicide and violence prevention, along with parent and community education activities
- Professional Advisory Committee, which identifies system issues that impact the ability of clients to remain stable in the community (The eradication of the stigma associated with mental illness continues to be a priority.)
- Mercer County Task Force on Co-Occurring Disorders, which promotes community outreach to this special area of concern with the Office on Addiction Services (The Mercer County Co-Occurring Disorders Task Force Crisis coordination continues with a goal of developing a flexible mental health response.)
- Children's Interagency Coordinating Council (CIACC), which coordinates a group of community providers and youth advocates who monitor and invest in the improvement of the children's mental health system throughout Mercer County

Additionally, the Division of Mental Health represents the County on the steering committee for the Mercer County Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD). COAD coordinates and collaborates in the all hazards response to disasters. Planning efforts are directed at minimizing gaps in, and duplication of, service in all phases of disaster. The Administrator also serves as the Disaster Mental Health Response Coordinator for disaster crisis counselor deployment and coordination. This is accomplished through a network of first responder leadership.

The Division of Mental Health also takes part in the Special Needs Advisory Panel (SNAP), which is a group under the Mercer County Office for the Disabled. SNAP continues to work toward the improvement of overall preparedness and response to special needs populations during emergencies and disasters at the County, State and local levels. Individuals with mental illness are considered a part of the special needs population. Training, planning and response are the key areas of the focus of SNAP.

A monthly gathering of community professionals and concerned citizens who provide guidance and collaborate with the Division to provide a coordinated response to traumatic loss events affecting youth, TLC manages and monitors the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services grant for compliance with County and State regulators. TLC

provides trauma-related educational programs and consultation to school districts, health care providers and human service agencies throughout Mercer County in the area of psychological first aid, traumatic loss protocol, positive youth development and crisis planning/management. This Coalition includes educators, clergy, health care professionals, law enforcement, service providers and elected officials. Grant funds of \$73,400 supported the activities of TLC in 2008.

Another component of the Division of Mental Health, the CIACC promotes the integration of coordination of County, State and other resources serving youth with emotional and behavioral challenges. Utilizing information received from multiple community sources, the CIACC suggests action steps regarding service and resource development prioritization.

Funded services through the Division of Mental Health in 2008 were for:

- Those in hospitals awaiting community re-entry
- Those in the community deemed at risk of re-hospitalization
- Emergency screening/crisis intervention
- Residential services
- Geriatric management
- Partial hospitalization
- Outpatient counseling

In 2008, more than \$1 million in County and peer grouping funding supported services including, but not limited to:

- More than 32,000 face-to-face, group or family-to-family counseling sessions, including sessions for Hispanic consumers
- 16,850 crisis intervention and hotline calls
- 19,500 day treatments, 110,000 service hours dedicated to day treatment and 16,272 partial care units related to day treatment
- More than 10,000 outpatient unit services
- 725 psychotherapy sessions
- 50 mental health awareness programs

2008 Highlights

TLC facilitated the third annual Healthy Bodies – Healthy Minds 5K run to promote suicide prevention “issue” awareness. There were 125 runners in attendance. The purpose of the event was to increase awareness of suicide and how to help prevent it. Each year, more runners and agencies participate.

Two training events were facilitated by TLC. The first half of “Adolescent Cyber-Bullying and Resiliency: Building Intentional Relationships with Youth” featured Mercer County Sheriff Kevin C. Larkin and his Crime Prevention Unit. The second half featured Lee Rush, Executive Director of Just Community Inc. and Executive Director of the National Student Assistance Association. One hundred people were in attendance.

The purpose of the training was to present two perspectives on the risk of self violence and violence to others due to cyber-bullying. The first point of view dealt with cyber-bullying awareness and the legal aspect from the Sheriff's Office. The second dealt with the 40 Developmental Assets – the concrete, positive experiences and qualities that are essential to raising successful young people, according to the Search Institute – as a means to fostering resiliency to avoid the suicide/homicide/despondency risks of cyber-bullying. Parents were given ideas to combat cyber-bullying by more positive means than monitoring a teenager's computer use.

Provided in September and December, "When the Worst Happens: How Schools Can Respond to Traumatic Events," was a training for school-based professionals provided by Jennifer Krencicki, MS, LPC, a certified school counselor experienced in mental health and school-based counseling. Forty individuals attended each presentation. The goal was to review the best practices for the coordination and management of a school response in the wake of a traumatic loss. School personnel gained tools to plan and implement practical crisis response and to enhance their skills involving direct support and intervention for individuals and groups affected by the traumatic event. The training combined TLC's *Managing Sudden Traumatic Loss in the Schools* manual with interactive dialog and experiential learning to achieve TLC's objectives.

In addition, the CIACC completed a needs assessment, which informs of funding requests and program development. The top areas that require funding, as decided by the assessment, were:

- Outpatient counseling
- Family therapy
- Access to specific treatment modalities, such as structural family therapy, parent child interaction, functional family therapy, parent management training and trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy
- Outpatient services for Spanish-speaking consumers
- Individual and group mental health services for those in the Mercer County Youth Detention Center and Mercer House
- Increased access to child psychiatrists
- Independent living/aging out services and supportive housing
- Family services for consumers of the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities
- Inpatient and outpatient treatment for mentally ill, chemical-abusing children
- Emergency special needs diagnostic beds

Division of Public Health

Sharon McNellis-Kissel, Health Officer

The Mercer County Division of Public Health is committed to ensuring an environmentally safe and secure community for Mercer County residents. The Division is a designated Local Information and Communications Network System (LINCS) and County Environmental Health Act (CEHA) agency under the direction of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). In addition, the Division is recognized as the lead agency for the Right to Know (RTK) program governed by the NJDHSS and NJDEP.

As the LINCS agency, the Division assumes the lead role with regard to bioterrorism and public health emergency preparedness and response planning for the County. The primary focus of the LINCS staff is to enhance the capabilities of emergency-ready public health departments by upgrading, integrating and evaluating local public health jurisdictions' preparedness for, and response to, terrorism, pandemic influenza and other public-health emergencies. In collaboration with other agencies, the LINCS team prepares and safeguards residents against major incidents, such as natural disasters, acts of bioterrorism and disease outbreaks, via comprehensive planning, communication, drills and exercises.

Communication is vital during a public health crisis. The LINCS system has the capability to transmit messages 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Using the LINCS-enhanced communication system, 380 public health-related messages (alerts, advisories, updates, information and press releases) were disseminated in 2008 to community partners to keep them up-to-date with information pertaining to public health concerns or emergencies as they evolved. LINCS has almost 1,200 contacts or message recipients in the Community Health Alert Information Network and continues to increase the list.

The Mercer County Division of Public Health has established and maintains a public-health network of Mercer County municipal health officers, public health nurses, registered health practitioners, public and private school nurses, colleges' and universities' health care centers, acute care hospital infection control practitioners/microbiologists and long-term care facilities' directors of nursing and physicians. This ensures that effective communication of health information will reach the public in real time.

Through CEHA, the Division provides environmental health services including education, outreach, compliance and enforcement of state laws pertaining to air, noise, solid waste, water, Haz-Mat and school laboratory chemical management compliance assistance program. Since 2004, CEHA staff has inspected 96 dry cleaners, 51 gas stations and 131 compost/recycling centers in addition to many other inspections they have performed.

In 2008, the Division of Public Health awarded competitive contracts to provide services to Mercer County residents, of which about \$70,000 was for outpatient education on tuberculosis to 111 clients, and \$27,000 for 30 Latina women to receive prenatal education. Grant funds of \$658,851 were used to run the CEHA, LINCS and RTK areas. The Division of Public Health is supported mainly by grant funding.

2008 Highlights

One of the major accomplishments of LINCS was the establishment of a Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The mission of the MRC is to recruit, train and have plans in place to deploy volunteers upon the event of a public health emergency. The 2008 recruitment campaign focused on health-care professionals and volunteers, all of whom have received training as required under federal guidelines. The MRC has more than 40 active members trained and ready to respond during a true public health emergency.

In addition, LINCS arranged and completed a “facilitated discussion” in April. Thirty-one participants attended to review and discuss the Mercer County Public Health Emergency Response Plan as well as emergency response plans from various school districts located in Mercer County. As a result of the discussion, a “table top” exercise ensued in July. Sixty-two participants were in attendance. Agency participants were presented with a scenario simulating an intentional release of a biological agent. The intent of the exercise was to test existing public health emergency response plans and their interoperability, and highlight the importance of updating or revising plans on a regular basis.

Both exercises were conducted as components of OPERATION ETIER 2010 (Examine Test Improve Emergency Response), a three-year, five-phase Mercer County exercise plan that, in conjunction with the assistance of NJDHSS’s Office of Emergency Planning, will be accomplished in 2010.

LINCS staff also reproduced a list of reportable diseases and mailed it to all Mercer County physicians, all private/public school nurses, all college/university health care centers, acute care hospitals’ infection control practitioners/microbiologists and directors of nursing at long-term care facilities. Included in the mailing package were: posters indicating the importance of hand washing (provided in English and Spanish); contact addresses, phone numbers and hours of operation of local, County and NJDHSS offices; and universal respiratory precautions for health care settings (provided in English and Spanish). The LINCS epidemiologist also distributed 100 NJDHSS Quick Reference Reporting Requirements to local public health nurses and infection control practitioners.

In addition, LINCS collected acute care hospitals’ emergency department data, statistically analyzed it for shifts and trends, and performed follow-up investigations as necessary. Influenza-like illness (ILI) data was collected from hospitals, schools and long-term care facilities. The data was statistically analyzed for shifts and trends, and follow-up investigations were performed as necessary. The Division continues to review local health departments/microbiology labs and infection control practitioners Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System data entries.

CEHA was active in 2008 as well. Under the guidance of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the CEHA program collected about \$80,000 in penalties assessed for air, water and solid waste programs. The money collected helped support the function of the CEHA office.

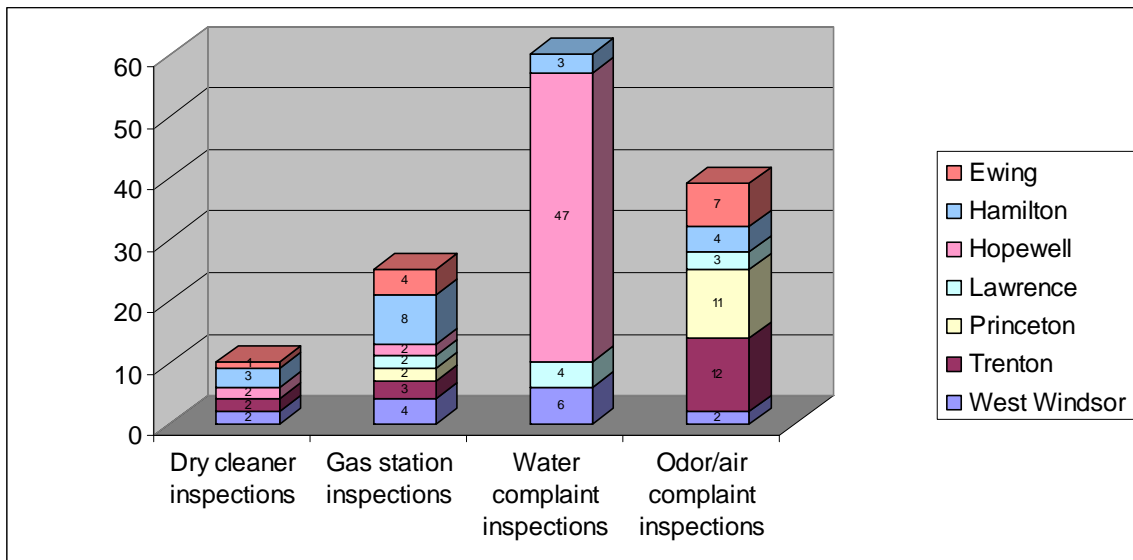
During the 2008 grant year, CEHA purchased two photo ionization detector units utilized to test dry cleaning machines for leaking perchloroethylene (PERC) and two global positioning system units to increase timeliness and efficiency of CEHA field inspections. PERC is the most commonly used solvent in dry cleaning shops. Breathing PERC for short periods of time can affect the nervous system adversely. For longer periods of time, breathing PERC can cause liver and kidney damage. Once in the body, PERC can remain, stored in fat tissue.

CEHA worked collaboratively with the Mercer County Office of Planning and Engineering to geocode all dry cleaning establishments within Mercer County. The goal of this project was to generate maps indicating all dry cleaners in Mercer County, including those who use PERC, and their proximity to daycare/preschool settings.

In addition, CEHA has been part of the pilot School Chemical Compliance Assistance Program since 2006 that was developed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that public and private schools, from kindergarten through grade 12, are in compliance with federal environmental requirements by identifying and addressing potential environmental, health and safety problems. In 2008, 10 middle and high schools were inspected. There were three in West Windsor, three in Hamilton, two in Ewing, and one each in Trenton and Princeton.

Once schools completed the program, they were invited to participate in Household Chemical Waste Collection Day. This was conducted three times in 2008 in partnership with the Mercer County Improvement Authority's Household Chemical Waste Day. The schools could bring, at no cost to them, all their preapproved waste to the Mercer County Fire Training School for disposal. Some items disposed of include outdated school laboratory chemicals, unused pesticides and custodial chemicals, waste oil, liquid mercury, fluorescent light bulbs, ballasts, computers and various electronic equipment.

Chart 6: Selected other CEHA inspections in Mercer County in 2008



Division of Youth Services

Robert Taylor, Interim Chief

The Division of Youth Services plans and coordinates services for children and youth from birth to age 18, residing in Mercer County. The Division ensures a broad spectrum of services to the most at-risk youth of Mercer County by providing a continuum of services from prevention through re-entry; by addressing the factors involved in youth violence and providing counseling and treatment for those youth; by development of dispositional options for juvenile justice involved youth; and by providing programs to prepare juvenile offenders to successfully return to their communities after their release.

Advised by the Youth Services Commission (YSC), the Division is responsible for the overall planning for multi-system involved youth, including those in overseen by New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services or those with issues pertaining to mental health, developmental disabilities, family court and the juvenile justice system. To aid its planning efforts, the Division is the recipient of several grants from various State agencies that substantially augment County funding administered by the Division. Areas of funded services include:

- Primary prevention
- Secondary prevention
- Treatment
- Diversion
- Disposition
- Re-entry
- State Incentive Program (SIP) – This program was created to provide judges with additional dispositional options that will help them craft the most appropriate disposition for each juvenile that is consistent with serving public safety, ensuring offender accountability and providing to juveniles opportunities for personal growth and skill development through rehabilitative efforts.

The YSC, through the coordinated efforts of public, governmental and private agencies and the courts, plans for and monitors the implementation of services and programs to meet the needs of children and their families in the county who are under the jurisdiction of family court or at-risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Sub-committees/subgroups of the Commission are: Education and Outreach Committee, Gang Task Force, Minority Concerns Committee and the Site Review Committee.

For various services, the Division administered \$2.8 million in County and grant funds, including:

- \$700,000 toward providing shelter services and shelter beds
- \$450,000 for the SIP program
- \$399,916 for education and/or career/vocation initiatives
- \$305,000 toward victim support services

- \$281,537 for programs related to violence prevention and/or gang prevention and intervention
- \$248,575 for mentoring services
- \$153,000 for substance abuse services
- \$150,000 for recreation support
- \$117,297 toward family counseling and/or family crisis intervention

2008 Highlights

The Division implemented a component of the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative. (JDAI). This program educates youth and family about the required operation of the juvenile court system. Data shows that the increasing number of youth in the detention alternative is decreasing the number of youth in detention, as evidenced by the Mercer County Youth Detention Center. The program provides an increased awareness of alternatives to detention for law enforcement and families. JDAI focuses on the juvenile detention component of the juvenile justice system because youth are often unnecessarily or inappropriately detained at great expense, with long-lasting negative consequences for both public safety and youth development.

JDAI promotes changes to policies, practices, and programs to:

- Reduce reliance on secure confinement
- Improve public safety
- Reduce racial disparities and bias
- Save taxpayers' dollars
- Stimulate overall juvenile justice reforms

In addition, the Division streamlined its needs assessment process and created a more data-driven decision-making structure. It also formed sub-groups focusing on the continuum of services from prevention through re-entry. The Division sought input from "key players" who have a primary role of serving or working with youth at the various points along the continuum.

Needs and services gaps were identified and a master list of services and programs were compiled. Based on the assessment, the top needs to be addressed in 2009 were determined to be:

- Substance abuse services
- Violence/gang prevention/anger management services
- Mentoring services
- Career/vocational initiatives
- Educational advocacy
- Family counseling services
- Nonschool hours recreation/support
- Technology for supervision (JDAI)

Office on Childcare and Neighborhood Centers

Michael Mattaliano, Coordinator

The Office on Childcare and Neighborhood Centers funds child care agencies and neighborhood centers so that they can assist Mercer County residents who are income eligible as decided by federal poverty guidelines.

The Office funds child care agencies that serve families who are income eligible up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Funding for child care services and funding for child care for income-eligible families who exceed the limit for *New Jersey Cares for Kids* guidelines is provided each year.

In 2008, child care agencies were selected through the competitive request for proposal process and address the identified priority areas of:

- Infant/toddler care days for children from birth to age 2 ½ years
- Preschool days for children ages 2 ½ years to 5 years
- After-school care days
- Summer day camp days
- Child care program enhancements

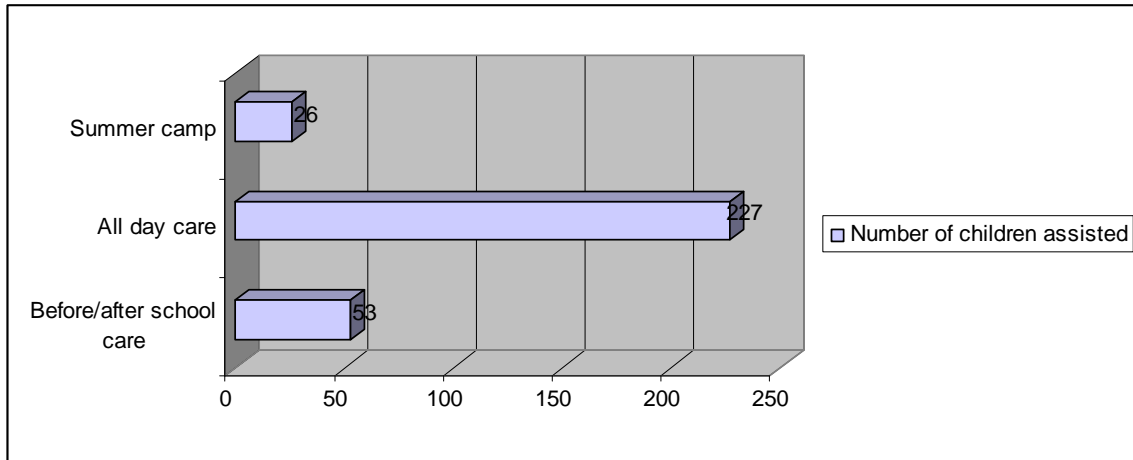
Mercer County funding of \$219,663 was leveraged to meet and support New Jersey Division of Family Development (DFD) match requirement for child care service days. About 175,000 child care days were delivered in 2008 to New Jersey-licensed child care centers in Mercer County. An additional \$5,000 was applied to program support and enhancements.

Through separate grants, the Office on Childcare and Neighborhood Centers also funds after-school and summer day camp programs that provide affordable child care facilitating families' ability to work outside the home. These programs provide children with the chance to enhance character development, learn valuable life skills, make new friends and discover new interests. The Office has identified after-school and summer day camp programming as a crucial prevention and intervention tool, and is a way to detract children from the risks of gangs, drugs and idle time.

Because of County funding, it is possible for the agencies to provide free or sliding-scale services to the income-eligible population. Last year, almost \$32,000 funded 29,160 after-school program days for children from eligible families. About \$58,000 provided 9,000 summer camp days.

The Office on Childcare and Neighborhood Centers also assists Mercer County families through the Mercer County Child Care Voucher Program. This program provides child care subsidy for income-eligible families. In 2008, the program offered subsidy to a total of 229 children through funding of \$100,785.

Chart 7: Number of children assisted through the Voucher Program



Please note that the total number of children depicted in the above chart does not equal 229 because assistance can be administered for multiple services at different times throughout the year, such as for before or after school care and summer camp.

The Office on Childcare and Neighborhood Centers' funding reaches a larger population through its contracts with Mercer County community centers. Community centers' funding emphasizes information and referral along with strong local networking for client support services. Funding provides for:

- Social programs
- Recreational programs
- Youth and senior programs
- Emergency services
- Transportation
- Information and referral and financial crisis assistance
- Summer day camp
- After-school child care

The Office works hand-in-hand with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to provide Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funds that support case management for comprehensive social service programs for low-income eligible residents of Mercer County who are up to 125% of the Federal Poverty Level. The Office and DCA also work together to monitor and provide technical support to the CSBG recipients. In recent years, the program has transitioned into case management, which has ensured more accurate accountability in obtaining results and outcomes in leading clients toward self-sufficiency.

In 2008, \$414,419 was distributed to four neighborhood centers to provide multiple services including:

- Employment support services for 270 participants
- Emergency food assistance to 1,247 people

- Emergency assistance for 97 households
- Economic enhancement and utilization services to 73 participants
- Community empowerment services to 24 clients

The funding to the community centers also allowed:

- the start of a community improvement and revitalization project
- 35 community aide partnerships
- 3,200 hours of civic investment or volunteer opportunities.

For families with young children, funding assisted 363 infants and children and 425 youth to attend after-school and summer programs. This also assisted 60 parents.

2008 Highlights

The Office on Child Care and Neighborhood Centers played an integral role in the planning transition of Mercer County Head Start Preschool to the Catholic Youth Organization. As a result, New Jersey Division of Family Development and County matching funds were secured, 75 children remained in preschool, partnerships were formed and a new program was implemented in an identifiable needed area.

Also in 2008, the Office on Childcare and Neighborhood Centers mandated CSBG grantees to case manage a percentage of their clients. Clients receiving comprehensive center-based services, such as information and referral, emergency food, employment services, youth programs, income maintenance and other general services have been case managed and monitored through the County on a quarterly basis. The end result is ensuring a higher standard of accountability to income-eligible clients and families served up to 125% of the Federal Poverty Level. Client benchmarks and outcomes are being captured for the first time, which will determine the efficacy of programmatic services. This process will expand and continue in 2009.

Also in 2008, the Office and CSBG sub-grantees received extensive training for the transition of case managing CSBG clients through Client Social Services Tracker (CSST) in 2009. As mandated by DCA, CSST will serve as the method tool in agency tracking and reporting CSBG case clients going forward in 2009. Once this system has been implemented, the Mercer County agencies will be linked via web hosting; and CSBG case clients will be centralized, tracked and reported, and linked to Federal goals performance indicators, ensuring a higher standard of accountability, which will result in better client outcomes.

Office of Homeless Services

Beth Risoldi, Coordinator

The Office of Homeless Services awards funding to community-based organizations to develop and maximize services and resources for low-income clients. In addition, the Office provides information and referrals for general human services and prevention-related services. Two grants from the State of New Jersey are maintained that allow for programs to prevent homelessness and advocate/communicate on human services issues.

Programs funded by County resources provide the following:

- Security deposits
- Utility, rent and mortgage assistance
- Domestic violence services
- The Housing First program (an approach to ending long-term homelessness)
- Community education information, referral and civil legal services
- Transitional housing services
- Neighborhood stabilization

The New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development (DFD), provides Social Services to the Homeless (SSH) grant funds to provide assistance with:

- Emergency food services
- Emergency family shelter
- 24-hour response emergency homeless hotline and homelessness prevention services

Under the Office is the Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC), which advises the County about the coordination of comprehensive social service planning. Council subcommittees, comprising educational speakers who inform the human services community of area-related programs, are:

- Government and Policy Subcommittee
- Homeless Emergency Assistance and Affordable Housing Subcommittee (HEAAH)
- Children, Families and Child Care Planning Subcommittee

The HSAC's Government and Policy Subcommittee advocates/informs on important social service issues confronting the Mercer County Human Services Community. Advocacy is performed through written communication, legislative breakfasts, municipal forums, and municipal and legislative office visits. Advocacy through the 2008 legislative breakfast were for health issues, housing, food and hunger, and child care issues.

The HEAAH assists with the annual monitoring of County, Office on Homeless Services and SSH contracts. This subcommittee also serves as a vehicle for the monthly reporting of programs related to SSH and emergency services related agencies.

The Children, Families and Child Care Planning Committee consists of local and state child care professionals ranging from representatives of the State of New Jersey's DFD, Division of Youth and Family Services and Division of Children and Families; Mercer County Department of Human Services; and child care agency staff members. The purpose of the committee is to identify, discuss and advocate local and state child care issues in the areas of child care planning and funding.

County funds of almost \$290,000, awarded through competitive contracts and shared services, assisted more than 1,400 Mercer County residents and families. Those assisted were:

- 94 residents with security, rent, mortgage and/or utility assistance
- 360 residents with community education, information and referral, and/or civil legal services
- 11 adults and 15 children with transitional housing
- 406 households with a neighborhood stabilization program
- 510 clients with emergency domestic violence services
- 13 individuals and four families, who received housing through the Housing First program

SSH grant funds of about \$421, 000 were used to assist more than 4,300 Mercer County families as follows:

- Emergency food services were provided to 3,654 families, with 63,280 servings provided.
- Shelter with case management services was provided to 42 families.
- Twenty-four hour homeless hotline with case management services assisted 177 families.
- Homeless prevention services, which included assistance with security, rent, mortgage and/or utility assistance, helped 469 families.

2008 Highlights:

The Office of Homeless Services supported the Housing First program by providing funding for case management services, which are a necessary requirement to the program. Housing First is an approach to ending long-term homelessness by offering the rapid access to permanent housing and voluntary access to comprehensive services. The focus is on individuals and families who have continued to cycle through the shelter systems and have been unsuccessful in programs requiring that they be drug and alcohol free or compliant with medication to access or maintain housing. Housing First's philosophy is that individuals and families are better able to benefit from and utilize supportive services when their housing has been stabilized.

The Office also assisted with Project Homeless Connect (PHC), an event designed to provide housing, referrals, support services and hospitality in a one-stop format for people experiencing homelessness. The Trenton/Mercer Continuum of Care conducts this one-day event each January and July. At PHC, participants are provided lunch, access to services and helpful items. In July 2008, more than 600 people were served.

The Office of Homeless Services added to its success by participating in the event's planning committee. As in years past, the Office coordinated with the Mercer County Park Commission and the Mercer County Improvement Authority; together they provided tents, recycle cans, a generator and fencing.

PHC has been successful because the community joins together with local businesses, private corporations, hospitals, volunteers and a variety of providers to positively affect the lives of the homeless in Trenton and Mercer County. On any given day, there are more than 921 individuals and 284 children homeless in Mercer County. This event helps the homeless to move off the street and be connected with the services that can help move them out of homelessness.

The Office participated in other events as well, including the New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance's Foreclosure Forum and the County of Mercer's two foreclosure workshops. These workshops, held in June and July, were provided to assist Mercer County residents in assessing whether they were at-risk of foreclosure and to guide them toward possible solutions/resources. At these workshops were:

- Services and advice from professionals from certified housing counseling organizations with proven track records of helping homeowners secure loan modifications and other foreclosure alternatives
- Lenders who discussed alternatives to foreclosure
- Program and support handouts

Social service agencies and the faith-based community were encouraged to attend these workshops to obtain information for their congregants/clients who are in need of this assistance. The Office of Homeless Services presented and provided community resources at these workshops.

Office on Aging

Eileen E. Doremus, Executive Director

The Mercer County Office on Aging is the designated county Area Agency on Aging and serves as the primary advocate, planning and coordinating agency for Mercer County older adults and their caregivers. All residents of Mercer County 60 years of age or older and their caregivers are eligible for services, however, emphasis is placed on the Older American's Act provision to serve those seniors of greatest social and economic need.

The Office on Aging has three distinct components: Administration; Information and Assistance, and Outreach and Care Management; and the Mercer County Nutrition Project for the Elderly. The Administration division is responsible for the development and management of a comprehensive coordinated social service delivery system. Through the development of an Area Plan Contract with the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, unmet needs, service priorities and implementing strategies are outlined, and funding sources are identified.

The Office provides services to seniors, their families, caregivers and the community-at-large through its Information and Assistance, and Outreach and Care Management Program. Care management services include an extended assessment, the development of a care plan, benefits screening and coordination of services for qualified individuals. The program acts as a clearinghouse for gathering, coordinating and disseminating information regarding programs, entitlements and financial assistance. Staff provides information regarding services and entitlement programs, and provides assistance in completing applications to access these programs. Also through this unit, *The LINK*, a quarterly newsletter, is published and distributed to more than 5,000 older Mercer County residents and to about 300 aging network providers.

Senior nutrition services also are provided by the Office through the Nutrition Project for the Elderly. This project provides a comprehensive, multi-purpose program to senior citizens, and centers around nutrition sites serving nutritionally balanced meals Monday through Friday at the noon hour. These meals satisfy one-third of the federal recommended adult daily nutritional needs. The Nutrition Project also offers a social service component that includes the scheduling of informational and education programs on topics relevant to older adults.

Comprising representatives from several townships, the Mercer County Council on Aging provides valuable insight regarding the needs of Mercer County older adults, and assists in the planning and development of senior programming. A similar advisory council, Nutrition Project for the Elderly Advisory Council, serves to advise the nutrition program on all matters relating to the delivery of nutrition and supporting social services.

In total, the Office on Aging distributed almost \$4 million for its many programs that assisted more than 25,500 Mercer County residents. The following statistics indicate how seniors and their loved ones were aided:

- Almost 3,200 residents received meals at the nutrition sites or through a home-delivery service. More than 238,000 meals were served and more than 3,100 seniors received nutritional education or counseling.
- More than 750 seniors took part in socialization and recreation programs offered through the Office. More than 16,650 activities were scheduled at five City of Trenton senior centers.
- Transportation services were used by 828 residents through almost 22,000 rides.
- Certified home health aides assisted 150 seniors through a total of 15,758 service hours.
- More than 3,650 in-home nursing service units assisted 94 seniors.
- Physical health services were provided to 5,765 residents, and medication management services were provided to 60 seniors through a total of 5,825 contacts.
- Adult protective services assisted 228 seniors through 21,662 contacts, including phone calls, letters, judicial case conferencing and in-person visits.
- The Office's funded programs provided 2,862 seniors and caregivers mental health counseling or education through 1,013 hours of counseling.
- Respite and respite care services assisted 203 clients through almost 13,000 in-home visits or short-term placements.
- Eighteen caregivers received education services specifically designed to improve and to prolong their abilities to provide care through 39 hours of service.
- Legal assistance and education services were provided to 1,229 clients through 1,917 hours of service.
- The Information and Assistance, and Outreach and Care Management office provided:
 - 3,211 clients with information and assistance services through 3,322 contacts with seniors
 - 199 clients with benefits screening services through 291 30-minute sessions
 - 237 clients with extended assessment services through 327 30-minute sessions
 - 155 clients with outreach services through 310 contacts with seniors
 - 246 clients with care management services, although care management was provided to 413 seniors in total through other programs of the Office, through 9,185 30-minute sessions in total.
- Telephone reassurance services were provided to 129 clients through 33,382 calls.
- The emergency response system assisted 39 clients through 309 contacts, including set up training and support of the system.
- A safe housing program provided 30 seniors with residential maintenance through 437 hours of service.
- A friendly visiting program called in on 329 seniors through 1,573 visits.
- One hundred seniors received housekeeping services through 675 visits.
- One hundred sixty-eight seniors received air conditioners as part of the Summer Cooling Program.

Highlights for 2008

The Mercer County Office on Aging used a new tool in 2008 that assisted in helping to forecast changing needs and services of Mercer County's older population. After a review of the former process for gathering this information, the Office decided to use "20 Questions" as the needs assessment tool for its Area Plan purposes and also for ongoing

assessment. What occurred was quite extraordinary in that new needs were identified using this tool. (Following new priority needs are italicized.)

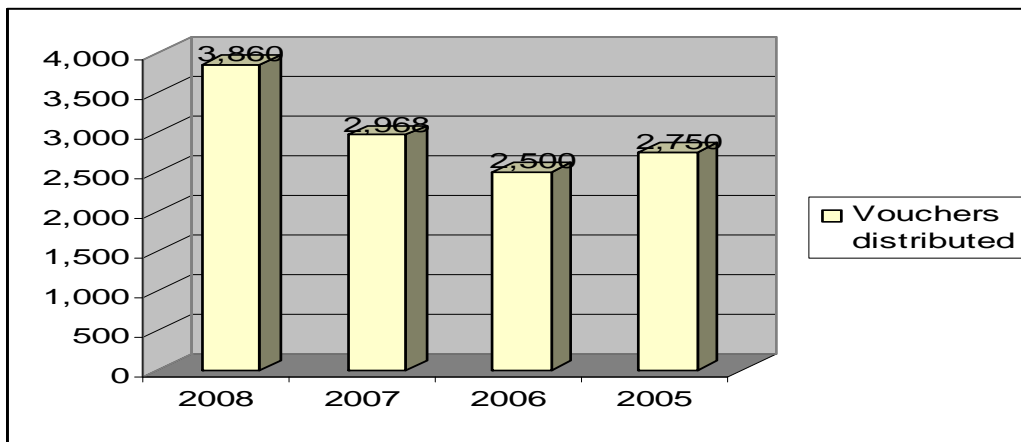
- *Benefits Screening*
- Transportation
- *Outreach*
- *Newsletter*
- *Information and Assistance*

Mercer County, poised to become the center of information, assistance and referral via the emerging Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), must continue to enrich its outreach and ability to educate and inform older adults and their families of supportive services. ADRC will be an “enhanced gateway” to information and assistance for senior citizens and adults with physical disabilities and their caregivers. The Office on Aging, the Mercer County Office for the Disabled and Progressive Center for Independent Living will continue to work on this program in 2009.

Responding to the aforementioned needs, an increased effort was made to increase the Office on Aging’s visibility in the community by offering educational programs and informational sessions on topics relevant to aging and caregiving. Working closely with the Mercer County Connection in Hamilton, the Office offered programs and increased its presentation schedule to include professionals in the community by attending networking meetings and other informational programs. The number of clients served through this office in 2008 was 837, with 264 of those being directly care-managed clients by the Office on Aging’s care management staff.

The Office also directly impacted Mercer County’s seniors through its nutrition program. At the 13 congregate meal sites, 162,096 meals were served to almost 2,400 seniors. In addition, the Nutrition Program distributed 3,860 Farmer’s Market vouchers to income-eligible seniors to be used for acquiring Jersey Fresh vegetables from local farmer’s markets and grocers throughout the county. In 2008, there was a 30% increase in the number of vouchers served to area seniors.

Chart 8: Farmer’s Market vouchers distributed from 2005 to 2008



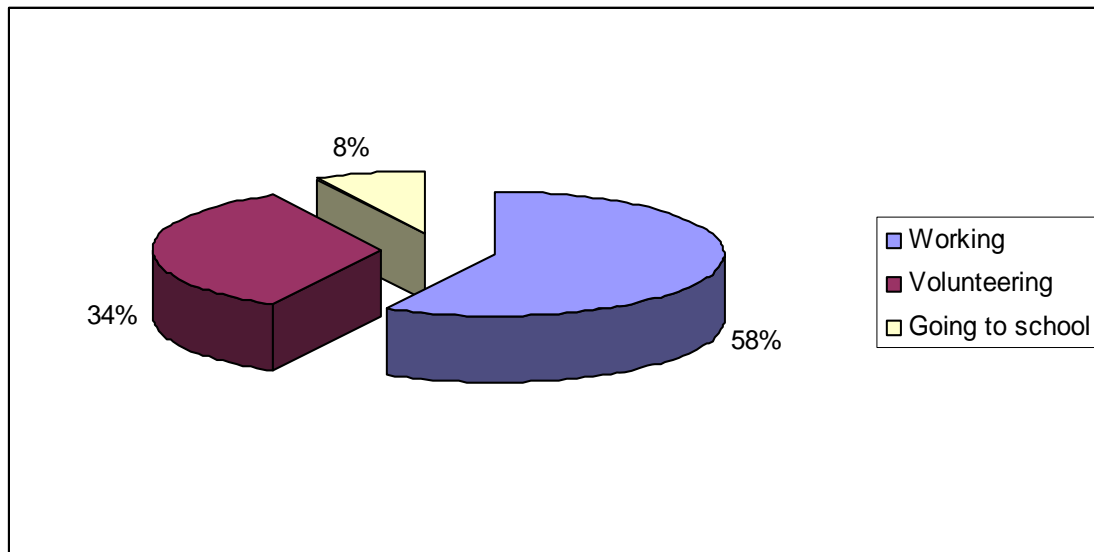
Office for the Disabled

Thomas E. Shaw, Director

Since its inception 25 years ago, the Mercer County Office for the Disabled has helped enable residents with disabilities to achieve and maintain competitive or equal status in the workplace and social settings with nondisabled citizens. To this end, the Office for the Disabled provides appropriate centralized information and referral; camp scholarships; access and information to health services; planning for emergency preparedness for people with disabilities; and personal assistant services, while providing funding for transitional and employment services and socialization and recreational programming. The Office also provides Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 education and ensures compliance of the Act throughout County facilities.

The New Jersey Personal Assistance Services Program (PASP) also is administered through the Office for the Disabled. This program gives adults with physical disabilities opportunities to work or attend school or vocational training and live independently in the community. Personal assistants help individuals with tasks such as light housekeeping, bathing, dressing, meal preparation, shopping, correspondence, mobility, driving and/or use of public transportation, for up to 40 hours per week. Thirty-one consumers were enrolled in PASP in 2008.

Chart 9: Activities of PASP consumers



Another component to the Office for the Disabled is the Special Needs Advisory Panel (SNAP), which continues to work toward the improvement of overall preparedness and response to special needs populations during emergencies and disasters at the County, State and local levels. Training, planning and response are the key areas of the focus of SNAP.

The Office's physical disabilities program area facilitates provision of community-based recreation and transitional services in an integrated setting for Mercer County residents

with disabilities whose needs are not met by other programs. The spectrum of services for this program area includes:

- Information and referral
- Recreation opportunities
- Specialized employment training
- Job readiness

The Office's developmental disabilities area provides funding for the provision of developmental daycare and education for employment and business development by people with disabilities. These services provide necessary vocational, personal and social skills to achieve a certain degree of independence, while improving the quality of life for each individual.

The Disabilities Advisory Council (DAC) functions in an advisory capacity and oversees the organization and delivery of services to Mercer County residents with physical/developmental disabilities. A standing subcommittee of the DAC is the Workforce Investment Board's Disabilities Subcommittee, which provides information and advice on the development of business connections and employment services through the Mercer County One-Stop Center.

In 2008, more than 2,100 residents received services from agencies through which the Office had contracts that totaled more than \$1 million in County and grant funds. Almost 900 were children. The breakdown of services for children was:

- 28 preschool children received assistance through developmental day care centers.
- 611 received case management services.
- 148 preschool children took part in clinical speech and language programs.
- 97 children received summer camp/day scholarships.

The breakdown for other consumers was as follows:

- 112 received family support or respite services.
- 900 took part in education and employment services.
- 110 received fine arts, music, acting, drama and theater mentoring.
- 31 consumers were enrolled in PASP.
- 99 graduates received post-secondary and employment services.

Also provided were:

- 18 recreation and socialization sessions
- 52 recreational sports for exercise sessions
- 45 day programming sessions
- 500 hours for wills and legal services

2008 Highlights

The Office for the Disabled, along with the Mercer County Office on Aging and the Progressive Center for Independent Living, began to develop the Aging and Disability Resource Connection. Through a grant from the Administration on Aging and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services has empowered each of its 21 counties to establish “one-door” access to services that will help people age in place. Mercer County will strengthen its role as a primary resource to the aging and disability communities by offering a comprehensive assessment, creating individualized care plans and providing ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programs and services that will ensure dignity and independence of choice in living arrangements as one grows older.

In addition to working with the Office on Aging, the Office for the Disabled collaborated with other agencies in 2008 to improve the quality of life for residents with disabilities. The Office helped the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management and the New Jersey State Police promote their Special Needs Registry Registration Project, which has been changed to the New Jersey Register Ready project. Register Ready is a voluntary and personal registry database that was designed to help first responders in the event of an emergency by identifying and locating individuals with and/or facilities that house people with special needs so that first responders are able to better assist them.

As part of the transformation into the Register Ready program, the data-entry system had changed. The Office for the Disabled committed to contacting those consumers registered in the Office to inform them of the change and to offer to help them reregister with the program.

In addition, the Office for the Disabled updated the Special Needs Annex Plan into a full-blown Special Needs Strategic Plan for the Mercer County Office of Emergency Management. The Special Needs Annex outlines services and mechanisms that are used to help prepare, educate and assist an individual for an emergency. Some of these tools include:

- The File of Life (a card containing personal medical information that is inserted into a magnetic pouch that is usually placed on a refrigerator or somewhere else where it is visible), which allows individuals to centralize their medical information
- Reverse 911 phone system with TTY capability, which enables people who are deaf or hard of hearing to receive telephone messages notifying them of an emergency

Appendix A

Funding sources for contracted services provided by the Department

Division	County	State/ Federal	Peer Grouping	Total
Addictions	\$662,106	\$660,659	0	\$1,322,765
Municipal Alliance	0	\$425,085	0	\$425,085
Aging	\$1,023,367	\$2,713,475	\$220,443	\$3,957,285
CSBG & Childcare	\$598,920	\$231,123	0	\$830,043
Homeless	\$289,572	\$420,969	0	\$710,544
Mental Health	\$871,286	0	\$188,747	\$1,060,033
CIACC	\$37,243	0	\$37,243	
TLC	\$73,400	0	\$73,400	
Office for Disabled	\$363,579	\$536,188	\$135,000	\$1,034,767
Public Health	\$97,468	\$746,834	0	\$844,302
Youth Services	\$1,840,136	\$965,189	0	\$2,805,325
TOTALS	\$5,746,437	\$6,810,165	\$544,190	\$13,100,792

Appendix B

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

The boards and commissions listed below are those that were created by State or County ordinance. Many have subcommittees, councils or task forces, which are detailed in the previous Office or Division profiles.

The Mercer County Department of Human Services, Office of the Director, receives input from two commissions: the Mercer County Commission on the Status of Women and the Mercer County Commission on Abused, Neglected and Missing Children. The Commission on the Status of Women acts as a liaison among existing community organizations, associations and groups working to improve the status of women in Mercer County. The Mercer County Commission on Abused, Neglected and Missing Children initiates the development of programs and services that enhance the physical, emotional and social well-being of children in Mercer County.

The Mercer County Office on Addiction Services receives input from the Mercer County Advisory Committee on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (also known as the Local Advisory Committee on Alcohol and Drug Abuse), which serves in an advisory and policy development capacity to the delivery of alcoholism and drug abuse services in Mercer County.

The Division of Mental Health receives input from the Mental Health Board. The Board members review progress in the development of comprehensive community mental health services in the county. They also make recommendations to local agencies and the New Jersey Department of Human Services.

The Mercer County Office on Aging receives input from The Mercer County Council on Aging. Members assist with developing and administering the area plan on aging; conduct public hearings; represent interests of older individuals; and review and comment on all community policies, programs and actions that affect older people. Another advisory council is the Nutrition Project for the Elderly Advisory Council, which addresses nutritional needs for senior citizens.

The Office for the Disabled is assisted by the Mercer County Disabilities Advisory Council. The members work in an advisory capacity to oversee the organization and delivery of services to Mercer County residents with disabilities.

Social service needs are addressed through the Human Services Advisory Council. The members provide advice with respect to the coordination of comprehensive social service planning.

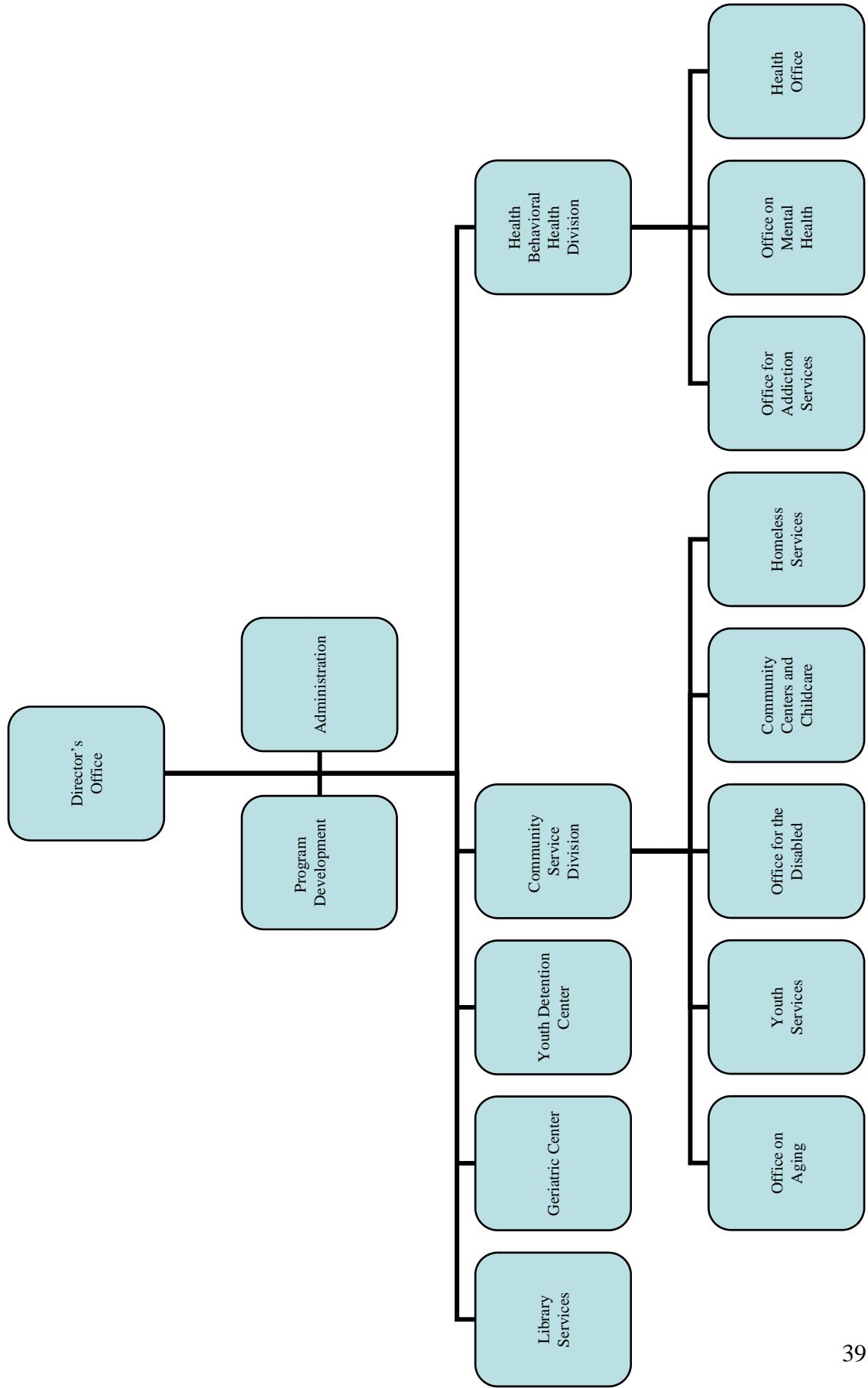
The Division of Youth Services' programs are addressed by the Youth Services Commission. Its purpose, through the coordinated efforts of public, governmental and private agencies and the courts, is to plan for and monitor the implementation of services and programs to meet the needs of children and their families in the

County who are under the jurisdiction of family court or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system.

The Mercer County Library System is assisted by the Library Commission. The Commission's purpose is to represent municipalities of the Mercer County Library System in the overall policy-making and programming of patron services in the County's nine library branches. The Commission works with library staff and the "Friends of the Library" organization to bring special programming to Mercer County residents.

Department of Human Services

Appendix C



Appendix D

Human Services Acronyms

ADRC – Aging and Disability Resource Connection
CEHA – County Environmental Health Act
CIACC – Children’s Interagency Coordinating Council
COAD – Community Organizations Active in Disaster
CSBG – Community Service Block Grant
CSST – Client Social Services Tracker
DAC – Disabilities Advisory Council
DCA – Department of Community Affairs
DFD – Division of Family Development
DYFS – Division of Youth and Family Services
ETIER – Examine Test Improve Emergency Response
HEEAAH – Homeless Emergency Assistance and Affordable Housing Subcommittee
HSAC – Human Services Advisory Committee
ILI – Influenza-like Illness
JDAI – Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative
JJC – Juvenile Justice Commission
LINCS – Local Information and Communication Network System
MCLS – Mercer County Library System
MCYDC – Mercer County Youth Detention Center
MRC – Medical Reserve Corps
NJDEP – New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
NJDHSS – New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
PASP – Personal Assistant Services Program
PERC – Perchloroethylene
PHC – Project Homeless Connect
RTK – Right to Know
SIP – State Incentive Program
SNAP – Special Needs Advisory Panel
SSH – Social Services to the Homeless
TLC – Traumatic Loss Coalition
YSC – Youth Services Commission