



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS AND MANAGER

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11/20/2013

Union County shares the community's deep concern regarding the recent events pertaining to Dorian Harper and Wanda Larson and the children who were residing in their home. Consequently, we want to ensure that the information that is communicated with the public is accurate. The article in the November 20, 2013 Enquirer Journal contained numerous inaccuracies that Union County must correct. No child in the Harper-Larson house was in foster care at the time of the arrest of Mr. Harper or Mrs. Larson: Four of the children had been adopted and the fifth had been placed in guardianship in the home.

As the State Division of Social Services statement dated November 19, 2013 indicates: "Dorian Harper and Wanda Larson are not currently licensed foster parents in North Carolina. The Harper/Larson foster home license expired in December 2010. There have been no foster children living in the home since May 2009."

The statement from the State Division of Social Services further indicated: "Based on state law regarding adoption of foster children, once a decree of adoption is entered, the adoptive parents are not subject to any additional oversight by DSS unless it is requested by the parents."

Union County DSS supervised the family foster home from December 1, 1998 through September 17, 2003 prior to Ms. Lawson's employment. Gaston County DSS supervised the family foster home from 9/18/03 through 12/1/10. It is also important to note that according to State records, "No adverse licensing actions occurred during the licensure period."

In terms of the December 2012 report mentioned in the article, the matter was evaluated and it has been determined that Mrs. Kawyn acted according to State procedures in reviewing that particular case.

As the inquiry continues, the County will continue to be transparent and keep officials and the public informed while working to protect the children and families that DSS serves. We are committed to finding a solution and setting procedures in an effort to prevent incidents like this from occurring in the future.

Sincerely,

Cynthia A. Coto

Cynthia A. Coto, ICMA-CM

County Manager