



# 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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## Christmas Wish Lists

Once Halloween is over, what do children's thoughts turn to? Christmas! Many children who are unable to be with family or relatives during the Holiday Season, spend their Holiday in our group homes or residential placement facilities. We are keenly aware of their "wish lists" and welcome community partners and social service organizations to help us make their dreams come true.

Some of the favorites on the children's lists include: dolls, bikes, super hero figures, remote control devices, mp3 players, clothing, V-tech toys, Disney "Cars" items, bracelets, necklaces, bath and body, handheld video games, hot wheels, legos, trains, LeapFrog books and toys, dinosaurs, Elmo stuffed animals and toys, transformers and iPods.



For more information or to make a donation, please contact Radhika Cruz at Mahoning County Children Services at (330) 941-8852. Thank you for helping to make a child's Christmas Wish come true!

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## One Church One Child National Conference

Faith in Action - Embracing the call to Foster and Adopt  
Oct 12-14, 2011 Avalon Inn, Warren, OH [www.mahoningkids.com](http://www.mahoningkids.com)



# Mahoning Matters

## From The Director's Desk By Denise Stewart

### Mahoning County Children Services Welcomes the 24th Annual National One Church One Child Conference



After months of planning and collaboration, the kick-off date for the National OneChurch One Child Conference is almost here. The conference will be held **Oct. 12-14, 2011** at the Avalon Inn in Warren, Ohio. The conference is being co-hosted by Mahoning County Children Services and Trumbull County Children Services and in partnership with Homes for Kids. The conference committee, under the leadership of Rev. Lewis Macklin- One Church, One Child Executive Committee Member (and Mahoning County Children Services Board Member) and John Jemison, One Church One Child Executive Committee member (and Mahoning County Children Services Foster Care Worker), is proud to welcome this conference to our valley for the first time.

The conference theme "**faith in action-embracing the call to foster and adopt**" emphasizes the need for ongoing recruitment for foster and adoptive homes. The "One Church, One Child" concept focuses on developing a collaboration with the faith based community and their local child welfare agency to identify and support adoptive families. Once a child is placed for adoption, the "church family" continues to provide assistance and reinforcement to the family as needed. In Mahoning County we currently have 25 children waiting for a safe, permanent, and loving family. In addition to social service agencies, there are approximately 20 church representatives registered so far to attend our conference. Could this be the perfect combination for a "*match made in heaven?*" If you'd like to attend this event, please contact John Jemison at 330-941-8888 to register.

## September is Hunger Action Month By Radhika Cruz

**September is Hunger Action Month** in which there is a community "**call to action**" to provide food donations to the hungry in our community. According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the percentage of families in Ohio with food insecurity in 2010 was 16.4%. This percentage is up approximately 3% since 2008. This increase has caused Ohio to become the **6th worst state** in the nation for food insecurity and **3rd in the nation for children under the age of five!** This is alarming! The estimated annual cost of hunger per household in the U.S. is approximately \$800 and multiply this number by the total population of Ohio and the cost is approximately \$3.9 billion per year ([www.sodexfoundation.org/hunger](http://www.sodexfoundation.org/hunger)).

Children who experience food insecurity generally have poorer health, higher hospitalization rates, poorer psycho social functioning, more anxiety, depression and lower math and reading gains in children K-3. Hunger is causing a huge health problem in our nation but it can be minimized or even ended by strengthening and supporting existing food programs such as the Second Harvest Food Bank.

We at **Mahoning County Children Services** have decided to be part of the solution to this problem. We are collecting nonperishable food items to feed the hungry in our community. We will be collecting food contributions beginning on Monday, **Sept. 19th until Dec. 8th**. If you'd like to partner with us to meet this need and would like a list of suggested food items, please contact Radhika Cruz at 330-941-8852 or by e-mail at [cruzz@odjf.state.oh.us](mailto:cruzz@odjf.state.oh.us).

No effort is too small or insignificant and will be greatly appreciated by the many families in need. The children and families of the Mahoning Valley belong to **ALL** of us! Let's all work together to meet the need in our community!



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## Continuous Quality Improvement Update

By Julie Rudolph

The CQI Department was expanded almost one year ago and has been focusing on the policy and procedure aspect of agency operations. We have completed two separate state reviews and have learned and improved from both experiences.

The Family Services and Placement Department Manuals have been reviewed and are in the process of being amended and revised. The CQI Teams formed in the summer months have completed their first round of quarterly meetings and are scheduled to meet for the second round in the month of October. The Permanency Reviews continue to be conducted on a weekly basis to ensure that each child in the temporary custody of Mahoning County is being provided the least restrictive and most appropriate placement. The cycle of continuous improvement in our agency is taking shape.

Upcoming activities of the CQI Department include the establishment of a formal communication plan to ensure that all staff members are kept up to date of the improvements made throughout the agency. The CQI Department will also work towards the identification of measurements to evaluate the anticipated outcomes related to the provision of therapeutic services that are being implemented at the agency group homes. Mahoning County Children Services will continue to pursue excellence in order to provide the children and families of Mahoning County with the highest quality of services.



When we let worries and anxieties wear us down, it can be detrimental to our health. We can lose sleep; get stomach ulcers or even high blood pressure, just to name a few.

Did you know that stress can even cause diabetes? When we worry about things beyond our control, what good does it accomplish? Absolutely nothing!

Worry wears us down physically, mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. We must keep in mind that good health is not just the absence of physical illness; it is well-being in all of the aforementioned areas. So, we owe it to our families and our friends to take good care of ourselves. When we find ourselves feeling stressed, stop, take a breath, and remember the words of a very wise man who said, "Anxiety wears down the heart, but a kind word cheers it up." Speak kind words to yourself and to others. You will like the results.

## October is National Domestic Violence Awareness

by Radhika Cruz

Domestic violence is a huge problem in our society. Many groups have taken an active role to educate the community on this issue. In a national survey of more than 6,000 families, 50 percent of the men who frequently assaulted their wives also frequently abused children. Furthermore, studies suggest there may be between 3.3 and 10 million children who witness some form of domestic violence annually. Battering is a learned behavior and is rooted in a distorted belief system. Take time to become educated on

this issue and support prevention efforts in the community. Your knowledge may help to save someone's life. For more information on warning signs or upcoming trainings, visit The **Ohio Domestic Violence Network** online at [www.odvn.org](http://www.odvn.org)



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## It Matters To Meghan

By Meghan Tarantino

Injury is the leading cause of death in children older than one year of age. In 2001, more than 5,500 children ages 1-14 died from unintentional injuries. Children with disabilities in cognitive, emotional or social limitations have higher risks of injury than their peers.

The following information is from Safety Tips for Children with Special Needs, a book created by the Pediatric Injury Prevention and Education Department of Toledo Children's

Hospital. This book contains general injury prevention information. The entire book is accessible online at [www.tri-counties.org](http://www.tri-counties.org).

Passenger safety: All children should ride in the backseat of a vehicle with an age appropriate restraint. Infants should ride rear-facing until one year of age. Booster seats should be used for children over 40 lbs but not yet 57" in height. A lap belt should be used for older children.

Fire and Burn Prevention: Ask your local fire department to check your home for potential fire hazards. If your child can not speak or communicate in an emergency, keep a whistle or bell by the bed to alert others or use an alarm that is easy to operate. Sight impaired children should practice escape techniques using feel. For children with Autism, teach your child the basic concepts of hot and cold. Create visual signs needed to depict escape routes and develop social stories about smoke detectors and the dangers of touching fire.

Poison prevention: Keep a sheet with the names of the conditions your child has, medications he or she takes and any special concerns available to babysitters or siblings to use when calling 911. For children with autism, you may need visual cues such as "NO" stickers to identify poison items. Older children may be able to operate simple locks, so more advanced ones may be required. Children with PICA should be supervised at all times to prevent ingestion of poisons. *See these and much more in the aforementioned resources and online!*

## Mahoning County Foster Parent Association By Peggy Messer

The Foster Parent Association of Mahoning County is once again having its annual pie sale. We have returned to our previous (and very popular) supplier, Bake Mark.

This year we will have two pick up dates for the holidays. Thanksgiving day pies will be Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup> and Christmas will be Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>.

You can pick up your pies in the Mahoning County Children Services Building parking lot from 3:00p.m. 6:00p.m. Deadline for all orders and payments is October 21<sup>st</sup>. If you are interested in ordering pies, you can contact Margaret Messer at 330-941-8855. All proceeds from the sale will go toward the annual Christmas Party held for foster parents and children in foster care.



## Northeast Ohio Adoption Regional Exchange By Radhika Cruz

On September 30, 2011, Mahoning County Children Services hosted its annual North East Ohio Adoption Resource Exchange training entitled "*Triggers: What can cause Adoption Related Crisis*". This training was presented by Regina Kupecky, a recognized expert in adoption related issues. Regina is the co-author of ***Adopting the Hurt Child*** and ***Parenting the Hurt Child*** and currently works at the *Attachment and Bonding Center of Ohio* where she helps children who have an attachment disorder. She is also an international trainer who speaks on many adoption and attachment related issues. It was an honor to have her at our agency for this successful training event.



# Mahoning Matters



The splitting of multiple-word verbs is a common but erroneous practice in America's writing and speaking culture. For example, saying or writing "Jenna has to *pick* her oldest daughter *up* from soccer practice" is an incorrect presentation because the sentence's two-word verb, *pick up*, is split with three words in between. Instead, one should say or write "Jenna has to *pick up* her oldest daughter from soccer practice." Similarly, rather than saying or writing "Lisel decided to *put* her homework and cleaning chores *off* until the television show ended" the proper presentation is "Lisel decided to *put off* her homework and cleaning chores until the television show ended." The two-word verb, *put off*, should not be split.

As a separate matter, note that in the second and fourth example quotations above the ending period is placed before the closing quotation marks rather than after. This placement of the ending period with a full-sentence quotation is always the proper placement and is not optional.

By the way...It's *pique* NOT *peek* or *peak*! To arouse one's attention to someone or something is to *pique* his or her interest. A *peek* is a quick glance, and a *peak* is a mountain's apex.

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



## Did You Know?

*greatfacts.com*

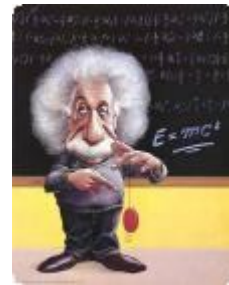
**That...** the typical lead pencil can draw a line that is thirty five miles long.

**That...**most lipstick contains fish scales.

**That...**a one ounce milk chocolate bar has 6 mg of caffeine.

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new"

*-Albert Einstein*



"Well done is better than well said"

*-Benjamin Franklin*

"It is by acts and not by ideas that people live"

*-Anatole France*

"Attitudes are contagious. Are yours worth catching?"

*-Dennis and Wendy Mannerling*

"Every day may not be good, but there's something good in every day."

*-Author Unknown*

## Community Resources

### • Mahoning County Children Services

Offers **FREE Child Safety** Presentations in the community & for children in the Mahoning County School Systems. For more information contact Radhika Cruz at 330-941-8852.

### • 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



Keep your heart healthy with phytosterol rich seeds and nuts. Phytosterol is a substance that reduces cholesterol naturally. Below is the top five listed in Consumers Reports "On Health" magazine:

- 1) Sunflower Seeds
- 2) Pistachios
- 3) Pumpkin seeds
- 4) Pine nuts
- 5) Flaxseeds, whole



Did you know that Olive oil can actually reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease? It is because it contains phenol, and ingredient that keeps your arteries "elastic". The more "elastic" your arteries are, the better able they are to handle sudden changes in your blood flow—the secret to preventing a heart attack.

### Healthy Tidbit

Do you have a hard time getting your kids to eat a healthy breakfast? Try making a "Breakfast Bling" from the book designed to help get children excited about nutrition - *Bean Appetit*.

Make a batch of mini pancakes and stack them on skewers with blueberries (full of antioxidants), Kiwis and strawberries (both are high in vitamin C)

### Make life a little safer

One way to make life a little safer is to make sure to give yourself time! Getting up a little earlier, getting the "to do" list done the night before, laying out what you will need, all will help slow down the morning rush. The rush that can cause typical accidents like spills from grabbing your coffee too fast, rushing around and carelessly tripping or knocking over things, driving too fast, not be observant on the road, all because you are worried about running late. Do yourself and your family a favor and slow down. It may save your life and you may just find you are much more relaxed and less irritable not rushing everywhere...

## Community Events

### Youngstown State University's Hispanic Heritage Celebration

When: Saturday, October 15, 2011 12-3:00p.m.

Location: McDonough Museum of Art  
410 Wick Ave, Youngstown



## Clergy Suicide Prevention Training

When: Tuesday November 1, 2011

Where: Mahoning County Children Services

Time: 7:30-10:00 a.m.

The event will include a panel discussion, individual presentations, and a question and answer session. Please call Michele Petrello at the Mahoning County Board office at 330-746-2959 by Friday, October 25, 2011, to register

## Newsletter Committee

**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 one of the members below.**

Radhika Cruz, Editor,  
Floree Stubbs, Supervisor  
Peggy Messer, Caseworker  
Julie Rudolph, QA Supervisor  
Ruth Parker, Case Aide

Theresa Pancoe, Co-Editor  
Philip Murphy, Abuse Supervisor  
Meghan Tarantino, Caseworker  
Shawn King, Tech Support  
Melinda Lackner, File Clerk

