

DHS HERALD



To All

As we spend time with our family, our friends and loved ones, let us take time to reflect on all we've accomplished together this year. We serve the most vulnerable in our State, including the low income, the elderly and children at-risk.

Like all of you, we know that together and individually, in this Department, giving and serving occur every day of the year.

We want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your efforts on behalf of those we serve. Your hard work, dedication and compassion reflect the best of our Department and public service in our State.

Māhalo and Happy New Year!
*Henry Oliva, Deputy Director &
Lillian B. Koller, Director*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Cynthia Goss 2

Lori-Lei Aponte 2

THE SON OF ALL INFLUENCES

He is the son of all influences, past and present.

Pankaj Bhanot has his father's work ethic, his mother's attention to detail and his grandmother's compassion for people.

Asked to characterize himself, he says, his voice barreling across the room.

"I am a thinker!"

As one of the administrators for the Department's Benefit Employment and Support Services Division, Pankaj admits he can be loud—he gets that from his father. As a child his dad once asked him about the ideal place to sit in a classroom.

"In the front," he remembers saying.

"No!" his dad replied. "You sit in the back so that when you speak, you have to be loud enough so everyone can hear you."

The advice and guidance of



Pankaj Bhanot, BESSD

his late father, mother and late grandmother have shaped him into the person he is today.

Pankaj, who now has a family of his own, credits his accomplishments to a strong family upbringing. Born and raised in New Delhi, India, he became fascinated with the profession of law and art of complex thought.

"There was an aura of being a lawyer or a judge," he said. "At eight years old I asked my father, 'what do I have to do to become a lawyer?'"

His father, Joginder Lal Bhanot, who owned his own law firm in India, looked his son square in the eyes and emphasized three traits.

You need command over the English language, you need to have a background in political science and you must know how to communicate, his father told him.

Pankaj worked feverishly to reach his dream. He studied economics, sociology, political science, English throughout school in New Delhi, London and New York.

He joined the Department in 1999 and quickly moved up in the ranks, from being a program specialist to program administrator for Food Stamps, Employment and Training section.

"He is a meticulous thinker with a great ability to develop simple, can-do solutions for complex problems," said DHS Director Lillian. "And every endeavor he pursues, he does with a tender heart."

DIRECTOR'S HOLIDAY GIFT GIVEAWAY

Thank you to all who participated in our first annual Director's Holiday Gift Giveaway; we wish we could give prize to all of you!

These are the winners for the respective islands/counties:

For Hilo, with 86 entries, and from the SSD East Hawaii Special Services: Earlette DeLuz-gift certificate from Don's Grill

For Kauai, with 46 entries,

and from SSD Kauai Adult and Community Care Services: Linda Shigeta—gift certificate from Hyatt Kauai Hotel and Resort.

For Kona, with 56 entries, and from BESSD NIB West Hawaii North Kona 1 Unit: Pauline Nishida-Miller-gift certificate from Outback Steakhouse

For the County of Maui, with 77 memories and from the VRSBD Molokai Field Office: Alicia Teves-gift certificate

from Café O Lei Khei

For Oahu with 548 entries, and from SSD Diamond Head Child Welfare Unit: Joyce Rogers-gift certificate from Morton's

MQD Membership File Integrity Services, Imelda Nakasono-gift certificate from Asagio's

BESSD PAWAA Unit: Stephen Koike—gift certificate from Alan Wong's

TIMEKEEPER OF LIFE

Time rarely slips by her.

Cynthia Goss, program development administrator for the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Services Branch, watches the ticks on the clock with great interest.

"I don't like to waste time," she said. "That's why I'm



Cynthia Goss, Child Welfare Services

always looking at my watch." Her home is proof alone

that each moment of life is precious. She has more than 30 watches and 16 clocks in her residence, all to keep track of where the day is going.

She manages her time by planning the hours, days, months and years ahead. She said being prepared has helped her to deal with the stress of the job.

Lynne Kazama, an assistant program administrator at Child Welfare Services, calls Cynthia a "bright, analytical problem-solver," who is "courageous, determined and hard working."

Cynthia drives herself to work at the speed of light. And while her work pace is blistering, she finds time to enjoy what matters most, her family.

She is married to Jay Goss, a deputy attorney general. They have a son, Noah, who is eight.

"I thank my lucky stars everyday for my family," she said.

As a social worker with the Department for more than 21 years, she has seen families ripped apart. She's seen the crystal methamphetamine epidemic spread throughout the state.

"What I see today in terms of substance abuse and violence still shocks me," Cynthia says.

"I don't spend time or money on movies about sadness or doom and gloom. There's enough of it at work, why would I want to see it on my own time?" - Cynthia Goss

But she still believes in the power of families.

"I like the approach that foster care is not always the answer," she said. "If you can keep families together, you should."

Amy Tsark, head of Child Welfare Services, offered effusive praise for Cynthia.

"She is a key member of the Program Improvement Plan team, very dedicated to the Department and a great team player," Tsark said. "I can count on her—she is always willing to help out."

DHS Deputy Director Henry Oliva agrees.

"Cynthia's vast experience in social services has been invaluable to the Department," he said. "She is calm and has a great demeanor that commands respect from her supervisors and peers."



CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH A SMILE

Rather than step on toes, she tiptoes over them.

Customer service can be a delicate balance between listening, understanding and delivering service to clients. Lori-Lei Aponte, the acting administrator for the Department's Med-QUEST Customer Services Branch, knows that technology does not replace face-to-face contact or talking to a live person.

"For medical assistance, time is of the essence," Lori-Lei said. "Although we live in such a fast-paced world, people want to have face-to-face contact. For some people, being automated can be very frustrating."

Lori-Lei is camera-shy, speaks in soft tones and quotes legendary NFL coach Vince Lombardi. She believes in the concept of working together.

She pulls off her desk a strip of yellow paper with the Lombardi quote, "individual commitment to a group-effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."

Team, she stresses is what the Department is all about.

"As a whole, if we all do our part we will produce a better society," Lori-Lei says.



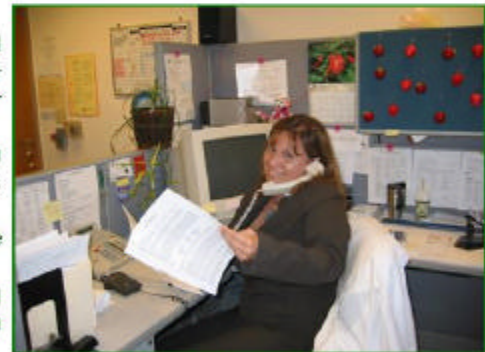
Lori-Lei with customer service staff

Growing up she learned the concept of team through sports such as softball and volleyball, and by volunteering at various charities such as the Foodbank. When she isn't at work, Lori-Lei likes to spend time with her family, husband David Aponte and daughter Courtney-Cree. They'll use the time to go on family outings like hiking in Makakilo or Moanalua Valley.

"She leads by example and that's why in her section you sense the atmosphere of unity and belonging, a feeling of being a part of something bigger," said DHS Director Lillian Koller.

Lori-Lei, who joined the Department in 2003, said each day is a learning experience and she uses that to enhance customer service for clients. These days much of her attention is focused on learning about Medicare Part D, the shifting of prescription drug coverage from state Medicaid to federal Medicare.

"Learning about the Department, what has happened and what's going to happen is so interesting and helpful," she said.



Lori-Lei Aponte, Med-QUEST