

# Aitkin County Health & Human Services

204 First St. NW

AITKIN, MINNESOTA 56431

PHONE 1-800-328-3744 or 1-218-927-7200 - FAX # 927-7210

TO: Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Tom Burke Director

RE: Employee Request for Leave of Absence

DATE: April 15, 2014

Children's Mental Health Social Worker Jessi Schultz has been studying for a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree for about a year. The next part of her MSW program is to participate in a "field placement," which is a focused, hands-on practicum in an actual social work setting. Her work at ACHHS cannot be considered her field placement; she must participate in a setting that is totally different than her current work. She has made arrangements for her field placement beginning in late August of this year and finishing in December of this year... a total of 15 weeks.

Our agency is very supportive of Jessi's desire to complete an MSW degree. During this last year, Jessi's studies have had no impact on the work or schedules of any of her peers. Jessi has explained that there is more than one option for organizing her field placement. The first option is for the student to have a leave for 15 weeks ending in December 2014. The other two options make the field placement almost eight months long and allow time for the student to continue working at a full-time job. It is the preference of all of us that Jessi takes a leave for the 15 weeks. For that relatively short period of time, we believe each child welfare social worker can take two or three cases out of Jessi's caseload and manage them for those 15 weeks.

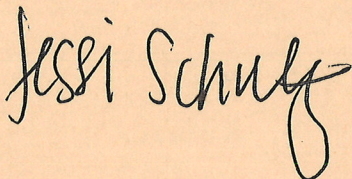
I would like to make the recommendation that Jessi be granted a leave of absence starting August 25, 2014 and ending on December 13, 2014.

TO: Tom Burke  
FROM: Jessi Schultz  
RE: Leave of Absence  
DATE: 4/15/2014

As you know, I have been studying for a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree for about a year. The next part of my MSW program is to participate in a "field placement," which is a focused, hands-on practicum in an actual social work setting. My work at ACHHS cannot be considered a field placement; I must participate in a setting that is totally different than my current work. I have started making arrangements for a field placement beginning in late August of this year and finishing in December of this year... a total of 15 weeks.

The child welfare staff has been very supportive of my desire to complete a MSW degree. During this last year, I do not believe that my studies have had an impact on the work or schedules of any of the rest of my colleagues at ACHHS. I have discussed my situation with Sue and the entire child welfare staff. I have explained that there is more than one option for organizing this field placement. The first option is a leave of absence for 15 weeks ending in December 2014. The other two options make the field placement almost eight months long and allow time for the student to continue working at a part time or full-time job. My preference is to have a 15-week leave of absence so that I am done at the end of this year. It appears also to be the preference of Sue and the staff that I take a leave for the 15 weeks. For that relatively short period of time, we discussed that each child welfare social worker can take two or three cases out of my caseload and manage them for those 15 weeks. Actual dates for the leave of absence will be from August 25, 2014 to December 12, 2015. This may end sooner if the required number of hours is accumulated before the December 12<sup>th</sup> date.

Thank you for considering my request.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessi Schultz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.