



# Mahoning Matters

1. matter (n.) – material, topic, issue or subject
2. matter (v.) – to be of importance, to count, to make a difference

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## Mahoning County Children Services Celebrates Child Abuse Prevention Month

By Radhika Cruz

On April 12, 2011, Mahoning County Children Services in collaboration with the Akron Children's Hospital Mahoning Valley Child Advocacy Center will be having its 6th Annual Pinwheels for Prevention event.



Pinwheels for Prevention is a nationwide public awareness campaign created by Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA) to encourage Americans in taking action to prevent abuse and neglect from ever occurring.

The Pinwheel not only serves as a symbol of a happy childhood, but it also represents "change" due to its constant movement. The prevention message has evolved or "changed" from not only being an awareness message but also includes providing solutions for effective prevention. The goal of the campaign is to stop child abuse **before** it ever occurs.

In 2010, Mahoning County Children Services received 3,129 calls concerning child safety and of those calls, 1,317 were classified as child abuse or neglect. Each of these reports was provided by adults in our community who advocated for the safety of children. During our Pinwheels for Prevention event, each report will be visually displayed in the form of a pinwheel on the lawn of Akron Children's Hospital which is located at 6505 Market Street in Boardman on April 12th at 9am.

The event agenda will include remarks from Denise Stewart, Executive Director of Mahoning County Children Services and the keynote speaker will be the Honorable Mark A. Belinky, Judge of Mahoning County Probate Court. There will also be a brief reception following the event that will include refreshments and entertainment.



# April is Child Abuse Prevention Month



# Mahoning Matters

## From The Director's Desk

Mahoning County Children Services Recognizes Child Abuse Prevention Month

The month of April has been designated as "Child Abuse Prevention Month" throughout the State of Ohio. The goal of this program is to bring awareness to the community of the importance of preventing child abuse and neglect and to motivate community members to take an active role in the protection of children. In Mahoning County we are pleased to present two major events that emphasize the importance of the community's role in assisting in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. On Tuesday, April 12, our agency will host our annual "Pinwheels for Prevention" event at Akron Children's Hospital, Building C, 6505 Market St., where 1317 pinwheels will be planted on the lawn representing the number of calls of abuse and neglect that were made to our agency.

In addition, our agency, in collaboration with the Family First Council, was selected as one of only 11 counties throughout the state to receive a special grant for the provision of a second Child Abuse Prevention event. On Saturday, April 16, we will host a day long family event to increase awareness of the child abuse and neglect prevention through a variety of workshops and activities. This event will be held at the Davis Center in Mill Creek Park from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

It is of importance to note that total reports received by our agency in 2009-- including child abuse, neglect and dependency referrals -- increased approximately 30% from 2007. However, through comprehensive case management, the number of children in placement has not increased, but has actually decreased by approximately 4%. By investing in birth, kinship and adoptive families we have been able to provide family stability, as well as better long term outcomes for children. Educated and involved communities play an integral role in preventing child abuse and neglect and enhance our ability to provide quality services to our children.

To sum up, that is what this month's activities are all about!

Denise Stewart, Executive Director

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## Mahoning County Foster Parent Association

By Peggy Messer

The Mahoning County Foster Parent Association (MCFPA) would like to thank everyone who donated to the Mahoning County Foster Parent Association Christmas Party. The party was held on Sunday, Dec. 19, 2010. Everyone had a great time.

We would like to welcome two new officers, Marita Emmert, President and Venita Collins, Vice President.

The First Annual 2K/5K Walk, Stroll and Roll for Foster Care will be held on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> beginning at 11:00 a.m. starting at the Mahoning County Children Services Building, 222 W. Federal Street, Youngstown, Ohio 44503. There will be goody bags, children's activities, food, beverages, and a Chinese Auction. This event is open to the public. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness of the children who are in the foster care system, to create support for these children and their foster families and to raise awareness to the ongoing need for foster families. The proceeds from this event will benefit the Foster Children of Mahoning County. So, come on out for a family friendly, informational, and fun time. Registration fees are \$10 for adult, \$5 for child, Maximum \$50 for family, and foster children participate for free. For more information or to register please contact Marita Emmert at 330- 783-1719, Venita Collins 330-538-9620, Margaret (Peggy) Messer, or Radhika Cruz at 330-941-8888.

The MCFPA is looking for speakers who would be willing to come and talk with their group for about an hour or two, If anyone would like to volunteer you can contact Peggy Messer at 330-941-8855.

**In recognition of the month of May as National Foster Care Month, we would like to thank all of our foster parents for their love and dedication in providing homes for our children.**

# Mahoning Matters

## Department News *This month we are featuring Mahoning County Children Services Group Homes*

By Glenna Ress, Residential Supervisor

Mahoning County Children Services group homes are homes to 13 (thirteen) children, ranging in ages from 9 to 18. There are 3 (three) homes; The Girls Child Care Center (GCCC), the Boys Child Care Center (BCCC) and the Receiving Home. The group homes are supervised by one supervisor and 2 group home coordinators, 15 full time Youth Leaders and 18 part time Youth Leaders.

The GCCC currently has 7 (seven) young ladies residing at that home. We are fortunate to have an intern from YSU, Lynn Duffey, who has been providing education and training in the area of health and HIV issue for our residents. Lynn has been working with the girls to prepare them for sharing information in other educational settings.

The BCCC is currently home to 5 (five) young men. The boys have volunteering at a local agency with great success serving the homeless in our community.

The Receiving Home is currently home to 2 boys and 2 girls, ranging from ages 9 to 13. The children have a tutor coming to the home 4 (four) nights a week to help with school work. Two of the children just made the honor roll at their respective schools. Good Job!



We've all heard the old adage, "It's not what you say, but how you say it." Communication is not just the spoken word, but also body language and tone of voice. You can say the nicest words, but if your eyes are cold and there's no smile on your face, the words are meaningless. The opposite is also true. If you need to convey a serious message, you cannot giggle and look away while talking. Make yourself aware of your own body language; this will better enable you to understand other's body language. But keep in mind that somebody languages are simply a

person's habit, so be careful when trying to interpret.

Did you know that children generally communicate and receive information through nonverbal communication? Many times a child cannot verbalize what they are thinking or feeling, so they act it out. At times their actions and/or demeanor are the exact opposite of what they are saying. So, pay close attention to what your child is **not** saying, especially when he or she pulls away from or acts differently around certain people.



### "Parents Stress levels and a Vulnerable Population of Children"

Among all types of children who are at risk to suffer abuse and neglect, children with disabilities are an extremely vulnerable part of this population. This is directly correlated with parent stress levels, which are notably higher than for parents of typical children. Behavior challenges with these children have been documented by parents as being one of the most stressful factors. There is new research that

has shown that mothers of children with Autism and behavioral problems have stress levels similar to military personnel in combat (Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders).

Research shows that mothers, who tend to be the primary caregivers, have less time for themselves, are more tired, and are three times more likely to suffer from stressful events on any given day. They are also more interrupted at work and have a difficult time finding caregivers who are qualified to provide care for their child.

Parents need to find ways to ease their stress levels. Here are some parenting tips from [special-needs.families.com](http://special-needs.families.com) to aid in dealing with such high levels of stress: Make sure to find a way to take some time for yourself and for your spouse and other children. Schedule a "time off" and stick to it; Take care of your own health; when possible, accept help from people who offer it; Seek support from other moms parenting similar children. There are local support groups and online ones as well.

*April is National Autism Awareness Month!* Spread awareness of the need for research and funding to aid in finding answers and providing help to families raising children with Autism in your community!

# Mahoning Matters



Words that indicate multiple people functioning as one body are *collective nouns*. Common examples are *team, family, crowd, unit, general public, platoon, couple, and Congress*. The key to proper constructions with such words is remembering that collective nouns are singular in number. Therefore, the corresponding pronoun that often follows a collective noun in a sentence must also be singular (NOT plural).

**Incorrect usage example:** The *crowd* expressed *their* displeasure with the referee's call.

**Correct usage example:** The *crowd* expressed *its* displeasure with the referee's call.

**Incorrect usage example:** *Congress* must get *their* act together if America is to prosper.

**Correct usage example:** *Congress* must get *its* act together if America is to prosper.

**Incorrect usage example:** The *unit* pooled *their* money together to buy a pizza.

**Correct usage example:** The *unit* pooled *its* money together to buy a pizza.

By the way, there is no such word as *its'* (which is a non-standard form). The only two correct forms are *it's* (which is a **contraction** for "it is" and, less commonly, "it has") and *its* (which is the **third person singular possessive pronoun** used in the example sentences above).

E-mail me your English questions at [pkm32mpf@aol.com](mailto:pkm32mpf@aol.com) and I'll give you my words.

## Did You Know?

**That...** [www.mahoningkids.com](http://www.mahoningkids.com) is a valuable source of information about Mahoning County Children Services and provides information on *How to become a Foster Parent* and the agency's *One Church One Child Program*.

**That...** Cucumbers contain most of the vitamins you need every day, just one cucumber contains Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B3, Vitamin B5, Vitamin B6, Folic Acid, Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium and Zinc.

*Flore Stubbs*

**That...** The average four-year old child asks more than four hundred questions a day. *The Book of Useless Information*

**That...** In ancient Egypt, the apricot was called the egg of the sun, killing a cat was a crime punishable by death, and Egyptians paid their taxes in honey. *The Book of Useless Information*

**That...** On any given day in Ohio, more than 22,000 children are living with foster families or in another out of home placement setting. Nearly 2,800 of these children are waiting for adoptive families.

*ODJFS*

## Community Resources

- **Mahoning County Children Services**

Offers FREE Informational Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Presentations throughout the community and to children in Mahoning County School Systems. For more information contact Radhika Cruz at 330-941-8888.

- **Akron Children's Hospital - Child Advocacy Center**

Offers FREE Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training. To learn more please contact Andrea Mistovich at 330-743-2539.

- **Help Hotline**

2 - 1 - 1

Providing Information and Referral Services. Get connected. Get answers.

- **CASA – A child's voice in court.**

Mahoning County Court Appointed Special Advocate Program "Speak up for a child." CASA is a volunteer organization – for more information contact: Renee Battafarano, Executive Director at 330-740-2239.

# Mahoning Matters

## Health Matters

By Melinda Lackner



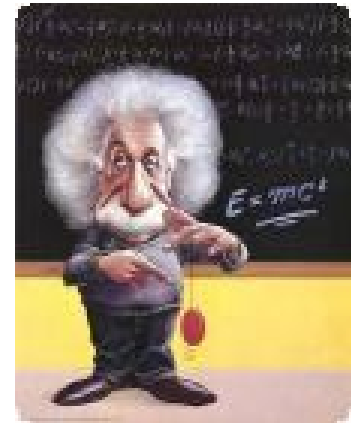
### Healthy Eating For a Healthy Mind

Millions of children have been diagnosed with Autism or ADHD and recent research proves that there is often a connection between the food children eat and their brain function. Much of the research indicates testing for food allergies, sensitivities and intolerances would be a step towards determining if a change of diet would help these children improve their brain function..

The Autism Research Institute posted these results on one of the studies conducted in a "Parent Recorded Response" study:

- 50% of children with autism improved by avoiding milk
- 49% improved by avoidance of wheat
- 64% improved on gluten-casein free diet

The researchers have found that a high percentage of these children are unable to properly break down certain proteins. The two main offenders seem to be gluten (the protein in wheat, oats, rye and barley) and casein (milk protein). These proteins leak into the child's gut undigested and attach to the opiate receptors of the autistic brain. Johnson and Johnson Ortho Clinical Diagnostics researchers confirmed peptides (breakdown products of proteins) with opiate activity in the urine of a high percentage of autistic children and have found elimination diets have made improvements in their functioning.



"Insanity: doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results."

Albert Einstein

"We allow our ignorance to prevail upon us and make us think we can survive alone, alone in patches, alone in groups, alone in races, even alone in genders."

Maya Angelou

"A youth is to be regarded with respect. How do you know that his future will not be equal to our present?"

Confucius

## SpankOut Day USA

By Radhika Cruz

**SpankOut Day USA** was initiated in 1998 to raise awareness to the need to end corporal punishment of **all** children and to promote non-violent ways to teach children positive behaviors. This nationwide initiative is observed on April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year and is sponsored by an organization called End Physical Punishment of Children (EPOCH-USA), a program of the Center for Effective Discipline. On this date, all parents, guardians and caregivers are asked to **refrain** from physically spanking their children and seek other positive forms of discipline through educational programs in their community.

Non-physical forms of discipline include: natural consequences, re-direction, distraction, establishing clear rules, loss of privileges and setting limits to name a few. Discipline involves being proactive in teaching children desirable behaviors **before** an inappropriate behavior occurs. Should misbehavior occur, positive discipline will correct the misbehavior quickly in an environment of respect, love and caregiver self-control rather than an environment of anger, fear and a caregiver's loss of control.

Let's join together in this mission of **"Raising Responsible Kids Without Hitting"**.

For more information on positive discipline techniques or for additional ideas on how **you** can do something to stop children from being physically disciplined, please visit <http://www.stophitting.com/index.php?page=spankout>



# Mahoning Matters

## April is National Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month

### “Strong Families Growing Safe Kids”

Mahoning County Family and Children's First Council in collaboration with Mahoning County Children Services, Help Hotline Crisis Center and Help Me Grow is hosting an informative and fun family event “Strong Families Growing Safe Kids”. The event will be held on Saturday April 16th at 10am at Mill Creek MetroParks Fellows Riverside Gardens.

The goal of the event is to create awareness and provide solutions to prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs. The event will include educational sessions that will focus on parental stress management, positive discipline and child rearing practices, nurturing and attachment, internet safety and parenting children with disabilities.

There will also be various activity stations for children to visit where they can hear a story, make a craft, play bingo and have an FBI Identikit created for child safety. Resource toolkits that include a free Berenstain Bears storybook on stranger danger, an awareness coloring book, wristband and backpack along with other resources and tips on internet safety which will be made available to the first 200 children.

The event is funded by the Ohio Children's Trust Fund and is free to the public. Please consider how you can participate in making a difference in the life of a child! **For more information contact Radhika Cruz at 330-941-8852.**

**STRONG**  
*families*  
growing  
**safe kids**

a Child Abuse and Neglect  
Prevention Month event

**Saturday, April 16**  
**10am-4pm**

Mill Creek MetroParks  
Fellows Riverside Gardens  
123 McKinley Ave., Youngstown

Funded by:  


**Free!**  
Children's activities  
and resources  
(limited supply)

**Educational seminars**  
Hosted by Mahoning County  
Agencies:  
♦ Family and Children First Council  
♦ Help Me Grow  
♦ Children Services

**For more info call:**  
(330) 941-8888 or (330) 965-7828

**We are looking for agency staff to be an active part in the Newsletter. Would YOU consider contributing to the Newsletter? If the answer is Yes, please contact a member of the Newsletter Committee.**

#### Newsletter Committee:

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Shawn King, Technical Support  
Philip Murphy, Abuse Supervisor  
Meghan Tarantino, Casework Specialist  
Melinda Lackner, File Clerk

Radhika Cruz, Co-Editor  
Flore Stubbs, Supervisor  
Peggy Messer, Casework Specialist  
Ruth Parker, Case Aide  
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