



Wayne County Children Services Board

2534 Burbank Road, Wooster, Ohio 44691

PHONE (330) 345-5340 - FAX (330) 345-7082 - www.waynecsb.org

The CONNECTION

MARCH/APRIL 2009

2008 YEAR IN REVIEW

By: Randall B. Muth, Executive Director

No review of calendar year 2008 would be complete without some discussion of the impact the recent economic downturn has had. As I value completeness, this review will be no different. However, before we get to that, I would like to take a moment to draw your attention to some successes which the Wayne County Children Services Board has enjoyed over the past year.

We believe that when children must be removed from their parents, kinship placement with other capable family members, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles is better for children rather than being placed with foster parents who, though well meaning and loving, are total strangers. Research indicates that the transition from birth parents to extended family members in kinship placement is often less traumatic for these children because often times, the children will have had a previous relationship with the family member. Further, children in relative placement experience fewer placement changes than children placed with non-kin foster parents. Significantly, children who reunify with their birth parents after kinship care are less likely to re-enter foster care than those who had been in non-relative foster placements or in group care facilities.

In recognition of the benefits associated with safe, appropriate relative placement, we have dedicated one social worker to do nothing but facilitate these types of placements. We have seen great results. The statistic we use to measure our success in this is the relative bed days compared to foster care bed days. Over the past year, we have seen an increase of around ten percent in favor of relative care. At any given time, approximately 46% of our traditional out of home placements are with relatives. That translates into a savings of almost \$102,000.00 to the County. Our goal is to hit 55% of our children in relative placement. If that happens, we anticipate saving the county an additional \$100,000 in placement costs.

Another area in which we achieved success in 2008 is with reducing the case load sizes in our on-going department. For the past several years, we have consistently operated at ten to twenty percent above state recommended case loads. In July of 2008, after approximately a year and a half of effort, I had the pleasure of announcing that none of our 16 on-going case workers had a case load size above recommended levels.

The reduction in case load sizes is not, unfortunately, due to a reduction in need. In fact, the number of cases we investigated last year was up slightly from 2007. Nor was this the result of us reducing the services to the community. We achieved this goal by implementing cutting edge techniques that resulted in a reduction in the time it took to remedy the problems that led to our involvement with a family or, when the problems could not be remedied, achieving a permanent placement for children.

As I promised, I do need to inform the community of the impact which the economy has had on our agency. We have been able to maintain the previous high level of service which we provide to the community. However, to do so, like

(continued on page 4)



THE CONNECTION

MARCH/APRIL 2009

**WAYNE COUNTY
CHILDREN SERVICES**

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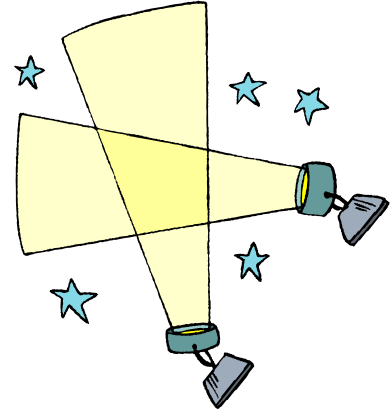
Employee Spotlight

By: Bethany Sherrieb
Social Service Supervisor



Michelle May

Caseworker II - Intake



Michelle has worked at Wayne County Children Services for four years. She started out as an Ongoing Caseworker II, but is now a Caseworker II in Intake. She investigates new referrals of child abuse and neglect, ensures child safety, makes referrals to community agencies, and transfers cases for ongoing services as needed.

Michelle is a 2003 graduate of Kent State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Development and Family Studies with a concentration in Family Life Education.

One of Michelle's lasting memories while at WCCSB is receiving the Caseworker of the Quarter Award in 2006. She was humbled to receive this award because of her hard work and dedication being recognized in the short time she had been an employee.

Michelle's hobbies include spending time with her family and friends, scrapbooking, being outside in summer, and singing on the church Praise team.

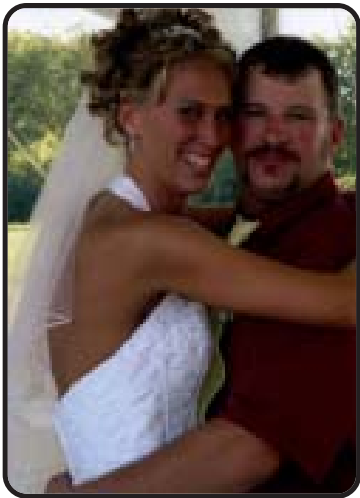
Michelle has had a lot of rewarding moments working at WCCSB. She loves the feeling she gets when her words or actions have really made an impact on a child, parent or an entire family.

If Michelle had one wish about her job, it would be that we would have an unlimited agency budget and unlimited community resources with an overall goal to drastically reduce child abuse and neglect in our community.

STAFF NEWS

Staff Member Anniversaries

March	April
Christa Hissong, Social Service Supervisor 03/23/95 14 years	Chrystal Way, Records Technician 04/15/00 9 years
Kim King - Account Clerk II 03/17/03 6 years	



Rachel & Dave

Congratulations to Caseworker Rachel Workinger on her marriage to David Perry. Rachel's outdoor wedding took place on August 16, 2008, at the home of the groom's parents in Seville. Following the ceremony, guests enjoyed a hog roast, games, and watching the bride feed the cows in her wedding gown!

Rachel and Dave enjoyed a honeymoon where they traveled to Camelback, Pennsylvania; Burlington, Vermont; Kennebunkport, Maine and Cape Cod, Massachusetts.





(continued from page 1)

everyone else, we have had to make some sacrifices. We have cut our discretionary spending by almost 26 percent. We had to eliminate our tuition reimbursement program, training incentives, health incentives, raises for management staff and even water coolers.

In the grand scheme, those sacrifices are relatively minor and we are happy to make them if it means continuing the services to the children of Wayne County. What is a little harder to accept is that we had many plans to expand and improve the services we provide. For example, we had hoped to have funding available to support our new increase in relative placements. We realized that our parenting program has not changed significantly since 1992. We had hoped to expand and improve that as well.

But, if there is a silver lining to all this, it is that we have renewed our appreciation for the tradition of communication and cooperation between our sister agencies, other governmental entities in Wayne County and the private sector. As we continue to face economic challenges, it will be important to rely on the support and cooperation of our many community partners and citizens.

Therefore, I would like to thank the Wayne County Prosecutor for providing excellent representation of our Agency in the Wayne County Juvenile Court, the Children's Advocacy Center which provides services to victims of sex abuse locally, the Family and Children First Council which provides services including team meetings to develop collaborative treatment plans with families with the goal of service delivery in the least restrictive environment, the multiple mental health and substance abuse recovery agencies which provided various treatment interventions to address issues for both parents and children, our local schools who have worked closely with the agency to ensure children are in the most appropriate educational system, and the many prevention, early intervention, and collaboration efforts occurring in Wayne County. But, mostly, I would like to thank you, the citizens of Wayne County, for making services to families a priority as evidenced by the investment you have made in our multi-systemic approach to reducing child abuse.

I am firmly convinced that child protection truly takes a community. So, as you read this, please take a moment to reflect on how you may help build a community where all children can thrive, develop character, and learn to be responsible citizens in an environment of security and love. By honoring our obligation to support and protect our young people, we all have an opportunity to make a positive difference in the life of a child and build a brighter future for our community. I encourage all citizens of Wayne County to recognize that child abuse prevention starts with each one of us.

To review our entire 2008 Annual Report, please visit our web-site at www.waynecsb.org.

#

16th Annual Child Abuse Prevention Month Community Breakfast



Honorary Chairpersons

Jim & Anita Miller

Scheduled Speaker

Cedric Riley - Former Foster Child &
Current Student at The Ohio State University

Thursday, April 30, 2009 - 7:00 a.m.
Shisler Center (OARDC, 1625 Wilson Rd., Wooster)
Cost: \$12 per person (Tables of 8 are available.)
Registration Deadline: April 16, 2009

RESERVATIONS

Name of Company: _____

Contact Person: _____ Phone: _____

Number of Tickets Requested: _____

Address to Send

Tickets with seating assignment will be mailed
approximately one week prior to the event.

Tickets to: _____
(street) (city) (state) (zip)

**Address to Send

Invoice to: _____
(street) (city) (state) (zip)

Make checks payable to: Wayne County Children Services, 2534 Burbank Rd., Wooster, OH 44691

**Payment must be received prior to the event.

RESERVATIONS: Phone: (330)345-5340 Ext. 2331 FAX: (330)345-1282 Attention: Lisa Cygan

**Presented by: Voices for Children (a Children's Advocacy Committee) and
the Wayne County Children Services Board**



Volunteer News

By: Jackie Wynn, Volunteer Coordinator

INTERESTING TRIVIA IN HONOR OF NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK, APRIL 19 – 25, 2009

Did you know?

- ⇒ National Volunteer Week began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order establishing it as an annual celebration of volunteering.
- ⇒ Data from the Longitudinal Study of Aging found that individuals who volunteer have lower mortality rates than those who do not.
- ⇒ According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor, about 60.8 million people volunteered through or for an organization at least once between September, 2006 and September, 2007.
- ⇒ According to the Independent Sector's "Giving and Volunteering in the United States," based on a national survey of more than 4,000 adults:
 - 89% of households give to charity
 - The average annual contribution for contributors is \$1,620
 - 44% of adults volunteer
 - 83.9 million American adults volunteer, representing the equivalent of over 9 million full-time employees!
- ⇒ In 2008, Wayne County Children Services' volunteers invested 2,458.50 hours in the children of our community.



And, the most amazing trivia (drum roll, please!)...

...According to the research from The Independent Sector, the estimated hourly rate in 2007 for each volunteer hour is equivalent to **\$19.51!**

Now, that's pretty impressive! Don't you think!?!

Volunteer News

By: Jackie Wynn, Volunteer Coordinator

THANK

YOU

In recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month (April) and National Volunteer Recognition Week (April 19 – 25), I wish to thank ALL individuals who serve as volunteers and support our volunteer program. As the saying goes, "It takes a village to raise a child," and that is proven time and again by all of you who volunteer and support our agency. Each time you give to our agency, whether it be by spending time with a child or making an in-kind or monetary donation, you make a difference – so from the bottom of my heart –

THANK YOU!



FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWS

2009 FOSTER/ADOPTIVE CAREGIVER TRAINING SCHEDULE

Street Drug Recognition

Saturday, April 18 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Trainer: Tyrone White

Self-Mutilating Behaviors

Saturday, May 9 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Trainer: David Zidar

Helping Children w/Mentally Ill Parents

Thursday, June 18 - 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Trainer: David Zidar

Speaking the Truth in Love

Friday, October 23 - 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Trainer: John Ward

Re-Parenting the Wounded Child

Saturday, October 24 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Trainer: John Ward

Play with a Purpose

Friday, November 6 - 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Trainer: Bert Nero

Child Development

Saturday, November 7 - 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

Trainer: David Zidar

Chemically Dependent Parents

Saturday, November 7 - 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Trainer: David Zidar

Computer Safety

Saturday, November 7 - 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Trainer: Pieri Levandofsky

Coaching & Mentoring for Foster Parents

Sunday, November 8 - 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Trainer: Mel Gravely

NOTE:

All adoptive parents are also welcome to attend these trainings.

To register for any of the trainings listed, please call a foster care specialist at 330-345-5340.

****Please remember to pre-register at least five days prior to the training. If we do not have ten people registered by that deadline, the training will be cancelled.****



FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWS

FOSTER FAMILY FEATURE

By: Michelle Costa, Caseworker II - Placement

Paul and Laura Graebing have been foster parents since June, 2008. They got licensed with a motivation to adopt since they have no children. Approximately three weeks after becoming licensed, Paul and Laura accepted placement of Marie, a 13 year old girl with developmental delays. They have worked very hard to teach her appropriate social skills. They also plan a lot of activities for her in the home and in the community. They have her in a therapeutic horse program, church groups, school science club, and agency mentor program. In addition to these outside activities, Marie has responsibilities in the home caring for their animals. It is Marie's job to feed their many chickens, care for the guinea pig, and help care for the family's 13 dogs. The family also has many birds in the home that Marie helps out with. Laura's love for animals extends outside the home with her volunteer work at the Humane Society. Paul and Laura used to have dogs in the Therapy Dogs program where animals are used in hospitals and nursing homes to help in the healing process. This works into Paul's career as he is a full-time nurse.



Paul



Laura

Recently, the Graebings accepted placement of Trissha, a seven year old girl who is available for adoption. She is adjusting well to their home and is excited to have a forever home with them. Paul and Laura have also done some short term placements and respites. They are learning all the "ins and outs" of foster care rather quickly. They really enjoy fostering and are excited about the prospect of adoption. Paul and Laura have said that they feel biological parents do not pick out what their child will be like, therefore they do not feel they should be selective in what child they plan to adopt. A child that is in need of a family is their only necessary qualification. As long as there are issues they can work through with services and support, they are committed to that child through it all. We appreciate their love for the children in need and are happy they are on our team of foster families.

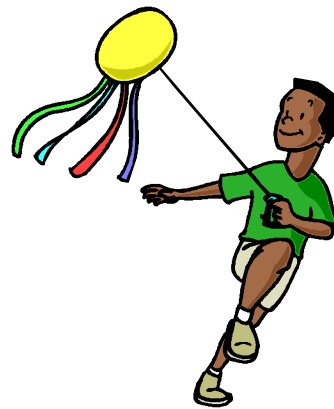


FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWS

ANNUAL FOSTER CARE MONTH KIDZ KITEFEST

Join us from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on May 16 for some kite flying fun in honor of you - our foster parents and children! There will be free kites for the first 100 guests, a bounce house, face painting, kite safety seminars, games, prizes, and more!

Anyone interested in helping with face painting or other activities should call Regina Schwartz at 330-345-5340, Ext. 2351.



FOSTER CHILD RECOGNIZED AT BOARD MEETING



(left to right) Sharon Gretzinger, Mitchell, & Randy Rice

At its February meeting, the Wayne County Children Services Board recognized Mitchell O. with a Certificate of Achievement for progress he has made since being placed in foster care. Since being placed in the Gretzinger Foster Home, Mitchell has made great strides. He is showing maturity, making improvements at school, maintaining positive relationships with peers and adults, and has earned the trust of his foster parents.

As a reward, Mitchell received a gift card to do some shopping with. Mitchell's foster parents, Mike and Sharon Gretzinger, and his caseworker, Randy Rice, were also recognized for their contributions to Mitchell's progress.

Great job, Mitchell, Mike, Sharon and Randy!



FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWS

TEAM ENCOURAGES FOSTER CARE AWARENESS

By: Regina Schwartz, Foster/Adoptive Home Recruiter

They love the outdoors, a physical challenge, and kids. On April 18, those three things will come together as “Team Foster Friends” kicks off the 2009 mountain bike season at Wooster’s Vulture’s Knob race course. The team slogan is, “Move Fast to Foster or Adopt” and that’s just what the team is encouraging people to do. All of the team members themselves have been involved with the child welfare system in some way and are hoping to share their experiences with others.

Child mentor and team organizer, Steve Schwartz, says there is a desperate need for more people willing to help with teenagers, especially boys. Steve started mentoring a 13-year-old boy for Wayne County Children Services at the prompting of his wife, Regina, who is the agency’s foster/adoptive home recruiter. He says he and Regina have two daughters and the “guy time” he shares with his mentee is something he looks forward to. Steve says he had considered mentoring in the past, but always thought it would take too much time. He finally realized, however, “The investment in a child’s life is more valuable than most of what I was doing with that one hour a week.” Some of the activities Steve and his mentee enjoy are mountain biking, playing guitar and skateboarding.



In addition to Steve, team members include foster parent Doug Yoder; child advocate Joe Costa; caseworker Jodi Gates; adoptive parent Mike McClintock; and Mike’s son Adam McClintock. Mike McClintock is not only an avid mountain biker, but is also the president of McClintock Electric, one of the team’s sponsors. Other team backers include Ride On Wooster Bicycles, J. Michael Insurance Agency, Wooster Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine, and the Exchange Club of Wooster.

Wayne County Children Services has temporary or permanent custody of 20 teen boys, but only two foster homes licensed through Children Services currently accept placement of boys in that age group. When homes are unavailable through our network, children are placed in therapeutic homes whose services are purchased from private providers. These homes are usually out-of-county, forcing children to leave behind not only their homes, but also their school systems and friends.

To learn more about fostering/adopting or Team Foster Friends, contact Regina Schwartz at 330-345-5340 ext. 2351.



AGENCY STATISTICS

Intake Services	December, 2008	January, 2009
Reports of Child Abuse/Neglect	93	71
Reports of Child Abuse/Neglect-one year ago	94	127
Annual Total	1,360	71
Monthly Increase/Decrease	- 1%	- 44%
 Substitute Care		
Agency Foster Care	69	57
Purchased Therapeutic Care	14	17
Purchased Residential Care	20	18
Independent Living	0	0
Total Placements	103	92
Total Bed Days	2,824	2,704
 Adoption Services		
Finalized Adoptions	2	0
Total Year to Date	7	0
PASSS Approved	0	0
 Protective Services		
Families Served	176	165
Children Served	329	311
Children in Permanent Custody	23	23
Case Aides/Miles Driven	7,966.49	7,392.16
 Volunteer Services		
New Inquiries	53	15
Active Volunteers	51	83*
		*includes 7 Board Members & 11 Advisory Board Members
 Parent Education		
Steps to Better Parenting I:		
Adults Enrolled	23	23
Adults Successfully Completed Program	-	13

WE'VE CHANGED OUR PARENTING CLASSES TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

STEPS TO BETTER PARENTING: THE EARLY YEARS

For Parents of Children Ages Birth to Four (4)

Future classes will be scheduled as the need arises. A waiting list will be maintained. Please call to sign up.

Instructor: Heather Fath

Location: Varied Locations in Wooster

STEPS TO BETTER PARENTING: THE MIDDLE YEARS

For Parents of Children Ages Five (5) to Twelve (12)

Future classes will be scheduled as the need arises. A waiting list will be maintained. Please call to sign up.

Instructor: Heather Fath

Location: Varied Location in Wooster



Topics Covered in Both Classes Include: Learning appropriate development expectations, increasing knowledge and ability on how to manage the behaviors of your children, increasing self awareness and ability to be empathic, positive discipline, communication, expressing feelings, family stress, modeling appropriate behavior, consistency, and personal boundaries.

Books and materials are provided at no cost to participants. You must attend eight (8) out of ten (10) classes to receive your completion certificate.

Class participants must call personally to register - 330-345-5340.

OUR MISSION...

In partnership with the community, Children Services of Wayne County protects children at risk of abuse or neglect and strengthens, preserves and empowers families. Through evaluation of that risk, we identify and coordinate community services. We work in collaboration with others to provide these children with safe, nurturing and permanent families, whether their own or another. We seek to enhance community awareness by educating the public.