

Program Hopes To Detect Child Abuse And Neglect Earlier

BY TERRY POPE

Detecting child abuse or neglect isn't always an easy job for social workers in local child protective services units.

Brunswick County is no exception.

"We get over 40 calls a month in that program," said Jamie Orrock, director of Brunswick County's Department of Social Services.

Each allegation of child abuse or neglect must be thoroughly and promptly investigated by social workers.

Alarmed by the recent deaths of some children in homes where abuse had occurred in North Carolina, state officials are also beefing up pro-

grams aimed at detecting abuse earlier.

Reports often start pouring into the DSS office once school begins in the fall, said Orrock.

When children return from a summer visit at one parent's home, the abuse is often spotted by the second parent. Also, teachers who are with children for several hours each day often report what they believe is potential abuse.

Social workers must spend many hours investigating potential abuse cases and screening out those that are not. However, there is another side to the issue.

Many reports are often the result of family feuds, or as James Marlowe, vice chairman of the DSS board stated, "one parent trying to create problems for another parent."

In Brunswick County, an estimated 20 to 25 percent of child abuse reports are screened out and rejected, or said to be unfounded, said Orrock.

Of those, he estimates 50 to 60 percent were filed as a result of arguments in broken marriages and family feuds. The state average for child abuse reports that are screened out is 22 percent, said Orrock.

"They get concerned if you screen out more than the state average," he added.

If the home environment isn't injurious to a child, then a case of abuse or neglect is often unfounded.

In October, 37 cases of child abuse or neglect were reported to Brunswick County's DSS. Of those, 11 reports were not accepted while three cases were referred to other agencies.

In September, 34 potential cases were reported while 10 were screened out.

Brunswick County's DSS will receive \$63,000 in state grants this fiscal year to boost its child protective services program.

It's part of the state and federal

funds trickling down to local counties in an effort to combat an increase in reported child abuse and neglect.

Orrock plans to hire an additional child services worker with the \$38,166 initially allocated while the department will receive another \$24,737 in January. Another \$24,000 will be allocated every six months to pay for the position.

The grant is part of the \$3.2 million set aside by the state to combat the increasing number of child abuse or neglect cases that are plaguing county social services units.

Screenings help to detect false claims or those based on little or no evidence. Because a parent drinks alcohol doesn't necessarily mean the child is in danger and should be taken into custody for foster care, said Orrock.

"That's not something that we can do an investigation on," he added.

Also, good foster homes are not

easy to find. In Brunswick County, a shortage of foster parents has reached a crucial stage, with 29 children currently in need of and awaiting foster homes.

Orrock said his department is constantly recruiting new homes for children who are taken into custody in hopes of placing them in a more protective environment.

The foster home shortage has also become a national issue and not just a local problem.

In September, 15 children were placed in foster care by DSS's children's services unit, said its supervisor Mary (Meezie) Childs. The department placed 14 children in foster

care in October.

Since enough foster homes are not currently available, the children are often placed with family members on a temporary basis, said Orrock, which could become a hardship for the volunteer family.

"We're not making payments on those situations," he added.

The family that agrees to provide a temporary foster home must also agree to financially support the child until a permanent home can be found.

"We're still required to supervise those cases, as if they're cases for which a payment is made," said Orrock.



ORROCK

Health Board Did Not Meet

The Brunswick County Board of Health did not meet as scheduled Monday night for lack of a quorum.

Chairman Bill Rabon said he notified board members around 5 p.m. Monday that a quorum would not be present.

The meeting will not be rescheduled, said Rabon.

The next regular meeting is set for Jan. 13 at 7:30 p.m. at the Brunswick County Health Department.

Calabash Rescue Answers 36 Calls

Calabash Volunteer E.M.S. responded to 36 calls in November, including 22 in Calabash and three in Sunset Beach.

Chief Mark Christy reported at the Dec. 2 board of directors meeting that squad members worked 142 hours and traveled 1,671 miles in November.

President Kathy Morfit said a fund drive is under way in the Sea Trail and Sugar Sands area.

Secretary Maryn Hall said the squad held its annual Christmas party Tuesday for members, dispatchers, bucket-shakers and others at the building.

A collection of food and money was taken for the Brunswick County Volunteer and Information Center Christmas baskets at the party.



STAFF PHOTO BY DORE C. GURIGANUS

Season Of Light

Ocean Isle Beach property owners held the second annual lighting of their town Christmas tree along the Ocean Isle causeway Thanksgiving weekend. Stringing the lights on the tree are (left) Carolyn Blythe and Judy Hanna, while Mayor Betty Williamson (third from right) and Gladys Goldsmith (second from right) prepare for the ceremony. The tree was dedicated to the town in honor of Mrs. Goldsmith and her contributions to the community.

UPS SHIPPING
We are the authorized UPS agent for the South Brunswick Islands

We carry packing supplies... boxes, bubble wrap, tape, etc.

We'll even box your packages for you!

Gift Bags & Tissue Paper
It's not too late to order your imprinted Christmas cards.

We have a full line of...
OFFICE SUPPLIES • RUBBER STAMPS
FAX SERVICE • COPYING SERVICE • BUSINESS CARDS

Come in and receive a free brochure on how to properly package your items for shipping.

SHIPPING STATION
754-7456 HWY. 17 S. SHALLOTTE RESORT PLAZA

Great for Christmas to Read or Give!

This book is a documented study of the Cape Fear area's early settlers, their royal governors and Anglican missionaries, followed by the circuit riders and early churches.

HEARTENING HERITAGE
ON A CAROLINA CRESCENT
BY J. M. M. HOLDEN

Written by Mrs. John F. (Johnsie) Holden of Holden Beach, the book is available at Brunswick Town Gift Shop; the Beach Mart and Alan Holden Realty at Holden Beach; The Bookery and UNCW Bookstore in Wilmington. \$17.

WAREHOUSE FURNITURE
Distributors
HOLIDAY SALE

SAVE 20% TO 60% OFF LIST

ALL FURNITURE REDUCED NOW!

ALL FURNITURE REDUCED 20-60% OFF ALL SOFAS, CHAIRS, LOVESEATS, BEDROOMS, DINETTES, RECLINERS, END/COFFEE TABLES, SLEEPERS, DINING ROOMS, CURIOS, GUN CABINETS, ENTERTAINMENT UNITS, ROCKING CHAIRS AND MORE. HURRY NOTHING HELD BACK.

OPEN MON.-SAT. 9-5:30

Hwy. 90, Nixon's Crossroads
North Myrtle Beach, SC
(803)249-8874

SPECIAL ORDERS WELCOME
INSTANT CREDIT
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
IN-STORE FINANCING
90 DAYS-SAME AS CASH

SALE

Sweatshirts (irregulars) **Only \$4.99**

Men's Suits & Sportscoats **20-50% Off**

Men's Dress & Sport Shirts **15-33% Off**

Men's & Ladies' Sweaters **15-33% Off**

Ladies' Dressy Coordinates **15-33% Off**

Men's Jackets & Windbreakers **15-25% Off**

Ladies' Fall & Winter Sportswear **15-33% Off**

Ladies' Sabino Dresses **15% Off**

Ladies' Fall Nicole & Sensations Shoes **15-20% Off**

3 Racks of Men's Shoes **Reduced**

Haggar Sport Coats **20-50% Off**

Haggar Cords **20% Off**

Select Group Haggar Dress Slacks **Reduced**

Don't forget Kirby's great crafts dept. for gifts and decorations!

Kirby's
DEPARTMENT STORE
and BEN FRANKLIN
754-4846 Main St. Shallotte

BIMA
Brunswick Islands Medical Associates

Marcus R. Williams, MD
Michael W. Wilkerson, MD
Gary D. Ross, MD
Board Certified Internal Medicine

Samuel W. Kirtley, MD
Board Certified Family Practice
emphasis in Pediatrics

579-0707
By Appointment Only

South Brunswick Islands Medical Park
Hwy. 17, 4 miles south of Shallotte
Medicare Participating • BC/BS Costwise

Have Your Party At Our Place

Whether your holiday party is for a few or a crowd, we can handle it. And we'll take care of the clean up—all you have to do is enjoy yourself. Call us today. We'll arrange everything... even decorations. Don't wait—call us today.

Piper's Restaurant
579-9373
Old Georgetown Road • Calabash

GOLF and COUNTRY CLUB AT CALABASH