Mahoning Kid S Matter



The Exclusive Publication for Staff, Stakeholders and Friends



What's Inside

Our Community

Pinwheels for Prevention Event	2
Pinwheel Garden Display Collage	3
YPD vs. YFD Charity Basketball Game	4

Around the County

Sweet Cases Donation	6
Foster Parent Appreciation	7
New Foster Parent Assoc. President	9
Celebrating Graduating Youth	10

News Briefs

All CSB Visitors Screened 10

About Us

Staff News, New Roles & New Faces 11 Executive Staff, Board of Directors 12

Child Abuse & Neglect Report Line 330.941.8888

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, report to Mahoning County Children Services 24/7, evenings, weekends, holidays.

COVER PHOTO: An East High School Junior ROTC Student helps "plant" pinwheels for a "Pinwheel Garden Display" at Boardman Park. *PHOTO BY/JENNIFER KOLLAR/MCCS*

Editor's Note

Into the Blue, Above the Rim & Beyond...

It's been a whirlwind several months for Mahoning County Children Services. Spring is one of our busiest seasons as we honored, celebrated, raised community interest and awareness and we even did a little fundraising during several



community-wide events with specific focus and purpose including: National Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month in April with our Pinwheels for Prevention Event, Pinwheel Display and Wear Blue Day. Blue—by the way is the national color for Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month. For National Foster Care Month in May, we honored all of our Foster Parents at our annual Appreciation Dinner. We also hosted our first Foster/ Adoption Informational Open House for anyone wanting to learn more about fostering and adopting Mahoning County Children. And in between—our now annual and signature event— Above the Rim Basketball Event, sponsored by our Mahoning County Children Services' Citizens Committee was a slam-dunk! In June, our Graduation Luncheon Party gave us several exceptional reasons to celebrate graduation season as four agencyinvolved youth graduated from area high schools. Read the article on page 10 that explains why graduating from high school is such a significant accomplishment for these students.

The collective effort of all these special events is a testament that when the community comes together—AMAZING things happen to positively benefit Mahoning County Children now, into the future and beyond!

-Jennifer T. Kollar, Editor

OUR COMMUNITY

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Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention is Pinwheel Event's Focus

inwheels for Prevention is an annual community event to recognize and raise awareness of National Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention In April. The event is cosponsored by Mahoning County Children Services and Akron Children's Hospital. This year's event was held on April 3rd at Boardman Park's Lariccia Family Community Center. The event featured: Keynote Speaker: Atty. Edward Gilbert, an Akron-based attorney and author of Swallowing Nickels—A Memoir of a Welfare Child. Sniper. President. Erie Shores Ohio Bikers Against Child Abuse, East High School Junior

ROTC, and Boardman High School Jazz Ensemble. Each year the event also awards a Community Spotlight Award presented to an individual or organization who demonstrates continued generosity, commitment and community service to Mahoning County Children. This year's award was presented to members of the AFL-CIO **Community Services** Union Counselors who participated in a Fence Building Project for a Mahoning County Children Services' licensed foster family in order to keep specialneeds siblings placed in their home safe.















- Andrea Mistovich, Akron Children's Hospital and Jennifer Kollar, MCCS, Event Directors
- 2. Atty. Edward L. Gilbert, Keynote Presenter
- Community Spotlight Award recipient:
 AFL-CIO Union Counselors:
 Betsy Steel, Billy Keel, Tony
 DiTommaso, and Cindy Michael
- 4. Pastor JoAnn Pangio, Mahoning Co. Children Services Board Member, delivered a Benediction Prayer
- 5. Anthony, Randy and Jacinda Madison performed the National Anthem

- 5. East High School Junior ROTC Color Guard
- Boardman High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by Mr. Ruggeri, Performed several of Prince's hits including "Let's Go Crazy."
- 8. Sniper, President, Bikers Against Child Abuse, Erie Shores, Ohio Chapter delivered the Bikers Against Child Abuse "Biker Creed"
- 9. Paul D. Mitchell, Field Representative, Office of Congressman Bill Johnson (OH-)
- 10. Master Sgt. Doug Moon and the East High School JROTC Color Guard

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Master Sgt. Doug Moon

Thank You East High School Junior Army ROTC Students!

Kelvin DeJesus Terrence Douglas Rosezena Figueroa James Gilmer. Heaven Hightower Chrjiia Hill Jordan Jones-Burney, Terrell Jones Johnathan Lee Jamfieer Nieves Spencer Perkins Jennirys Rodriguez, Aaron Santos, Malik Stoffer Emani Willis

Master Sgt. Doug Moon, Army Instructor East High School Army Junior ROTC ach April pinwheels no matter the weather—sun, rain, sleet or snow are "planted" in communities across the nation to raise awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month. The pinwheel is the national symbol for child abuse and neglect prevention. The pinwheels represent individuals who advocated and took action on behalf of a child.

Mahoning County Children Services and Akron Children's Hospital partner with students from East High School Junior Army ROTC Program to plant a Pinwheel Garden. Over the years, the pinwheels have been on display at various locations throughout the county including Akron Children's Hospital, Boardman Campus, Downtown Youngstown. For the last two years, the Pinwheel Garden has been displayed on the front lawn of Boardman Park facing U.S. Route 224, one the busiest commercial traffic corridors in the county. The pinwheels were on display the whole month of April.

FAST FACTS:

The pinwheel and the color blue are the national symbols and color for Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention.



OUR COMMUNITY

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Youngstown Fire Department 'On Fire' with Win Against Youngstown Police at Children Services' Charity Basketball Event

The competition was hot on the hardwood with a friendly backyard rivalry between the Youngstown Police and Youngstown Fire at Mahoning County Children Services' 2017 Above the Rim Basketball Event featuring the annual "Battle of the Blue" basketball game. In front of a standing-room only crowd, YFD captured the win 70 –41 over YPD.

The Youngstown Police, winners of the last year's Battle of the Blue Game, battled it out this year against the Youngstown Fire Department. The Youngstown Police Team was led by Officer Jessica Shields. Lt. Christopher Vass served as Youngstown Fire's Team Captain.

Game rules invite the winning team to play again the following year and to select their opponent.



Why Blue:

Battle of the Blue Game is named in honor of National Child Abuse and Neglect Month and **blue** is the national and official color.

Background: The Above the Rim Basketball Event is planned, hosted and sponsored by the Mahoning County Children Services' Citizens Committee and aims to accomplish three goals:

- Raise awareness about Mahoning County Children Services.
- Raise funds to continue a stable base of funding for Children Services.
- The event is held in April to also raise awareness of National Child Abuse Prevention Month.



Celebration Time: Team YFD: 2017 "Battle of the Blue" Game Winners.



Girl Power: YPD Team Captain Jess Shields (in blue) snags the ball away from a swarm of YFD players.



Aim! Jump! Shoot! YPD player gets great air time. Nice block by YFD!



Bobby DJ Litch keeps the Event energized with tunes.

2017 Event Planning Committee

Jennifer T. Kollar, Event Director

Monique Arocho Susan Babinec Josh Cayson Teri Cercone Theresa Cramer Debbie DeCecco Natalie Finamore Robert Gessler Kristy Gustovich
Nikki Hinchcliffe
Bobby Litch
Marisa Litch
Margaret Mallis
Jennifer Moore
Alexandria Pancoe
Nikki Posterli
Rachel Schiele

BATTLE OF THE BLUE



Team Spirit: While YFD snared the win from YPD—the BIG winners are Mahoning County Kids!



Jones Dance Academy performs a Half-Time hip-hop routine.



Team YFD after their 70-41 Win!



Shooting Stars: Team YPD



Serious Shooter: Rocco Hass beat out four others to win the Above the Rim Event Half Court Contest and a VISA gift card. Way to Go Rocco!!



TEAM ROSTERS

Youngstown Police

(Wearing Light Blue Shirts)

Jessica Shields, Team Captain *

Darrick Ball

Mohammad Awad *

Anthony Congemi

Ryan Curry *

Darryl Herdman

Jimmy Hughes Jr. *

Eric Mallory

Michael Ouinn *

Michael Saverko

Travis Sheely *

Chris Weibel

* Denotes returning player from 2016 Battle of the Blue Game

Youngstown Fire (Wearing White Shirts)

Christopher Vass, Team Captain James D. Drummond, Coach Terry Stephens, Coach

Scott Barton Chris Brown Corey S. Brown Mark A. Brown, Jr. **Brian Charles Benjamin Cintron** Sam Congemi Ryan Cook Andre Miller Dwyain J. Montgomery

Chris Stephens George Zordich

Game Referee Officials

Charles Williams, Certified Referee Jason Pangio, Certified Referee

Scoreboard Officials

Natalie Babinec Rachel Babinec

Event Photographer Steve Woodberry

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"Sweet Cases" Donated for Foster Care



Amanda and Joe Rettig (pictured above) of New Springfield, Ohio raised funds to purchase "Sweet Cases" from *Together We Rise*, a national non-profit that works to transform the way kids experience foster care. *Together We Rise* provides opportunities for individuals and

groups to purchase "Sweet Cases" to donate to local children services agencies which are then given to children entering foster care. The Sweet Cases are intended for children 10 and under and include: a hygiene kit, blanket, stuffed animal, coloring book, crayons, and other various items. When children are placed in foster care, many arrive on short notice and with only the clothing and belongings they have on or with them. Sweet Cases, suitcases, totes, and overnight bags include personal items such as blankets, toiletries, and a plush toy or stuffed animal to cuddle, which helps comfort and ease the child's transition to a foster home especially at a time when a child feels most vulnerable.

Thank You Easter Bunnies!

ach year residents and staff of Shepherd of the Valley Boardman and the Coitsville 4-H Club assemble and donate Easter Baskets for Mahoning County Children Services. The beautifully wrapped baskets are filled with a variety of snacks, toys and plush stuffed animals for Mahoning County children and youth.

The Agency also received a surprise visit from the Easter Bunny who enjoyed attention from kids and employees— which means—you're never too old to enjoy a visit from the Easter Bunny! Thank you to all of our Easter Bunnies.



Baskets Full of Love: Shepherd of the Valley Boardman Staff (left) Danielle Procopio, Corporate Marketing Director pictured with Jennifer Kollar, Mahoning County Children Services.





Fostering Dreams Organization Receives 2017 Children's Advocate Award

Mahoning County Children Services nominated Fostering Dreams, Inc. for the 2017 Akron Children's Hospital Children's Advocate Award.



The Children's Advocate Award is presented to "outstanding groups or organizations who exhibit the spirit of caring and work to make a difference in the lives of children in the communities we serve."

Fostering Dreams, was founded by Mary Alice and Robert Noble, who along with their organization, have provided numerous years of service as foster/adoptive parents and have directly and positively impacted the well-being of Mahoning County children.

Fostering Dreams along with five other community organizations were selected to receive the Award at a special Awards Dinner.

To learn more visit: www.fostering-dreams.net

Connect With Us!



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Celebrating Mahoning County Foster Parents

ay marks National Foster Care Month. One of Mahoning County Children Services traditions to support and honor Foster Care Month is with an annual Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner. The event is designed to provide a night out and to celebrate, thank and recognize current Foster Parents for providing unconditional love, support, stability and security to our County's most vulnerable children.

This year's event was held May 12 at The Georgetown.

"Celebrating Cultural Diversity Around the World" was this year's theme. Guests were invited to dress in ethnic or cultural and garb. The event also featured entrees of foods from cultures around the globe, ethnic music and performances by the Jones Academy Dancers.



Meghan Tarantino, Foster Care Unit Supervisor

A Community Recognition Award was presented to the

AT&T Pioneers who donated 100 child-friendly suitcases to the Agency's foster care unit. The award is presented to an individual or organization that demonstrates outstanding generosity and community service to the children of Mahoning County.



Jennifer Kollar, Information Officer and Sandi Page, AT&T Pioneers

















- 1. Tammy and Tom Parteleno
- 2. Katrina and George Harris
- 3. Pam Bowers
- 4. Pam and Elmer Lehman
- 5. Angela Kingsley
- 6. Jennifer and Tim Huston
- 7. George and Jo Ross
- 8. Danielle Mulligan

Mahoning Kids Matter | SPRING/SUMMER 2017



Foster Parents Make a World of Difference

























- Nicholas and Carolyn Harvey
- Kendra and Mark Wirtz 2.
- 3. Tommy Ann Gash
- 4. Robert and Mary Alice Noble
- JR and Toni Saccomen
- Jeanette Dubos and her mom
- 7. Jeanette Humbert
- 8. Rebekah and Jason Delatore
- 9. W. Pearl Stevens
- 10. Jason and Brenda Jones
- 11. Gary and Lisa Bartek
- 12. Jason and Taffy Pavone





Mahoning Kids Matter | SPRING/SUMMER 2017

Too Little to Live: Ohio Works to Prevent Infant Deaths

By: Our Babies Count Special to Mahoning Kids Matter

Too little to live. Did you know that nearly 1,000 babies in Ohio die each year before their first birthday?

Babies born too soon is the number one cause of baby deaths in Ohio.

Ohio is only as healthy as its tiniest citizens. In

addition

to a lower chances of survival, babies born too soon are at risk for poor health later in life due to mental illness, obesity and breathing problems, according to the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children may also have a harder time in school or be unable to work when they grow up.

My Babies 1st, in Youngstown, is a local pregnancy and parenting resource, and Our Babies Count, is a state grassroots awareness and education movement. My Baby's 1st offers education and tips and resources like the Empowering Moms Program, Centering Pregnancy®, progesterone therapy and birth spacing. To learn more, visit: mybabys1st.org.

Our Babies Count also includes information on pregnancy tips on its website as well

as prenatal care and resource information about Ohio's five Medicaid health plans

and other resources women can access through their health insurance company like programs that provide free rides to the doctor, doctor rewards programs that offer gift cards just for keeping medical appointments and help finding community resources, paying bills and buying food.

Contact to your local coalition, My Baby's 1st (mybabys1st.org), and visit:
OurBabiesCount.org.

Together, we can make a difference and help Ohio babies have a future.

Mahoning County Foster Parent Association's Golf Scramble "Fore" Mahoning County Kids



On Par For A Great Cause: Foster Parent Association Golf Scramble Event at Parto's Golf and Learning Center.

Foster Parent Association

2017 Golf Scramble Event

It was a gorgeous day to golf for a cause at the Mahoning County Foster Parent Association's 2nd Annual Golf Scramble Event. It's all

'fore' Mahoning County children in foster care.

Many, many thanks to Tammy and Tom Parteleno for hosting the event at their 9-hole course, Parto's Golf and Learning Center.

The Partelenos spearhead the now annual event from organizing to fundraising and everything in between. Tammy Parteleno also

> serves as the President of the Mahoning County Foster Parent Association.

Thank you to all who supported

and participated in the event!

Save the Date for 2018: June 23, 2018!

New President for Foster Parent Association

The Mahoning County Foster Parent



Association selected Tammy Parteleno as the new Association President. Parteleno takes the helm from Jason Pavone.
Parteleno's goals for

the Association include: re-organization, increasing foster parent participation

and fundraising efforts that will ultimately enhance the lives of foster parents and children in foster care. The Association meets monthly at:

Mahoning County Children Services
222 W. Federal St., 3rd Floor,
Youngstown, OH 44503.

Meetings are open to all Mahoning County Children Services' licensed foster parents. For more information and to contact the Foster Parent Association of Mahoning County:

Phone: 239-682-2534

Email: partopar@peoplepc.com

MCCS Celebrates 2017 Graduating Youth

ahoning County Children Services has several wonderful reasons to celebrate this graduation season!

Four agency-involved youth graduated from area highs schools. Mahoning County Children Services recognized the four 2017 grads with a Graduation/Luncheon Party in their honor.

Each year, Mahoning County Children Services' Graduation Committee plans a special Graduation Luncheon Party. This year's Graduation Luncheon Party was

held June 2nd at beautiful Boardman Park



in the Lariccica Family Community Center. The event features a catered lunch, a DJ, dancing, photos and gifts for the graduates. The Grads are encouraged to invite family

members and friends to the party and agency staff were also in attendance to celebrate the graduates' achievements

and wish the graduates luck. Graduation is always a special landmark event for students. However, for these youth, graduation is an especially significant milestone. Many of these students have experienced difficult childhoods and significant trauma throughout their young lives. Remaining in school despite these circumstances and overcoming obstacles is truly an amazing testament and accomplishment and the hope for a bright future.

Congratulations and all the best to our graduates now and in their bright futures!

News Briefs • News Briefs • News Briefs

Multi-media Campaign to Help Foster/Adoptive Parent Recruitment Efforts

Kicking off National Foster Care Awareness Month in May, Mahoning County Children Services launched a new television, digital advertising campaign. A billboard campaign



will follow. The campaign seeks to recruit new foster/adoptive parents in Mahoning County. The agency is experiencing a shortage of licensed foster homes to accommodate

emergency placements (after hours/holidays/weekends, youth 12-18 years old and sibling groups.

All Visitors to Mahoning County Children Services Will be Screened

If you're planning a visit to Mahoning County Children Services, all visitors to the Agency at 222 W. Federal Street will be subjected to metal-detector security screenings performed by a full -time Mahoning County Deputy Sheriff.

The new screening protocol aims to

increase safety for both the visiting public and Agency staff. In addition, the Agency also updated its closed-circuit TV camera system to further bolster the Agency's safety prevention efforts.



August Canfield Fair our biggest Community Outreach Event. Aug 30-Labor Day

October Halloween Treats at the Agency with

Eagle's Christian Preschool

November National Adoption Awareness Month

"Adoption Day Celebration Event"

Decembe	er Gifts For Kids Holiday Campaign
April	National Child Abuse and Neglect Month
May	National Foster Care Awareness Month
June	High School Graduation Party for agency Involved youth who are graduating
	Mahoning County Foster Parent Association Annual Golf Scramble Event
*	Stay Tuned for Dates/Times/Locations *

MISSION: Mahoning County Children Services, in partnership with the community, is committed to being the leader in protecting children while helping preserve families.



NEW ROLES • NEW FACES • HONORS



Get the Blue Out: MCCS staffers wear blue for "Ohio Wears Blue Day" in support of National Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Month in April.

Cynthia Berend has been promoted to the Lead Caseworker in the Intake Unit. Congratulations Cynthia!

Candis Harper has been promoted to the Lead Caseworker in the Ongoing Unit, Family Services Department. Congratulations Candis!

Lori Robinette has been promoted to a Caseworker in the Training Unit. Congratulations Lori!

Taylor Kutsch, a University Partnership Program (UPP) student, has accepted a position as a Caseworker in the Training Unit. Congratulations and welcome Taylor!

Nikki Hinchcliffe has been promoted from the Clerical Unit to the Case Worker in Training Unit. Congratulations Nikki!

Jamila Humphrey joined the Agency as a Technical Typist in the Clerical Unit. Welcome Jamila!

Audra Carlson will transfer laterally from Caseworker in Training to Caseworker in Ongoing Unit #1. Congratulations Audra!

Alexandria Pancoe has been promoted from Technical Typist in the Clerical Unit to Clerical Specialist in the Clerical Unit. Congratulations Alex!

Victoria Luther will transfer laterally from Caseworker in Ongoing to Caseworker in the Kinship Unit. Congratulations Victoria!

Joy Peterson will transfer laterally from Enhanced Visitation Caseworker in Ongoing to Caseworker in the Kinship Unit. Congratulations Joy!

Diane Stahl will transfer laterally from Caseworker in Intake Caseworker in the Kinship Unit. Congratulations Diane!

Kristy Gustovich will transfer laterally from Caseworker in the Ongoing Unit to Caseworker in the Intake Department. Congratulations Kristy!

Nicole Ware will transfer laterally from Caseworker in the Training Unit to Caseworker in the Intake Department. Congrats Nicole!

Bridget Howells accepted a position as a Caseworker in Training. Welcome Bridget!

Jamila Provitt accepted a position as a Caseworker in Training. Welcome lamila!

Niki Laughrin accepted a position as a Caseworker in Training. Welcome Niki!

Kevin Talley has begun his internship through the University Partnership Program for social worker students. Welcome Kevin!

Shanice Hodges has begun her internship through the University Partnership Program for social worker students. Welcome Shanice!

Smith Selected Case Western Reserve University "2017 Field Instructor of the Year"

Bradley Smith, Mahoning County Children Services' Program Administrator, Intake Services Department, has been selected as the 2017 Jack, Joseph & Morton Mandel School Field Instructor of the Year at Case Western Reserve University.

Congrats Masters Degree Grads

Diane Foster, Training Officer Supervisor, has been awarded a Master of Science Degree in Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University. A self-proclaimed 'bookworm,' this is Diane's third Masters' Degree. Her other Masters Degrees



include: a Master of Public Administration and a Master of Science in Human Resource Management both from Troy State. Congratulations Diane!



Constance Massey -Hight, Adoption Unit Caseworker, earned a Masters of Science Degree in Criminal Justice Management from Youngstown State University. Congratulations Constance!

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About Us

Mahoning Kids Matter | SPRING/SUMMER 2017

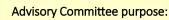


LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Seeking Members for Mahoning County Children Services Advisory Committee

Mahoning County Children Services' Advisory Committee is comprised of all volunteers who will serve in an advisory capacity. Members can be from a variety of backgrounds, professions and either live or work in Mahoning County. Current or prior experience or knowledge about child welfare is not required. Time commitment is minimal with meetings 4 times per year at Chil-

dren Services offices and at 4PM. Meeting are one hour in length.



1. Inform the citizens, community leaders and stakeholders of issues affecting Mahoning County's children in general, and, specifically, the issues affecting its children

who are abused and neglected or at risk of being abused and neglected;

- 2. To advocate and support services, laws and sound public policy to protect and benefit the children of Mahoning County;
- 3.To advocate for the recruitment of foster and adoptive parents and support and celebrate the advantages of fostering and adopting children;
- 4. To provide the Children Services Board with the perspective of local business and citizens relative to the Board's issues, policies, levies, legislation and services;
- 5. To provide an orientation of the Children Services Agency to the citizens and business leaders in Mahoning County.

For Consideration: Please contact Jennifer Kollar, Public Information Officer via email: <u>Jennifer.Kollar@jfs.ohio.gov</u> or phone: 330.941.8810.

Mahoning Kids Matter is the official publication of Mahoning County Children Services. For questions or to submit news or information pertaining to Children Services, contact:



222 W. Federal Street, 4th Floor Youngstown, Ohio 44503 330.941.8888 | fax: 330.941.8787 mahoningkids.com

Editor: Jennifer T. Kollar Public Information Officer

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