

Rural Social Work Cindy Howard, MSW

As a young girl, Cindy read several books by Lois Lenski which mentioned caseworkers going to homes to visit children. She decided she wanted to grow up to be a caseworker, and so the journey to social work began.

She received her BSW from Bethel College, a Mennonite College in Kansas. During her teen years she was personally touched and influenced by the events of the world: the Vietnam War, assassinations of President Kennedy & Dr. King, the Civil Rights movement, women's rights, poverty and drugs. She began her social work career with various community programs, participating in volunteer work and college internships. Cindy became a certified probation and parole officer and trainer with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, and then a child welfare worker with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services in a largely rural area. She returned to school in the mid-1990's and completed her MSW degree at OU.

After 28 years with OKDHS, she found herself moving into administrative positions and missed those "caseworker" visits. She retired and began to contract with the federal governments as a reviewer of child welfare programs in Oklahoma and other States and a trainer for new Oklahoma child welfare workers. Cindy continues as a trainer for DHS staff and sub-contractor in the SWIFT Adoptions program and performs other activities with the adoptions unit.

One of her favorite employment activities involves serving as a Practicum Liaison/Instructor for MSW students. She facilitates the Child Welfare Family and Youth Development Field Unit. Cindy is grateful for the many mentors and influences during her education and career. Cindy hopes to continue to pass on her enthusiasm and caring to further generations of social workers.