



# Pipeline

By and for the  
Office  
of Children's Services

## ... the flow of OCS

Sarah Palin, Governor • Bill Hogan, Commissioner



From ...  
*Tammy's Desk*

**H**ave you all completed your Personal Health Assessment? You know ... the AlaskaCare Select Benefits thing we've been getting all the e-mails about for the past month. There is a free \$100 reward in it for you! So, not only is it a good thing to do for yourself, but free money — who can't use a free \$100? You might think you know your own health and probably most of you do, but I will admit I learned some things (I already knew I've got some weight to lose) that I was able

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## Program Improvement Plan launches



**M**ore than 50 participants attended the Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan kick-off meeting in Anchorage Jan. 13. Those participating included OCS staff, service providers, program staff, focus groups, and other partners and organizations.

At this kick-off meeting, workgroups were established that will meet regularly over the next few months and will reach out to a broad array of stakeholders

through the use of focus groups, which includes OCS field staff and established community and statewide forums.

“We appreciated each and every one who attended and their commitment to better Alaska’s child welfare system,” said Kristie Swanson, Social Services Program Administrator.

The review (CFSR), conducted by the U.S. Administration of Children

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## HEART GALLERY

### RASHAWN



Rashawn is an Alaska Native 3-year-old, born and raised in Anchorage. Despite issues with FASD, he is happy, affectionate and very active! Rashawn attends pre-school, and is described as a “model student.” Rashawn will bring energy and smiles into any home. For information on the Heart Gallery, please e-mail [gail.stadig@alaska.gov](mailto:gail.stadig@alaska.gov) or [sara.childress@alaska.gov](mailto:sara.childress@alaska.gov).

## Every day, you make a lasting impression

By Sara Childress

**A**lmost 10 years ago, at the young age of 26, I became a DFYS social worker. Straight out of graduate school, I had little experience in the field and truly no clue of what I was walking into, aside from a great state job with benefits. I knew that I loved working with kids, and was naive enough to think that would carry me through. Handed a large caseload, little training, and a complex system to navigate, I



Childress

made it day by day. I learned as situations arose, and I had very little time to assess or think about the impacts that all of my decisions and interactions would ever have in the long run.

Only because I have held on for 10 years am I now able to grasp the impacts that I made so long ago.

I recently received an invitation to a high school graduation in Washington,

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to immediately implement to improve my overall health as a result of having completed the assessment.

I know I'm not telling you anything you don't know, but only YOU can take care of yourself. Taking the health assessment is a way to check in with yourself and recommit to putting your personal lives first and taking breaks and lunches. Our work is both demanding and taxing. Take a few minutes out and reintroduce yourself to yourself. If you are healthy, you're happier; if you are happy, everything else will work itself out.

Deadline is Feb. 15, so there is no time like the present!

Take care — good care.

## TAMMY

<https://www.webmdhealth.com/sponsors/alaskacare.htm>

For login instructions to the AlaskaCare WebMD portal, please click on this link:

<http://www.state.ak.us/drb/ghlb/healthtracks.shtml#login>.

If you have any additional questions or difficulty logging in, please call the AlaskaCare HealthTracks Program Coordinator, Cameryn Flynn (907) 523-3415 or e-mail Cameryn.flynn@premera.com.

*Tammy Sandoval is Director of the Office of Children's Services.*



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and Families, began in January 2008 and included an extensive statewide assessment and on-site reviews during September 2008 at three locations: Anchorage, Juneau and Bethel. The review will be used to identify strengths and areas needing improvement.

Results will provide a road map, called a Program Improvement Plan, to address areas needing improvement. Those include: each outcome not found to be in substantial conformity and each systemic factor not found to be in substantial conformity.

The PIP is due to the Children's Bureau within 90 days of the receipt of the CFSR final report. While Alaska has not yet received the final report, preliminary findings have been

released. The Children's Bureau will negotiate and finalize the PIP with Alaska. Implementation may not exceed two years from the date the PIP is approved.

Three themes have been identified: Standardization of Practice around Safety; Standardization of Practice to Enhance Permanency Planning; and Standardization of Practice to Enhance the Capacity of Families to Provide for their Children's Needs. These themes weave safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes with the systematic factors.

"We're excited to embark on this opportunity to improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for Alaska's children," Swanson said.

## Ongoing Tribal Cultural Events

### February

#### Anchorage Area:

Eklutna Tribe located at Eklutna Village, Tribal Community Hall.  
Main Office: (907) 688-6020.

- **Elder's Lunch** every Wednesday at noon. If more than two people plan to attend, it would be helpful to call the main office so the cook can prepare enough for everyone.
- **Eklutna Women's Group** meets most Tuesdays at 11 a.m. to work on art, sewing, beading, and other culturally-related projects. Calling main office beforehand is helpful, but not mandatory.

## Using Excel 'AutoFilter' to sort data — It's neat!

By Ayaire Cantil-Voorhees

Do you ever find yourself sitting in front of Excel, trying to find that one piece of necessary information which has hidden itself among the thousands of bleary cells? Do you ever have difficulty sorting one column, and somehow not sorting all of the others, along with it?

Well, my friends, there is a handy tool to use in times like these, which will whisk your sorting data problems away! You will come to know this amazing tool as the "AutoFilter."

First, here is how you use the AutoFilter:

1. Select the entire row above the information that you want to sort. You can do this by clicking on the row number, found on the grey border on the left side of your excel page.
2. On the top of your page, click on the option that says "Data."

3. Move your cursor down to the "Filter" option.
4. Click on the "AutoFilter" option.
5. Now look at your selected row. Each column with data below your selected row now has a drop-down menu arrow in that column. You can click on any of those arrows to sort your data by order, or by any given value in that column!
6. Pretty neat, huh?

If you ever decide that you do not want to use the AutoFilter tool, you can always go through steps 1–4, and this will remove the filter, leaving your data complete, and back to the order in which it was originally sorted.

*Ayaire Cantil-Voorhees is a Research Analyst II with OCS.*

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from a name that I had not heard since those days when I first became a child protection worker. Nine years after the flight we took together to place her with her father, who lived out of state, she found me.

*"I don't remember much from my childhood, but I do remember you and because of that, I know you did something good for my brother and I. Deep down, I know that because of you, I am who I am today. Working with you has been a part of a great, difficult and depressing journey that we were supposed to go through and you were meant to be part of it. Most of the things I remember are horrible, I must say, but I really remember you on the plane that day. I know in my heart that you were a*

*great person and there to help. I can't really explain it but thank you because I know that without you, it wouldn't*

*"I know in my heart that you were a great person and there to help. I can't really explain it but thank you because I know that without you, it wouldn't be the same; we wouldn't have ended up as good as we did."*

*be the same; we wouldn't have ended up as good as we did. So, I've waited many years to tell you, thank you so much for everything. You will forever be remembered."*

I remember the flight we took together, handing her and her brother over to the father they hardly knew. I tried to make

it as comfortable as I could for all of them, and walked away with hope that a better life lay ahead. I flew home to the next family on my caseload, without taking a moment to realize that I had become a forever memory in someone's life.

Everything we do and everything we say has an impact, usually much greater than we ever realize. We are an important part of so many lives, and have the wonderful opportunity to make positive change. I live those words

that hang in the offices of so many case workers: "A hundred years from now, it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove ... But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child."