



Southwest Region

Michigan Family Support Council

37th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Welcome everyone to the 37th annual Michigan Family Support Council's Fall Conference at Boyne Mountain Resort! We hope our second year at the Mountain is as wonderful as the first!

Southwest's annual conference was held Thursday, May 16, 2019, at The Silo in Allegan, Michigan. Our venue was their banquet hall boasting a beautiful view of the surrounding, green, countryside. I am happy to report there was no snow and the rain held off until the conclusion of our conference. We welcomed 103 guests, inclusive of speakers. We began our morning program with Legislative Updates presented by Ottawa County Judges Jon Van Allsburg and Kent Engle. As always, the Judges shared pertinent information in an interesting and informative manner. This year we changed it up a little and included a few shorter presentations highlighting some innovative programs offered by various offices in our region. Deb Martis and Jo Ann Madsen, from Kent County FOC, spoke on their Responsible Parent Program and the success of same. Amy Gilmore and Stephen Schwitzer, from OCS, joined the fray with their Self Service Reporting presentation. Next up were Abel Munoz and Aaron Rosecrans, from Van Buren FOC, speaking on their 24:7 Dad initiative. We then heard from Stephanie Klausing and Kim Boswell, representatives from Sylvia's Place, giving the history of Sylvia's Place and the wonderful work they do. After a delicious lunch, Erin Frisch, acting IV-D Director and new Senior Chief Deputy Director For Opportunity, gave us the news that her new position is taking her away from us, however she will still be around. Join me in thanking Erin for everything she has done as the IV-D Director, and all that she will do in her new position. There is a lot to be accomplished and Erin gave a comprehensive overview of the IV-D program and beyond. Next up was Michelle Gallagher, CPA from Adamy Valuation, with an in-depth presentation of determining self-employment income. Michelle provided great information for those of us who struggle with self-employed individuals. She disseminated tons of information and materials/resources and was inundated with questions which she answered in a helpful manner. Rounding out our presenters was Sheila Waldrop, Case Management Manager from OCS, with an Electronic Data Exchange (EDE) overview. I would like to thank all of our presenters for the valuable and interesting information we were provided. The day flew by and was amazing.

Our Silent Auction recipient this year was Sylvia's Place, a domestic violence shelter. Many, many attendees brought donations for Sylvia's Place in addition to making generous bids for the items in the Silent Auction. We were able to make a substantial donation to Sylvia's Place because of the generosity of those who donated and those who bid and won. For more information on the work Sylvia's Place does please visit sylviasplace.com. My thanks to Matt Schmid, Kyle Bedore-Wilke, and JoAnn Madsen, our Silent Auction committee, for their hard work and dedication in obtaining donations and organizing the auction itself. I can never express enough our gratitude to everyone who participated and donated to the Silent Auction.

This year the SW Board had to bid adieu to a few members. Sherry DeLoach retired from Van Buren County as did Nancy Schultz from St. Joseph County. Erin Stender from Allegan County accepted a new position, and we wish her well on her new adventure(s). Jeff Koteles, a long time and valuable member of both the SW Board and the MFSC State Board, decided to step down and concentrate on other interests. Jeff was a dynamic and hardworking member and leaves behind a wonderful legacy. The board wishes everyone a happy retirement and we cannot thank Sherry, Nancy, Erin, and Jeff enough for the years of hard work and camaraderie they provided.

We were lucky enough to have Lisa Kissinger (Van Buren FOC), Julie Wirtz (St. Joseph FOC), Carissa Grimm (Berrien FOC), Jesse Bergwerff (Allegan FOC), and Amy Coscarelli (OCS), join us to fill the vacancies left from the departures. Julie hit the ground running as our new secretary as did Amy as our OCS Rep to the State Board. Lisa, Carissa, and Jesse didn't miss a beat and have been invaluable from their first introduction to the board.

I would like to thank the Board for all the hard work they do throughout the year and the wonderful support I have received during my tenure as President. I am truly blessed and grateful to be part of such an awesome group of people. Thanks to Sheila, Erin, Jennifer Granzow, Jeff, Matt, Sherry, Nancy, Donella, Tami, Kyle, Jennifer Galloway, Rebecca, Jo Ann, Lisa, Julie, Carissa, Jesse, Amy, and Manda.

Southwest's Board of Directors for 2018/2019 are as follows: Monica Morris-Moats (President), Calhoun County PA; Jo Ann Madsen (Vice-President/FOC representative to State Board), Kent County FOC; Sheila Waldrop (Treasurer), OCS; Julie Wirtz (Secretary), St. Joseph County FOC; Amy Coscarelli (OCS representative to State Board), OCS; and Tami Hewitt (PA representative to State Board), Ionia County PA.

My hope is to make this year as successful as last year. Have a fun and informative conference!

Sincerely,

Monica A. Morris-Moats
President, Southwest Region
Michigan Family Support Council