WELCOME

It is with much thanks that we welcome you back to PIÑON PERSPECTIVES. Our e-magazine, designed by the PS Research, Assessment and Data Bureau, continues to be greeted with positive feedback by our readers—both internal and external partners. Our goal is to provide you with a way to communicate with the PS workforce through our e-magazine so please consider sharing your news, insights, observations and ideas for new articles and photography.

Contact us at pinon.project@state.nm.us.

All the best – The Piñon Perspectives Team

THE ART OF PIÑON

About the Photography: New Mexico’s rich history and vibrant landscapes inspire photographer Armando de Aguero. In this issue we share de Aguero’s distinctive images including his “Junkyard Series” ©Armando de Aguero. You may view his portfolio here: www.yomando.zenfolio.com

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YOUR PERSPECTIVES

Amazing design! Interesting and valuable content too. Thank you for this uplifting contribution to state life. Jesse Leinfelder, EdD
CYFD Office of Child Development

I love the local artist’s photography and I look forward to seeing interviews with field staff.
Nancy Baca, CYFD Domestic Violence Unit

Thank you for the thoughtful, colorful and creative Pinon Perspectives. Porfirio "Pilo" Bueno,
Director of Cultural Diversity
OptumHealth New Mexico

PIÑON PERSPECTIVES MAY 2013
Q&A: Yvette Sandoval
PS Administrative Deputy Director, Santa Fe

What do you like most about your job?

I love the people in Protective Services. I am very fortunate to have spent the last 10 years of my career surrounded by so many compassionate, smart, and dedicated professionals.

Continues on next page
What are the biggest challenges that CYFD faces? And how can they be addressed effectively?

CYFD has many challenges that we continuously face, however, I see retention of our employees as the most significant challenge. Our work is difficult and we must figure out how to support our staff each and every day. We also continue to struggle with high vacancy rates. Pending investigations continues to be a challenge and is impacted by our high vacancy rates.

What are the challenges you face in your job?

I have only been in this position for six months and am still learning the broad responsibilities of the job which continues to provide me with many opportunities and challenges. The ongoing challenge for me is to give my best to PS every day and advocate for staff to ensure they have adequate support and resources they need to do their job.

PS is a very complex area where people specialize—and those of us working in it often only experience a small part of the overall system—how can the workforce better understand the “big picture”—and learn about all the services PS provides?

I have learned the most in PS by actively seeking out new professional experiences by joining committees, volunteering for work groups, and asking questions of those staff who are experts in specialized areas.

I am part of the training advisory committee which has recommended that CYFD provide an interactive learning module to new employees that provides an overview of the entire department and all of PS. I am hopeful that we can provide that in the very near future to provide a quick glimpse of the many parts of CYFD.

What innovation would you like to bring to NM? In prevention, treatment and overall?

I believe that we should give employees as many tools as we can to do their job. I am hopeful that in the next year, we will be able to provide training on Circle of Security to all of our In-Home Services staff as I think it is a very useful tool for helping parents in caring for their children.

How can information technology improve the PS process—with laptops, tablets and cell phones accessing the internet and offering web-cams?

We need to take advantage of information technology. Technology is changing everything in the workplace and in our homes. We need to acknowledge and embrace the many opportunities that come with information technology and use them to work smarter. Twenty years ago when I started in government, we did not have email or cell phones like we do now.

We need to figure out ways to use the internet effectively for on-going training and education. We also need to acknowledge that the younger generation is coming into the workforce with very different experiences, expertise, and communication tools based in their growing up surrounded by improved information technology. Our clients are also using technology, changing parenting and how families communicate and relate. We need to embrace technology if we are to be effective in communicating with the workforce and families.

What are success stories you hear out in the field?

Recently through our practice model, I have been able to hear in our monthly Piñon meetings about how many field offices have begun to look at their daily practices and collaborate with each other, foster parents and providers in order to make small changes that have huge impacts on our children.

How does our collection of data inform practice?

We use data to tell our story, to measure our successes, and learn where we still have challenges. The expectation in child welfare is that everything we do needs to be based on assessment, research and evaluation. When we are able to effectively measure outcomes, it enables us to celebrate the many things we are accomplishing and also give us the information we need to continue to make improvements in our service delivery to children and families.

Thank you for your time and insights.
PART 2

THE BIG PICTURE

The Piñon Project: The Ongoing Development of Our Child Welfare Practice Model

The Protective Services Division (PSD) goal, through the Piñon Project, is to develop a strengths-based resiliency model.

Continues on next page
An Ongoing Process

The Piñon project has been underway since November 2009 and it involves the entire Protective Services leadership team along with regional and field staff, foster parents, parents, children, youth, tribes, courts, providers and other stakeholders.

PSD has been engaging its internal and external partners to shift to a more child-focused, family-centered, trauma-informed, strengths-based, community-based, and culturally competent system and array of services and supports. Our key desired outcomes are: the strengthening of children and families, and staff who are more empowered and productive in their work.

The practice model and framework we are building have several very specific outcomes including:

- Vision, mission, values, and operating principles that inspire, empower, and engage staff and partners; creates commitment, and provide clarity and direction to our work
- Improves our organizational culture and climate, policies, structure, and practices
- Promotes achievement of safety, permanence, and well-being outcomes with a special emphasis on placement stability
- Engages all stakeholders: staff, children and youth, families, foster parents and adoptive parents, behavioral and physical health and other partners, the legal community, child advocates, and others
- Moves New Mexico from a deficit based/medical model to a strengths based “resiliency” model; our purpose needs to be understood as building on strengths and removing barriers; we don’t “fix/cure people”
- Employs a strengths-based approach in developing the model, building on what is working
- Incorporates the principles and practices of System of Care: child focused, family centered, trauma informed, strengths based, community based, and culturally competent array of services and supports
- Creates a strategy for change management that is data-driven and data-tracked, allowing for ongoing evaluation of the change process as well as tracking of targeted outcomes.

Acknowledging Capacities and Strengths

A key component of our Piñon Project is the acknowledgement not only of what we need to do, but current capacities and strengths which include:

- a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children and families through continuous, data-informed, quality improvement; state, regional, and local management structures that support practice improvement;
- a robust management information system and a commitment to using data to inform decision making;
- strong relationships with our contractors who are willing to work with us in supporting our foster and adoptive families;
- the 360° process and local improvement initiatives; stakeholder involvement in the CFSR and PIP;
- and the evolving training system with statewide advisory groups and a cadre of highly trained and certified in-house trainers.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Measuring Progress

The evaluation and monitoring plan for the Piñon Project addresses primary project outcomes:

- practice model/framework;
- organizational assessment and results; articulated mission, vision, values, and core operating principles;
- identification of best practices and strategies in key areas;
training programs and communication strategies;

- monitoring systems addressing child and family outcomes as well as agency and staff outcomes;

- and actual model implementation.

The completion of each of these is the major benchmark of success. Sources of data include repeat organizational assessments, surveys of staff and stakeholders, and system data that capture child and family outcomes.

**A Work in Progress**

The Piñon Project is a work in progress and continues to evolve, with participation from every level of Protective Services. To keep up to date on the Piñon Project visit: [Www.cyfd.org/pinonproject](http://Www.cyfd.org/pinonproject)

If there are particular questions you have about the Piñon Project and your role in it, please contact us. pinon.project@state.nm.us.

Parts of this article were adapted from the proposal *Developing a New Mexico Child Welfare Practice Model*

**WORTH QUOTING**

"Embrace disequilibrium. Without urgency, difficult change becomes far less likely. But if people feel too much distress, they will fight, flee, or freeze. The art of leadership in today’s world involves orchestrating the inevitable conflict, chaos, and confusion of change so that the disturbance is productive rather than destructive."

From—*Leadership in a (Permanent) Crisis* by Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky (Part of reading for the Adaptive Leadership training at CYFD.)
PART 3

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

Courageous conversations are those workplace talks we have, whether with peers, those in positions of power, or those we supervise, that constructively address workplace problems. All of us have different comfort levels when it comes to sharing workplace concerns. What might seem like an everyday workplace talk to some may sound like a very brave, bold and courageous conversation to others. Courageous conversations support a Piñon Value: Organizational Competence.

The following describes an actual courageous conversation from the workplace:

I was in a large meeting engaged in a group discussion was about values and how they impact our work. One attendee, a supervisor in a bureau different from mine, shared some comments that I found very out of sync with the type of positive work values we were discussing. I could tell from the body language in the room that I was not alone in my discomfort.

I decided it would be productive to have a conversation with the supervisor in private to share feedback. I expressed my concerns about how the supervisor’s comments were interpreted and some of the feedback that was provided to me from the other attendees. The supervisor listened closely, acknowledged my concerns and agreed with my assessment. It was a positive experience having the conversation that did take some courage on my part.

We hope to hear and share on-going examples of courageous conversation in the workplace. Please send yours, anonymously if you wish, in 150 words or less to Piñon Editor at Piñon.project@state.nm.us