

## Permanency Report to Court

February 21, 2017

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### Case Summary

Samantha Stewart is a married, 35-year-old, Caucasian female. She has five biological children: Charles Stewart, age 11; Simon Stewart, age 8; Jessica and Kyle Stewart, age 5; and Courtney Stewart, age 3. Mrs. Stewart's husband and father of all 5 children is Solomon Stewart. Mr. Stewart is currently incarcerated for involuntary manslaughter and is scheduled to be released in November 2017.

Ms. Stewart is estranged from her mother. Ms. Stewart denies a history of child abuse or domestic violence. She denies the use of alcohol prior to her husband's incarceration. Ms. Stewart is employed in the financial office of a local retailer. She receives public assistance, specifically SNAP, a housing subsidy and assistance with her heating bills.

The Stewart family first came to the attention of the Department on December 13, 2015, for a report of physical abuse. It was reported that both Jessica and Kyle Stewart were observed to have bluish bruises and welts on their arms and thighs as a result of their mother hitting them with a belt. This report was substantiated for physical abuse, and Mrs. Stewart agreed to voluntary in-home services.

A second report was received in the evening of April 6, 2016. Law enforcement called when Mrs. Stewart was arrested and jailed for driving while intoxicated with her children in the car. This was Mrs. Stewart's third offense and there was no one to care for the children. Ms. Stewart could not think of any relatives for the children to stay with. The children were very upset that their mother was arrested.

The Department substantiated neglect and lack of supervision and took emergency custody of all five children. Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Simon, and Charles Stewart were placed in foster care after determining the family friend specified in a previous safety plan was unable to care for them.

On April 7, 2016, the Court signed an ex parte order and granted emergency custody of the Stewart children to the Department. On April 8, 2016, the Department met with Mrs. Stewart following her arraignment and release from jail. The Department met with Mrs. Stewart on April 8, 2016, to develop an assessment plan. Concurrent permanency plans of reunification and adoption were established for all five children on May 6, 2016. The Department made contact with Mr. Stewart on April 23, 2016, in the Mock State Correctional Facility and informed him that his children were in the legal and physical custody of the Department.

The Department scheduled a substance abuse assessment for Mrs. Stewart. Mrs. Stewart completed the assessment on June 3, 2016. As a result, Ms. Stewart began an intensive outpatient substance abuse treatment program. Mrs. Stewart completed treatment on December 16, 2016. Ms. Stewart purportedly experienced a relapse over the Christmas holiday.

The Department referred Ms. Stewart for parenting classes which began on November 1, 2016.

Solomon Stewart continues to be incarcerated. Despite the Department efforts, the Department has not been able to get written reports from Mock State Correctional Facility. Mr. Stewart's case manager reports that Mr. Stewart is a model inmate and actively involved in the fathers parenting group at the facility. He completed a substance abuse treatment program and attends regular AA meetings. The Department has continued to support Mr. Stewart's relationship with his children through written correspondence and Mr. Stewart has had occasional telephone calls with the children supervised by the relative foster parents. In addition, the Department has been forwarding copies of the children's report cards and other educational documents to Mr. Stewart.

**Reason(s) for Continued Removal From Home:**

The children were removed on an emergency basis as there was no parent available to execute their parental responsibilities. Neither Mrs. Stewart nor Mr. Stewart are in a position where they can assume full-time parenting responsibilities for the children as Mrs. Stewart is addressing substance abuse issues. She has not been in contact with the Department since early January 2017. Mr. Stewart continues to be incarcerated.

#### **Children's Perception of Situation:**

The children, given their developmental level, have each been able to discuss their understanding of their mother's need for help. Simon Stewart was still showing some signs of being fearful of or angry with his mother during and after visits.

#### **Child(ren) Information**

##### **Physical Health**

Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Simon, and Charles Stewart are all in good general health. The children are up to date on their immunizations. The children have no unmet physical health needs, including vision and dental, at this time.

##### **Mental/Behavioral Health**

Simon continues to experience behavior issues in the foster home.

##### **Education**

Children are performing well in school, and all are at grade level. Simon Stewart is receiving special education services through the school. An IEP planning meeting was held for Simon in March 2016 and a review is scheduled for March 14, 2017.

##### **Social/Emotional Development**

Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, and Charles Stewart appear to be developmentally on target. The children have been described as outgoing, and each has made new friends at their new school. Simon Stewart's enrollment in a supervised after-school program has improved his socialization skills at school.

#### **Placement**

##### **Relative as Placement Resource**

All five Stewart children continue to be placed in the home of paternal great aunt Jill Francis and her husband, Logan Morris. The placement continues to be a safe and stable home.

##### **Description of Current Placement**

##### **Placement Type and Description:**

Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Charles, and Simon Stewart are placed in the licensed family foster home of their paternal great aunt Jill Francis and her husband, Logan Morris. The placement provides the least restrictive placement option. The foster care placement is considered stable.

##### **Needs of Foster Parents:**

The foster parents have been provided with known background information on Courtney, Kyle, Jessica, Charles, and Simon Stewart. They have also been provided with Medicaid cards to secure health care services for the children and with the name of the children's primary health care provider. Foster parents will receive monthly foster care maintenance.

##### **Visitation**

Ms. Stewart completed her treatment program at Keystone Treatment Facility on December 16. At times, she has appeared frustrated with the children during visits and has missed several scheduled visits since the holidays. Mr. Stewart is incarcerated, and visitation consists of letter

writing plan was established at this time. As Mr. Stewart is incarcerated, there is no face-to-face visitation between him and his children. Mr. Stewart has been writing to all five children.

**Safety and Risk Assessment**

Safety threats include:

- None

**Risk level: Moderate**

**Permanency Plan**

Reunification and Adoption

Signatures		
Foster Care Worker: Sally Jordan	<i>Sally Jordan</i>	Date: 2/21/2017
Foster Care Supervisor: Robin White	<i>Robin White</i>	Date: 2/21/2017