



Wayne County Children Services Board

2534 Burbank Road, Wooster, Ohio 44691

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

The CONNECTION

MAY/JUNE 2009

Child Abuse Prevention Month: A Flurry of Activity

By: Lisa Cygan, Executive Secretary & Voices for Children Member

Two thousand nine's Child Abuse Prevention Month came to a close on April 30 with 378 community members attending the 16th Annual Child Abuse Prevention Month Community Breakfast at The Shisler Center. The Voices for Children Committee, who plans this event, was thrilled to see so many professionals come out so early in the morning to support this event.



(l to r) Randy Muth, Children Services Executive Director; Jim & Anita Miller; Carrie Moreland, Voices for Children, Co-Chairperson; & Cedric Riley

This year's honorary chairpersons for the month were Jim and Anita Miller of Wooster. While Anita wrote the speech, Jim did the honors of sharing their story of foster parenting with attendees. Jim compared foster parenting to Johnny Appleseed by stating, "You see in foster care it's like Johnny Appleseed, you may not see the grove of trees or the fruits of your labor, you just have faith that it will be there." Jim is the Executive Director at The Village Network and Anita is a therapist at Catholic Charities in Wooster.

Cedric Riley, the keynote speaker, shared his story of being in foster care with his brothers and sisters. He was a foster child for seven years, moving from family to family, until he finally found a home he felt he belonged in. Cedric stated this was a pivotal moment where he needed to realize where the value was and what he had been through. He knew he had energy bottled up inside him that he wanted to use to move forward and show his brothers and sisters they could be successful members of society. It was from that moment on that Cedric decided to take advantage of past experiences, both good and bad, in a way that would build children up and motivate them, instead of bringing them down. His goal became to share his story and communicate to others that "success is a choice because of what we've been through."

Cedric is currently a student at The Ohio State University and travels the country as a motivational speaker. If you'd like to learn more about Cedric, please visit his website at cedricriley.com.

One week prior to the breakfast, on April 23, the Voices for Children Committee held its annual awards banquet for Child Abuse Prevention Month at Memories Party and Conference Center. It's at this event that the Child Advocate, Law Enforcement Officer and Caseworker of the Year are announced and celebrated, along

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THE CONNECTION

MAY/JUNE 2009

**WAYNE COUNTY
CHILDREN SERVICES**

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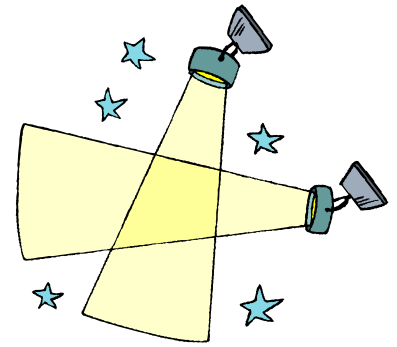
THE CONNECTION STAFF:

Editor - Randy Muth
Assistant Editor - Lisa Cygan

Contributors
Lisa Cygan
Christa Hissong
Regina Schwartz
Bethany Sherrieb
Barbara Smetzer
Joanne Walker
Jackie Wynn

Employee Spotlight

*By: Bethany Sherrieb
Social Service Supervisor*



Michelle Costa

Caseworker II - Placement

Michelle has worked at Wayne County Children Services for four years; currently in the Placement Unit. She arranges and coordinates placements and respites for foster homes, recertifies foster parents, completes Foster/Adoptive Home Studies, schedules foster parenting training, meets monthly with foster homes that have placements, and mediates between foster parents and caseworkers regarding services for children.

Michelle has Bachelor degrees in both Theology and Social Work. Her hobbies include eating in restaurants, thrift store shopping, and curling up on the couch with her husband to watch TV.

One of Michelle's lasting memories while at WCCSB is being given the Caseworker of the Quarter award in 2008. She admits to having a lot of lasting memories -- some crazy, some sad, some frustrating and some happy!

Michelle thinks the best things about working at WCCSB are the co-workers and how funny they are, and having a job and paycheck during the current economy.

If Michelle had one wish about her job, it would be to have a crystal ball that would allow her to know when children come into care, which ones we will eventually get permanent custody of, and what the children are really like so we can make the best match possible with foster families.

The Wayne County Children Services Board is an Equal Opportunity Employer. No employee will be discriminated against because of race, color, religion, creed, age, sex, national origin or ancestry, political affiliation or qualifying disability.

STAFF NEWS

Staff Member Anniversaries

May

Amy Rice, Caseworker II - Placement
05/18/98 11 years

Rachel Cranston, Caseworker II - Intake
05/14/01 8 years

Tiffany Green, Caseworker II - Intake
05/09/05 4 years

Jessica Musser, Caseworker II - Ongoing
05/16/05 4 years

Vanessa Cancelliere, Caseworker II - Intake
05/23/05 4 years

John Dillion, Staff Development/QA Manager
05/27/08 1 year

June

Kelly McMullen, Caseworker II - Placement
06/04/01 8 years

Lisa Harris, Clerical Specialist II
06/09/03 6 years

Jill Flinner, Network Technician
06/21/04 5 years

Rachel Workinger, Caseworker II - Ongoing
06/13/05 4 years

Lori Klintworth, Case Aide
06/26/07 2 years

Emily Engman, Caseworker II - Ongoing
06/23/08 1 year

Correction from April

Chrystal Way, Records Technician
04/15/09 10 years



Congratulations to Dawn Durkee, Caseworker II, on receiving her Master's Degree in Social Work from The University of Akron in May, 2009. What a GREAT accomplishment!



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with winners of the annual 6th grade poster contest. This year's award winners were: Mary Jane Miller, Child Advocate of the Year; Detective Josh Hunt of the Orrville Police Department, Law Enforcement Officer of the Year; and Jessica Musser, Caseworker of the Year. Poster contest winners included Logan Hale, Marissa Schroeder and Gabrielle Schmucker from Orrville City Schools; Laura Yoder, Megan Geitgey and Emily Price from Wayne County Schools; and Becca Cornelius, Daniel Ackerman and Kalyn Brown from Wooster City Schools. Poster winners received a monetary gift, along with a t-shirt with their poster on it.

The activities that occur during Child Abuse Prevention Month wouldn't be possible without the support of our corporate sponsors. This year's sponsors included The Apple Creek Banking Company, Cleveland Clinic Wooster, The Commercial & Savings Bank, The Daily Record, Expert T's/Embroidery Joe, The J.M. Smucker Company, Wenger Excavating, Wooster Glass Company, and the Wooster Kiwanis Club.



(l to r) Josh Hunt, Jessica Musser and Mary Jane Miller gathered around the poster contest display.

In addition to the events mentioned above, corporate sponsors make it possible for us to print and distribute over 82,000 placemats, with a child abuse prevention message on them, to 23 restaurants in Wayne County. We also distributed over 10,000 plastic bags to libraries, bookstores and gift shops in the county. These items help us spread the message of child abuse prevention throughout the entire county. They also provide contact information for anyone wanting to report abuse or neglect to Wayne County Children Services.

If you drove past The Kinney Building during April, you couldn't miss the 1,293 brightly colored pinwheels displayed on the front lawn. Each pinwheel represents one incident of reported child abuse or neglect from 2007. The Pinwheels for Prevention display is part of a state-wide campaign to bring attention to child abuse prevention. In 2009, all 88 Ohio counties participated and displayed pinwheels! The Wayne County display was organized by the Pinwheels for Prevention Committee and is sponsored by the Wayne County Children's Advocacy Center.

Numerous people contribute to Child Abuse Prevention Month and making it the success that it is in Wayne County. All of the activities mentioned above help us "protect children and strengthen families," which is the ultimate goal for those of us working in the field of child welfare. Thanks to everyone who contributed to a successful month!



FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWS

Unkefers Named Foster Parents of the Year at Annual Banquet

By: Regina Schwartz, Foster/Adoptive Home Recruiter



*Thad & Stephanie Unkefer
2009 Foster Parents of the Year*

Thad and Stephanie Unkefer were honored as Foster Parents of the Year at the 26th Annual Foster Parent Banquet held on May 13th. The Unkefers were chosen by WCCSB staff as the Foster Parents of the Year from 51 families who provide foster care through WCCSB. The Unkefers have been licensed for three years and originally got involved with the agency to care for a relative placement of four siblings. Since that time, they have cared for several sibling groups and a teen mom and her infant. They are committed to helping birthparents during their reunification efforts and have actively mentored birthparents. The Unkefers live near Smithville and have three children of their own.

“They do a great job of making children feel welcome in their home and of reunifying children with their birth families,” said their caseworker, Nancy Ballinger. Ballinger also stated she admires the

Unkefers for the calm attitude they maintain in all situations. The Unkefers are the owners of Livecom, a computer service business, and manage to keep their home and business running smoothly despite the busy schedules of their foster and biological children.

Receiving certificates for 15 years of service as foster parents were Rick and Tammy Yoder of Apple Creek, and Richard and Edith Speegle of Wooster. Recipients of certificates for five years of service were Eric and Joellen Fone of Dalton, and Ella Troyer of Apple Creek.

The following new foster families were also recognized: Kim Peden, Ashland; Mat and Christina Biggs, Wooster; Mark and Lisa Miller, Apple Creek; Jerome and Heidi Fatzinger, Shreve; Paul and Laura Graebing, Big Prairie; Bill and Laurie Harris, North Lawrence; Brian and Clara Yoder, Apple Creek; Pam and Larry Yonts, Marshallville; Art and Rebecca Jones, Wooster; Bill and Patricia Galanski, Wooster; Robert and Jenny Rybicki, West Salem; and Dalewyn and Julie Martin, Dalton.

The event was held at Wooster Church of the Nazarene in Wooster, which donated the banquet proceeds to Relay for Life. Door prizes were given to the length of service award winners thanks to the generous donations of area businesses, including Wal-Mart, Buehler’s, and Valvoline Instant Oil Change.



FOSTER/ADOPTIVE FAMILY NEWS

2009 FOSTER/ADOPTIVE CAREGIVER TRAINING SCHEDULE

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.****

Volunteer News

By: Jackie Wynn, Volunteer Coordinator

VOLUNTEERS: The Heart Of Our Agency!



(l to r) Lisa Harris, Robin & Rob Smucker enjoy food & fellowship at the celebration.

Gabriela Mistral, a Chilean educator, once stated: "Many things can wait. Children cannot. Today their bones are being formed, their blood is being made, their senses are being developed. To them we cannot say "tomorrow." Their name is today!" 'Today' is what our volunteers have all claimed in making a difference in the life of a child.

Our volunteers were thanked for their service during our annual volunteer celebration dinner, which was held on April 15 our mentor center. All volunteers were recognized for their dedication to the children we serve throughout the year.

Rachel Spatz, a graduating senior at the College of Wooster was recognized for her outstanding contribution to leadership in the COW 4 KIDS program. Rachel served as a volunteer for four years and was the coordinator of the COW 4 KIDS group for the past three years. We wish Rachel all the best in her future endeavors.

A star is unique in design and brightly shines over us on clear nights. Sometimes they shine so brightly it's like they are offering an aura of protection as if leading us unto a brighter path. That illustration reflects the spirit of our star award recipients: Jim and Kathi Weaver! The Weavers have dedicated their volunteer time to mentoring adolescent sisters since January, 2007 – spending quality time with two girls who desperately need good role models. We are truly grateful for the Weaver's dedication to mentoring.

Our Volunteer of the Year is Brooke Winkler. Brooke has been a volunteer with us for nine years and a mentor to Leah for the past four years. Brooke is a therapist at the Village Network and, in my opinion, one of the best cheerleaders for kids that I know. She oozes joy, compassion, and genuine interest to all she meets. Our mentoring program is stronger because of Brooke's dedication.

My main goal is to make the volunteer experience mutually beneficial for the volunteer, and the children we service. This goal is much easier to achieve when caseworkers actively support our volunteers, by offering case information in a timely manner, engaging the volunteer into the case objectives, offering guidance, and showing appreciation to our volunteers. One worker does all of this and more! Martha Jackson-Hill was presented the "One in a Million" award for the outstanding collaboration she gives to our volunteer team.



Sharon Porter and Bo present the benefits of canine therapy.

Our program for the celebration was a presentation from Sharon Porter of Caring Therapy Canines on the benefits of canine therapy. We were treated to a visit from several therapy dogs. We learned that Caring Therapy Canines is a very active volunteer services group in Ashland, Wayne, Holmes, and Medina counties who offer companionship visits, as well as conduct a Dog Bite Prevention Program. Children Services and Caring Therapy Canines work in partnership together at the Wayne County Fair Tot/Tag Station and Main Street Wooster Kid's Day.



Volunteer News

By: Jackie Wynn, Volunteer Coordinator

National Pajama Program comes to Children Services!

The motto for the Pajama Program is: "Nothing is ever too much to do for a child." And, I can affirm that is what the Akron Chapter is committed to. For well over a year the Akron Chapter, under the direction of Patty Gillepsie, has shipped not only brand new pajamas for the children we service through our Closet of Hope, but also includes fantastic books and blankets in each shipment. It is difficult to put into words how wonderful the items are in each donation we receive, and



(l to r) Spring Fling Party Planners Bethany Sherrieb, Debbie, Jackie Wynn, Patty & Lisa Harris. Debbie & Patty are with the Pajama Program Akron Chapter.

for the children to receive brand new pajamas is just really special. Yet, in April the volunteers with the Akron Chapter proved that "nothing is ever too much to do for a child" and hosted a Spring Fling party that was open to all of our foster children, as well as the children in our mentoring program. Each child that attended the event was given the opportunity to make several crafts and decorate their very own cookie. They also received a brand new book and pair of pajamas. The evening was a very special one for all in attendance!



Isn't it amazing what our volunteers will do for us!

Randy Regan is so into helping our cause that he even wore bunny ears for the Orrville Area Chamber of Commerce's Bunny Trail. Thanks, Randy, for your dedication!



AGENCY STATISTICS

	February, 2009	March, 2009
Intake Services		
Reports of Child Abuse/Neglect	107	97
Reports of Child Abuse/Neglect-one year ago	116	117
Annual Total	178	275
Monthly Increase/Decrease	- 8%	- 17%
Substitute Care		
Agency Foster Care	62	62
Purchased Therapeutic Care	17	16
Purchased Residential Care	18	17
Independent Living	0	0
Total Placements	97	95
Total Bed Days	2,607	2,619
Adoption Services		
Finalized Adoptions	2	5
Total Year to Date	4	9
PASSS Approved	0	1
Protective Services		
Families Served	170	166
Children Served	322	323
Children in Permanent Custody	22	21
Case Aides/Miles Driven	6,592.87	9,265.42
Kinship Services		
Relative/Kinship Placements	45	39
Kinship Assistance Approved	4	4
Kinship Permanency Incentive	2	4
Volunteer Services		
New Inquiries	22	30
Active Volunteers	83*	83*
*includes 7 Board Members & 13 Advisory Board Members		
Parent Education		
Steps to Better Parenting I:		
Adults Enrolled	33	33
Adults Successfully Completed Program	-	-

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.