

2018 DSS

Annual Report Supplement



Photo Credit: Elizabeth Cassella

Department of Social Services

Tammy L. DeLorme

Commissioner

Washington County

Department of Social Services

Mission Statement:

The mission of the **Washington County Department of Social Services** is to empower those in need and to collaborate with individuals and families to achieve and maintain independence and self-sufficiency. Our responsibility is to maximize resources and to achieve optimal outcomes for the residents of Washington County.

Overall Agency Goal:

To create and maintain a single Agency focus across all Divisions, seeking to provide the most effective services and supports for clients resulting in safety, empowerment, self-sufficiency, personal responsibility and independence.

**Washington County
Department of
Social Services is
located on the first
floor of Building B
within the County
Municipal Center,
in Fort Edward, NY.**



Introduction from Commissioner DeLorme:

It is my pleasure to present the 2018 DSS Annual Report. The data conveyed through the following pages is meant to be provided in a snapshot manner. If you are interested in comparisons to prior years, or for an expanded explanation on DSS programs refer to:

<http://www.washingtoncountyny.gov/827/Annual-Reports>

The Department of Social Services provides diverse social programs to the residents of Washington County. Old or young, prosperous or poor, healthy or frail there will always be a time in one's life when the help of someone or some program that we did not foresee is needed. Acceptance, tolerance and compassion are in short supply in many segments of the population. However, it is the very ideal of our Mission and Overall Agency Goal, combined with the conscientious delivery of our programs, that our staff aspire to fill that void here at DSS.

I could not be more proud to represent the employees of this Department. The data and details contained within this report tell part of our story. This report is dedicated to all of our employees, past and present. Thank you for your commitment to public service and assisting the people of our County. Only you, by continuing your calling, can fill in the rest of the narrative.

My compliments to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammy J. DeLorme". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a white rectangular box.

Legal Services



Agency staff work in collaboration with the Washington County Attorney's Office on matters involving all areas of legal representation.

A summary of the 2018 legal activities is as follows:

Type of Petition	Total No. of Petitions
Child Abuse	4
Child Neglect	40
Applications to Restore	2
Applications for Access to the Home/Child	0
Applications to Extend Suspended Judgment	2
Application for Removal	0
Extension/Review of Foster Care	4
Permanency Hearing Reports	73
Violation of Court Order	4
Termination of Parental Rights	8
Total Number of Petitions	137
Total Child Removal Cases	4
Total New Adult Guardianship Cases	5
Recoveries	
Estates	\$147,232.83
Public Assistance	\$2,143.00
Total	\$147,375.83
Child Support Statistics	
Total Court Appearances	820

Accounting



DSS/OFA Comparison of Expenditures to Revenue 2017 & 2018

	2017 Actual	2018 Actual
Administration	\$ 7,466,747	\$7,646,078
Includes salaries & on-call for DSS, Equipment & Contractual Costs for DSS		
OFA Salaries & Equipment	\$ 324,614	\$ 344,186
Fringe Benefits DSS & OFA	\$ 2,823,959	\$ 2,919,785
Programs DSS & OFA	\$ 9,031,464	\$ 8,526,642
Total Cost to Administer Programs	\$19,646,784	\$19,429,531
Total Revenues (State & Federal)	\$15,257,858	\$14,571,227
Net Cost for DSS/OFA Programs	\$ 4,388,926	\$ 4,858,304
Medicaid Cost to County	\$10,989,160	\$10,853,751

Medicaid Cost Comparison

County Cost for 2018 Medicaid Benefits	\$ 10,853,751
Gross Value Medicaid Expenditures for Washington County Recipients (for all medical services provided in 2018)	\$118,889,522

Staff Development



Employment, Advancement, Retention and Retirements

DSS has a total of 133 F/T Employees and varied opportunities for serving those in need. Here is a little detail about 2018:

New Hires

The Agency Welcomed 14 New Employees in 2018

- 6 to the Assistance Programs Division
- 6 to the Children's Services Division
- 2 to the Administrative Division

Career Advancement

2 Employees Advanced to Higher Grade Level Positions in 2018

- 1 Social Services Examiner was Appointed to a Senior Social Services Examiner position
- 1 Typist was Appointed to Social Services Examiner position

Service Recognition

In 2018, the Agency recognized 3 individuals that achieved 30 years of service with the County. 12 staff have over 20 years of service, and 55 have over 10 years of service. This represents 52% of the total staff within DSS.

Retirements

Meredith Schultz, a Caseworker in the Assistance Programs Division, retired after 30 years of service with Washington County, all within DSS.

Staff Development



Staff Development & Opportunities

Professional Development

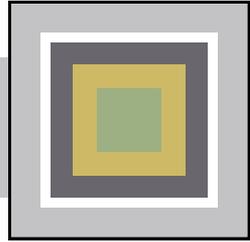
- The Agency hosted a Safe Harbour Conference in April 2018, in which 110 professionals from the local community and over 30 different agencies including law enforcement, court systems, schools, health care facilities and social services agencies participated. The Conference provided workshops addressing the issues involving Sex Crimes Against Children and provided education on how to better understand the behaviors of Sex Offenders in order to improve investigations, prosecutions, child welfare and youth services efforts.
- Agency staff participated in 148 Trainings in 2018 to advance program knowledge and interpersonal skills.
- Two Agency staff members obtained their Bachelor's Degrees in 2018.
- The Agency continues to have additional staff in pursuit of college degree programs who are participating in the Educational Reimbursement program.
- 10 Agency staff members are licensed as a Notary Public and can provide services to clients and co-workers.

Agency Transfers

5 Agency employees remained in-title and transferred to different units in 2018. Transferring within the Agency provides staff with experience in multiple program areas.

- 1 Typist transferred from the Children's Services Division to the Administrative Division
- 1 Examiner transferred from the Temporary Assistance Unit to the Child Support Unit
- 1 Examiner transferred from the SNAP Unit to the Daycare Unit
- 1 Examiner transferred from the SNAP Unit to the Temporary Assistance Unit
- 1 Caseworker transferred from the Child Protective Services Unit to the Homeless Unit

Preventive Services



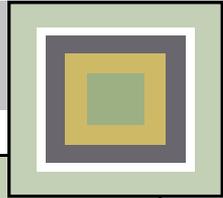
In 2018, the Preventive and CPS Units developed a case transfer protocol to ensure a more collaborative transfer of cases from CPS to Preventive Services. The new protocol requires the Preventive Caseworker to schedule a transfer meeting within five business days. The transfer meeting includes the CPS Sr. Caseworker/Supervisor, the assigned Preventive Caseworker, and the Preventive Sr. Caseworker/Supervisor.

The purpose of the transfer meeting is to review the case, discuss case needs, and to plan a joint home visit to occur within seven business days.

<p align="center">Preventive Services Referrals</p>
<p align="center">Preventive Referrals 40 CPS 24 Other Sources</p>
<p align="center">PINS Referrals 24 Parental 66 School 3 Law Enforcement</p>
<p align="center">11 Juvenile Delinquent Referrals</p>

<p align="center">Youth Referred to Alternative Sentencing / Youth Bureau</p>
<p align="center">(JCR) Juvenile Community Restoration 34 Youth Referred</p>
<p align="center">(JEM) Juvenile Electronic Monitoring 11 Youth Referred For a total of 285 days</p>

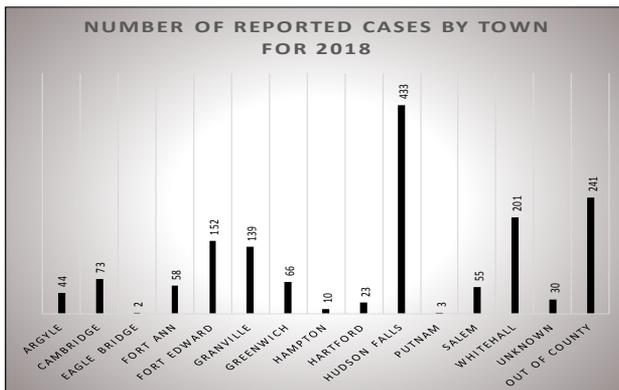
Child Protective Services



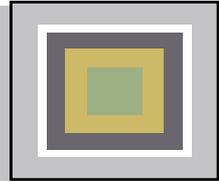
Reports of Suspected Child Abuse and Maltreatment in 2018

Total number of Primary Reports	1,301	Total number of children named in reports	2,403
Total number of Secondary Reports	229		
Total number of Reports that went Investigation	935	Total number of reports that went FAR	366
Percentage	72%	Percentage	28%

In **2018**, the total number of allegations listed in the **1,301** primary reports of suspected child abuse and maltreatment totaled **3,996**. **457**, or **35.1%**, of the **1,301** primary reports of suspected child abuse and maltreatment had allegations of **Drug/Alcohol misuse**.



Placement Services



**In 2018:
21 Youth entered
Foster Care**

Case Types Resulting in
the Placement of a Child
in Foster Care

- 9 Youth were placed through Child Neglect Petitions
- 1 Youth were placed as a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS)
- 2 Returned to care from a relative placement
- 3 Voluntary
- 4 Juvenile Delinquents

**In 2018:
25 Children were
discharged from
Foster Care**

- 10 - Returned to the custodial parent
- 5 - Returned to non-custodial parent
- 2 - Relative Resource
- 8 - Were adopted

In Addition, during 2018, we made a slight practice shift and exercised the option to “Trial Discharge” 7 youth in advance of their official discharge from the custody of the Commissioner

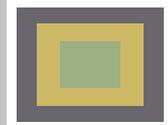
Foster Care Stats	2017	2018
Youth Entered	17	21
Youth Discharged	24	25

**In 2018:
8 Adoptions were
finalized**

**Number of Youth in Foster Care 2018
(on last day of each month)**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
46	43	45	45	46	47	48	50	50	50	41	42

Child Support & Enforcement



Child Support Stats	2016	2017	2018
Child Support cases	4,640	4,468	4,702
Children in open support cases	4,455	4,222	4,080
Number of petitions filed	1,142	1,150	1,129

Paternity Testing
85 individuals were scheduled
 for DNA/Paternity testing in 2018

Washington County's collection efforts for 2018 totaled:

\$7,900,753.00

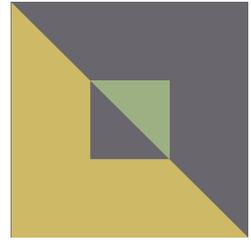
\$538,870.17 of that nearly \$8 million was collected as reimbursement to offset DSS costs to include:

Foster Care, Temporary Assistance and Medical Support.

**Total dollars collected as arrears for failure to
 pay child support from Tax Refunds
 and Lottery Winnings**

Federal Refunds	\$254,606.45
State Refunds	\$88,263.95
Lottery Winnings	\$300.00

Temporary Assistance & SNAP



2018 Monthly Average

	Description	Case/ Household	Recipients/Persons
Temporary Assistance	Cash benefits to income eligible individuals to pay for basic necessities	350	569
Temporary Assistance is divided into two separate categories as follows:			
Family Assistance	Cash benefits to income eligible families	170	327 Total 51 Adults 277 Children
Safety Net	Cash benefits to single adults/ childless couples/ or families who have received more than 60 months of Family Assistance	180	242 Total 178 Adults 64 Children
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	3,436	6,254
SNAP recipients as divided into the two separate TA categories:			
Temporary Assistance	In receipt of both TA and SNAP	211	493
Non-Temporary Assistance	In receipt of SNAP only	3,225	5,761

EMPLOYMENT



In conjunction with an application for Temporary Assistance, 649 assessments were completed by the Employment Program in 2018. Of them 255 were TANF (“Family”) cases and 394 were Safety Net (“Singles”) Cases.

In collaboration with the New York State “Jobs” Representative, 156 individuals found employment.

190 of the cases were denied for TA due to non-compliance with employment requirements.

2018 Benefits Paid Out By Program:

TA/TANF	(100% Federal)	\$ 1,191,674.				
TA/Safety Net	<table border="0" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="font-size: 2em;">{</td> <td>29% State</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: 2em;">}</td> <td>71% Local</td> </tr> </table>	{	29% State	}	71% Local	\$ 1,603,433.
{	29% State					
}	71% Local					
SNAP	(100% Federal)	\$ 8,855,031.				
HEAP	(100% Federal)	\$ 3,365,534.				
Day Care	(100% Federal)	\$ 717,599.				

2018 MEDICAID STATISTICS

<u>Case Type</u>	<u>Cases</u>	<u>Individuals</u>
MA	2,379	2,573
MA –SSI	1,678	1,678
Total	4,057	4,251

DAY CARE PROGRAM

In 2018 there was a total of:
101 cases, serving 299 children

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

2018 HEAP Federal Fiscal Year

10/1/17–9/30/18

Number of Benefits/ Grants Authorized	Total Federal Dollar Amount paid out through program to heating suppliers of Washington County Residents	Administrative Allocation provided to DSS to operate the program during the HEAP Season
6,458	\$3,365,534	\$188,100

Furnace Replacements

Total Cases: 13
Total Cost: \$52,721

Cooling Component
10/1/17—9/30/18
Total Cases: 93
Total Cost: \$52,725

Furnace Repair, Estimates And Clean and Tune Component

Total Cases: 44
Total Cost: \$17,824

Temporary Housing

Temporary Housing is provided through meeting eligibility requirements for Emergency Temporary Assistance

Number of Homeless Served in 2018

Many people report to DSS as being “homeless”. The Department seeks all manner of alternatives prior to approving temporary housing.

In 2018, a total of 58 families and 196 single adults were placed in Temporary Housing. Those not housed were either not eligible or located alternate accommodations.

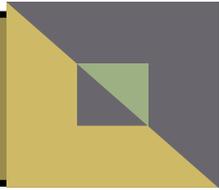
Month	Families	Singles		Month	Families	Singles
January	11	38		July	10	26
February	8	36		August	9	30
March	9	35		September	7	30
April	9	47		October	10	31
May	9	37		November	6	25
June	11	36		December	7	26

The implementation of the Homeless Unit has had a strong impact on the length of stay in Temporary Housing. The average length of stay has decreased for both families and single/childless individuals. The number of nights paid for also decreased by 33% to 8,827 from 13,172 nights in 2017.

In the last year, the Homeless Unit has been able to decrease the number of homeless households served by 10%.

Finding safe, suitable housing for individuals and families continues to be a struggle as housing costs have increased while the Temporary Assistance grants have remained stagnant.

Temporary Housing in detail



**In 2018, 87 of the 193 “singles”
appeared at DSS upon release from Prison**

23	Were registered sex offenders
64	Were convicted of other charges
51	Drug/Alcohol Treatment Required

**No previous conviction disqualifies someone
from these NYS Regulated programs**

Average Length of Stay in Temporary Housing

Families	36 Days
Singles (& childless couples)	43 Days



Cycle of Homelessness



**11 Families and 18 Adults were placed
in Temporary Housing more than once in 2018**

TEMPORARY HOUSING INITIATIVE

When looking at the homeless population in general, there is no better outcome than a successful transition into permanent and stable housing. One of the biggest barriers to finding and maintaining a permanent residence is the dearth of affordable housing. The New York State minimum wage in 2018 was \$10.40 per hour. Working a full 40 hours a week, an individual grossed \$416. At the same time the Fair Market Value of a studio apartment (household of one, no bedroom) was \$563; The Fair Market Value for a two bedroom apartment (household of two) was \$872.

If someone is eligible for assistance from DSS the allowance for one person is \$199 and for two it is \$231. These rates have not changed since 2003. It is possible to be homeless and qualify for emergency housing assistance while working full time at minimum wage. At the aforementioned rates, the Department would be required to expend far more toward the cost of temporary housing than we would be allowed to provide in one time assistance toward permanent housing.

In response to a rising homeless population in Washington County, the Homeless Unit began in early 2017, and has had many and varied accomplishments since inception. Success stories are most meaningful when the success comes from improved practice that appears to have finally stopped the churning cycle of homelessness.

One such story involves Joan and her disabled son who were first placed as homeless by the Department in November of 2016 for 6 days. The first attempt at maintaining permanent housing was unsuccessful for Joan and her son. They bounced from place to place for a few months, again returning to the agency homeless in September of 2017; at that time, they were temporarily housed for a total of 86 days.

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Joan and her son left, in a second attempt at maintaining permanent housing, only to return to the agency homeless once again in June of 2018; this time they were again placed for a total of 92 days in a motel.

In September of 2018, the agency was again able to secure an apartment for Joan and her son by assisting in first month's rent and security deposit. At each placement, the concern was that Joan would not be able to maintain a home successfully on the money available to her household.

While in temporary housing with the agency, Caseworkers assisted Joan with applying for SSI for herself. Her SSI income, combined with her son's SSI payment, would finally allow Joan enough income to afford and maintain an apartment.

Shortly after moving into a permanent residence, Joan was approved for SSI and is currently maintaining her apartment without the assistance of the County.

Joan and her son have maintained this residence for the past five months and appear to have finally found stability.

The assistance provided by Homeless caseworkers made it possible for the mother and her child to achieve long-term permanent housing, thus saving them from constant displacement, allowing the child structure and stability.

+++++It is interesting to note that the Department is directly re-paid the county paid portion of the costs that occur once a TA recipient applies for SSI. This payment comes in the form of a repayment and is included in the revenue portion of the annual budget.++++

In 2017, 782 payments totaling \$679,815 were made for motel/shelter placements. We saw a 26% decrease in 2018; we made 578 payments totaling \$504,230. The reduction in motel/shelter payments was a total of \$175,584.

INVESTIGATIONS ("FRAUD")

**Cost Avoidance for Program Integrity Initiatives
Calendar Year 1/1/2018– 12/31/2018**

Initiative	Description	Number of Application Denials, Case Closings, or Grant Reductions	Estimated Cost Avoidance
Front End Detection System (FEDS)	Detecting fraud at application	5 TANF	\$49,770
		11 Safety Net	\$184,464
		6 SNAP	\$9,576
Cases in Crimi- nal Court Prosecuted	Cases where arrests took place or charges were filed	26	\$33,201
Cases where over-payments determined not to be criminal*	Monies repaid or To be paid	15	\$4,675

**Members of the Investigations Unit performed
893 total field visits in 2018**

The Investigations Unit worked in collaboration with the Washington County Sheriff's Office to cross check the incarcerated individuals being held in the County Jail with open or pending assistance cases within DSS.

In 2018 the Department denied, closed or reduced the benefits of 166 individuals who were incarcerated in the County Jail.

Washington County Office for Aging and Disabilities Resource Center

Washington County Office for Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC) is a collaboration between the Department of Social Services and Office for Aging, providing unbiased information and access to home and community based services for aging and disabled populations under the NYConnects Program.

ADRC is the designated Area Agency on Aging, operating all state and federally funded programs under the Older American Act.

DSS Medicaid Personal Care Services

For Medicaid-eligible persons, local social services districts contract with home-care agencies that employ aides to provide Medicaid funded personal care services such as housekeeping, meal preparation, bathing, toileting, and grooming. The local social services office then notifies the individual of the services that will be provided and the need for services is reassessed approximately every six months. New York State oversees the local social services districts' administration of the program.

2018 Statistics

Personal Care Assistance	6
Consumer Directed Personal Care Assistance	107
Care at Home	7

DSS Adult Protective Services (APS)

APS is a program serving adults, 18 or older, who may be in need of protective services because:

- ◆ They have a physical or mental impairment;
- ◆ They can no longer protect themselves from neglect, abuse, or hazardous situations;
- ◆ They cannot provide for their most basic needs; for food, clothing, shelter or medical care; and
- ◆ They have no one willing or able to help in a responsible manner.

APS can provide services to strengthen an adult's ability to live in the community as long as possible.

Referrals made to APS are kept confidential and cannot be released to the public.

Legal Services

The County Attorney's Office represents the Department for Guardianship petitions. In 2018 there were 5 separate petitions filed initially requesting that the Commissioner be appointed Guardian of an individual.

2018 Service Statistics

Referrals	181
Investigations	135
Representative Payee Cases	31
Guardianship Cases	8

Community Donations For Children and Families in Washington County

Several members of our community made donations of clothing, school supplies, and toys to Washington County families in need for distribution through our Department.

Items for Youth

The Washington County Children's Committee is a wonderful organization and support to the youth of our County.

- Weekly allowance for children in foster care
- Support for youth to attend various camps
- Access to other items of need

Household Supplies

Throughout the year as staff learn of items that the families they are working with may need, they put the call out to agency co-workers for donations to help. Clothing, furniture & assorted items are frequently provided throughout the year through the generosity of the staff.

The Washington County DSS has operated a Food Pantry for a number of years. The collections started in a single cupboard, and expanded to a supply closet over time. It is seen on the next page as it is today, taking residency in a DSS file room.

Food Pantry Donations

Food Donations

- Price Rite
- Market 32
- DSS/OFA Staff

Hygiene Product Donations

- DSS/OFA Staff

Monetary Donations

- Stewart's Shops Holiday Match donation of \$1,000
- 1st Baptist Church of Hudson Falls
- 1st Presbyterian Church of Hudson Falls



Food Pantry

Numbers Served by Washington County DSS
(Employee) Operated Food Pantry in 2018

2018	# of Households	# of Children	# of Adults
January	138	136	190
February	90	83	127
March	80	76	122
April	123	101	173
May	119	128	190
June	100	111	151
July	97	100	148
August	111	122	176
September	99	83	148
October	130	110	190
November	119	121	167
December	82	74	108
Total	1,288	1,232	1,873

Reception in 2018

Number of document receipts recorded for
1/1/18-12/31/18

10,440

Number of customers served at the window
1/1/18-12/31/18

11,188

DSS & OFA Employees Contribute to Various Organizations

	2018
Jan	Employee Recognition Fund
Feb	Adult Services Incidental Fund
March	Haynes House of Hope
April	Tanya Crosier Scholarship Fund
May	Wounded Warrior Project
June	Cindy's Comfort Camp at Double H Ranch
July	Employee Recognition Fund
Aug	Local SPCA
Sept	Food Pantry & Hygiene Products
Oct	Argyle Thanksgiving FEAST
Nov	WAIT House
Dec	Toy Drive
Total	\$3,033 + Toys



The December Holidays always bring out the spirit of generosity. This year the employees of Washington County Sheriff's Office, OFA and DSS contributed over 400 dozen cookies which were then bagged and distributed to approximately 350 home bound individuals.



Several bins of toys were donated by employees in December of 2018 for distribution, as needed, by our staff.

Speaking of the toys... In one instance, what started out as a Caseworker providing a couple of toys from our toy bins for a 9 month old, evolved to helping provide needed safety items as well as gifts for the mom's 8 year old daughter and the mom herself. Through extra determination and big-hearted coworkers, the Caseworker was able to share the spirit of generosity and compassion at its best. The mom was overjoyed and thankful for the assistance, and realized that accepting the involvement of DSS could be beneficial in ways she would not have imagined when the Caseworker first came to her door.



Collaboration Spotlight

In 2018, the Youth Bureau & Alternative Sentencing Department was responsible for recycling all of the deposit bottle and cans discarded at the Washington County Fair. Through the effort of volunteers and Community Restoration participants this waste was transformed into good will. Work that started in the heat of August ended up as a donation that would warm hearts in December. The word of this donation was shared with staff and two stories unfolded...

A CPS Caseworker, discovered that a family was going to be without presents for their children on Christmas. The children's parents' income was only enough to cover rent, food, and utility bills; this left no money for Christmas. The worker to utilized a portion of the donated money to purchase toys and coloring books for the children. She also purchased wrapping paper and tape so the parents could wrap the gifts, themselves and share in the sense of gratification.

The second scenario also involved a CPS Caseworker. Upon learning that two grandparents, (who were caring for and supporting their grandchildren) did not have enough income to provide gifts for Christmas, this worker also purchased items including clothing and toys for the children. She made sure that the grandparents had tape and wrapping paper, as well.

The collaboration of the Youth Bureau / Alternative Sentencing of Washington County, and the above and beyond efforts of these caseworkers, truly reflects that everyone can help someone.



We Appreciate our Employees

While we appreciate our employee's dedication and hard work for this Agency, and the residents of Washington County on an everyday basis, we do set aside special days of recognition!

In October of 2018, we held Make a Difference Day. This event included an employee-purchased BBQ lunch, a spirited game of DSS Duel (which tested employee knowledge of the inner-workings of our Agency and Washington County in a format similar to a popular nightly game show), and tokens of appreciation paid for by the Management Team.

Events such as this not only bring about feelings of appreciation, but they show the true camaraderie felt by the employees here at DSS!

Our annual Holiday Luncheon was a fun event for all! Employees made centerpieces that brought holiday spirit to our training rooms! A contest was held for the best centerpiece, with two tying for first place! Many of the centerpieces were donated to local organizations; Veteran's House, Senior Center, etc.

Employees paid for a lunch catered by the kitchen in the County Jail, which featured stuffed chicken, biscuits, dessert... it was delicious!



About our Cover.....

DSS/OFA employees are asked to submit ideas for the cover of the Annual Report. The requirement of the contest is simply that it “must represent Washington County”. Submissions can be drawings, photographs, or any creation of their artistic flair. A copy of the cover will be framed and displayed, along with prior year winners, within our office.

Seventeen submissions were received this year, with the Management Team voting for their favorite.

The featured photo was chosen as the winner!



Photo was taken on Hinds Road in the Town of Kingsbury.

Credit goes to Elizabeth Cassella,
Staff Development Coordinator of DSS.