Welcome to our new publication—the Piñon Newsletter redesigned as Piñon Perspectives e-magazine. We will continue to share updates on our Piñon “process” that includes work life and culture, policies and programs, professional development, and innovation in the field. In this issue we interview PS Director Jared Rounsville, who shares his perspectives on the Piñon Project.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to your insights, comments, ideas and an on-going dialogue.
TRAININGS & WORKSHOPS

The Heart of Family Engagement: Advanced Skills to Build Partnership with Families - This is an experiential, hands-on workshop which provides specific practice on building relationships which increase the likelihood of families feeling heard and respected, allowing them to access intrinsic strengths and capabilities to keep children safe. The training is appropriate for all staff who work with families. 6 CEUs

When: March 15, 2013, 8:30-4:00 pm.
Where: Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, Conference Center at Isleta Pueblo
Registration: [Link]

Neuro-sequential Model of Therapeutics - This curriculum was developed by the trainers in the Bruce Perry Project in consultation with Dr. Bruce Perry. The training is applicable for any person working with children and youth who have endured any type of trauma. CYFD staffs are encouraged to attend with the approval of your supervisor. 6 CEUs

When: Tues., March 12, 2013; Tues., April 16, 2013; Tues. May 14, 2013, 9:00am-3:00pm
Where: Partners in Wellness, Los Lunas
Registration: Registration will close the Friday before each training date. You must register for Los Lunas/Valencia County trainings on the NMSU-SWIFCA website. Go to [Link], click on Trainings, and select Foster Parent Mandated Training from the list of available trainings.
Contact: Loretta Diaz at lediaz@nmsu.edu

SHARE YOUR PERSPECTIVES

Piñon Perspectives e-magazine is designed by the PS Research, Assessment and Data Bureau. Please share your news, insights, and observations. Contact us at pinon.project@state.nm.us.

About the photography: New Mexico's rich history and vibrant landscapes inspire Armando de Aquero’s imagination. Its light inspires his photography. In his work, de Aquero strives to reach beyond the typical New Mexico shot, and seeks out the dramatic light and shadows. Photography © Armando de Aquero. You can view de Aquero’s portfolio here: [Link]
What are some recent successes you have seen in the division related to Piñon?

I hear employees, more and more, talking about the Piñon values. I see offices doing exercises related to the values of Piñon. More people are asking more questions like, “...are we in line with the Piñon values?”
What are some of the challenges that Protective Services is facing right now? How do you see Piñon addressing those challenges?

Two big challenges: First, we face the challenge of stemming the tide of pending investigations—while still responding to a continuous incoming tide of new investigations. We have tried lots of different things and are having a hard time getting this under control.

Second, employee recruitment, hiring, and retention is a huge challenge. Meeting this involves lots of issues—employee compensation, the work environment, caseload/workload, and giving staff the support they need. All of this requires support from administration. Piñon helps us meet the challenges as the process asks us all to think differently, to try new ideas, innovate, and understand that every employee has a responsibility to be part of the solution. We know that the old way of running a government agency with “the edict” from above is not effective. We need input from every level. We are trying to make changes in the way we make decisions to seek out and consider input from staff from all levels of the agency.

If you could have a one-on-one conversation with every employee in Protective Services, what would you tell them? What would you hope to learn from them?

I would tell them that I appreciate them. I don’t know what it is like to be in all their shoes, though I have worked in a variety of positions. I am very grateful for their commitment to our children and families. I want to learn what our employees need to be successful.

Employee morale can ebb and flow in the high pressure field of child welfare. What are your thoughts about self-care, and how can CYFD PS management support employee self-care?
Not easy, but very important. We all have demanding jobs and our work can be very stressful. It is critical that we all take care of ourselves. Exercise is an important outlet for me. We don’t have control over everything and can’t do everything we wish we could offer, but we need to make sure that we support our employees and their families.

**How do you support learning from other states and what innovation would you like to bring to NM?**

I am very supportive of states learning from one another—on projects big and small. Our own Heart Gallery is one example of an idea here in NM that is now being replicated in other states. We sent a team to New Jersey to learn from them about their successes with CQI, as they are doing some very effective things in the area of continuous quality improvement. We would love to bring a similar idea to NM and build a CQI system that infuses the entire division.

The term “courageous conversations” has been a term used by those supporting the Piñon Process—to describe the types of candid, often-difficult, yet constructive talks between employee and supervisor, and between peers. How can employees feel supported questioning a supervisor?

We all feel anxiety when talking with someone who has power over us. I have had such conversations with the Secretary and they are difficult. It’s vital that we are having these types of conversations and that we, as supervisors and managers, are showing respect and listening. Supervisors need to be open, not defensive, and invite such conversations in order to support Piñon. We all need to be respectful of such conversations and the process.

**If money were not the issue, what changes would you implement in PS? New programs? Standards for workloads?**

I would like to see compensation at a higher level, so we don’t lose people. I would like to see training brought to staff, rather than them having to be brought to training. More Investigators to reduce caseloads...more In-Home Services workers.

**What is your vision for Protective Services?**

I want our workplace to be enjoyable...for employees to know that they are making a difference. I want us to improve better safety, permanency and well-being outcomes of the children and families of NM. I want all of us to be proud to work for CYFD.

**ABOUT Q&A**

Please share with us the names of people working within CYFD that you would like to see interviewed. If you have specific questions for a potential interviewee, please share those with us at pinon.project@state.nm.us

**FACTS & FIGURES**

In 2012 there were **33,253** calls to SCI for reports of abuse and neglect.

Of the total calls:

- **51.4%** (17,096) were accepted
- **48.6%** (16,157) were not accepted
The Piñon Project is driving our Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process and focuses on the entire CYFD system—the “big picture.” In a series of on-going articles, we will explore various components of the picture—from how CYFD policies are developed to designing healthy working environments. In this article, we illustrate the Piñon Practice Standards.

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The Piñon Practice Standards represent values that drive our work.

**Safety:** Child and youth safety is paramount. Managing safety begins with our first contact and continues throughout the life of the case. We assess safety threats; child and youth vulnerabilities; protective capacities and develop safety plans based on these factors.

**Child and Youth Centered Practice:** Our practice is centered on the best interests, well-being and needs of each child and youth we serve. As age and developmentally appropriate, the child and youth's views, thoughts and ideas are expressed and taken into consideration in planning and service provision.

**Organizational competence:** Children, youth and families receive services from highly-trained and skilled staff. Our staff will have a supportive, respectful and positive environment.

**Trustworthy and Accountable:** We are fair and compassionate and act with respect and integrity. We are transparent and responsive to our children, youth and families as well as our partners and communities within the limits of confidentiality. We avoid personal bias and reach factually supported conclusions in a timely and thorough manner.

**Family-Focused:** We recognize that all families have strengths and will have a voice in decisions about their children. We work with and support the entire family.

**Customer Service:** Customer service begins at the first point of contact and extends throughout all of our relationships. We are respectful, courteous, communicative and professional with each other, our children, youth and families, our community partners and the public. We engage our families, foster parents, and others as part of the team planning and caring for our children and young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**Shared Responsibility:** The entire community shares the responsibility of keeping children and youth safe and protecting them from abuse and neglect. Children and youth are best served when they are part of and supported by their community, with services that are accessible and individualized. We recognize that community partnerships are essential to ensure child and youth safety, permanency and well-being.

**Preserving Connections:** All children and youth will have enduring relationships that provide a family, stability, belonging and a sense of self that connects them to their past, present and future.

**Culturally-Competent Practice:** We understand, respect and serve children, youth and families within the context of their own family rules, traditions, history and culture.

**Data-Driven Decision Making:** We collect and use reliable and valid data to inform decision making; to direct continuous quality and practice improvement; and to evaluate our efforts in terms of safety, well-being, and permanency outcomes for children, youth and families.

**Evidence Informed Practice:** We use evidence-informed practices for effective service planning and service delivery for children, youth and their families.

*Please contact Piñon Perspectives for more information on the Piñon Project.*
Courageous means showing courage. Courage is the ability to confront or endure fear, failure, danger, despair, uncertainty or intimidation… the ability to act rightly in the face of opposition. Writer and poet Maya Angelou defined courage as: “…the most important of the virtues, because without courage you can’t practice any other virtue consistently.” Bravery, associated with courage, is defined as “the ability to stand up for what is right in difficult situations.”

Courageous conversations are those workplace talks we have, whether with peers or with those in positions of power, that address problems—such as workplace climate, culture, workloads, or communication styles. Courageous conversations support a Piñon Value: *Organizational Competence* which creates a supportive, respectful and positive environment for staff.

We hope to present on-going examples of courageous conversations in the workplace. Please send us your “courageous conversation” experience (in 150 words) and the impact it had on your work to the Piñon Perspectives editor at pinon.project@state.nm.us.