



# 2017 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Mahoning County  
Children Services

Protecting Children. Preserving Families.

# OUR MISSION

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

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

RANDALL B. MUTH, J.D.

Dear Community Members:

The mission of the Mahoning County Children Services Board is, of course, to protect children and strengthen families. To accomplish this mission, we must constantly strive to develop and implement the most effective, evidenced based strategies to provide children with safe, nurturing and permanent families.

As I'm sure you are aware, Ohio, and, in fact, the nation, are in the midst of an opioid addiction crisis. We have all seen how the wave of the epidemic has lead families down a terrible path of destruction taking with it many, many victims. In early 2016, we began to see evidence that this epidemic was beginning to impact Mahoning County families to a greater degree than ever before. Therefore, over the course of 2016, the Agency began to implement strategies designed to ensure that we would be in the best position possible to meet the needs of the numerous affected children which we knew would be coming.

The statistics for 2017 confirmed our fears. Mahoning County was not spared. We conducted nearly 600 more investigations of child abuse and neglect in 2017 than we did in 2016. That's an increase of over 35%. The number of cases that we accepted for continuing services increased by 55%. The

number of children born with drugs in their systems almost doubled. And, perhaps most significantly, the number of children put into our custody by the court went from 124 in 2016 to 165 in 2017. That's an increase of 33%.

Sadly, and ultimately, it is the children who--- through no fault of their own---have become the "Invisible Victims" of the opioid crisis. These are the children who have witnessed their parents buying drugs, taking drugs, shooting up, overdosing, passing out, getting revived or even dying. These are the children we have seen strapped in a car seat while their parents are near-death and unresponsive in the front seat. These are the children who are exposed to unstable, dangerous situations all times of the day or night.

These are the children who are taken on drug buys, have easy access to drugs and drug paraphernalia often found littered around their home. These are the children who are left at home to fend for themselves or found wandering the streets with little or no regard for their safety or well-being. These are the children who find themselves living in and lingering in foster care while their parents are in recovery, relapse or die.

We're all aware that there is a tremendous social, emotional and financial toll to the opioid crisis. But, I submit that its impact on our

children - the future of our country - which represents the deepest wound caused by this crisis.

It is imperative that we not fail these innocents. Child safety is and must be Mahoning County Children Services' top priority. This Agency will continue to assess all allegations of substance abuse which impacts a parent's ability to safely and adequately care for their children. No matter how many cases we get nor how long this epidemic lasts.

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 Mahoning County to recognize that child abuse prevention starts with each one of us.

Sincerely,

  
Randall B. Muth, JD  
Executive Director





## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### WE ARE CHILD WELFARE LEADERS.

We take pride in working with families and our community with care and compassion.

We provide quality services that respect each family's culture.

We are fiscally responsible, effectively utilizing resources to benefit the families we serve.

We educate the community on recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect.

### WE RESPECT AND VALUE FAMILIES AND THEIR CHILDREN.

We respect families' strengths and provide individualized services.

We empower parents and partner with families to ensure child safety, permanency and well-being.

We recognize children are best served within their family and community.

### WE VALUE OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY.

We recognize the need to work in collaboration with the community to protect children and preserve families.

We support the well-being of children and families; it is a shared agency and community responsibility.

## 2017 Board, Advisory Executive Staff & Commissioners

### Administrative Executive Staff

**Executive Director**  
Randall B. Muth, J.D.

**Assistant Director**  
Rona Curtis, BA, MS-ED

**Intake Services Department**  
Brad Smith, MSW, LISW-S, Program Administrator

**Family Services Department**  
Julie Rudolph, MPA, LSW, Program Administrator

**Placement Services Department**  
Anthony Paris, Program Administrator

**Business Operations Department**  
Melinda Posterli, Program Administrator

**Human Resources Department**  
Susan Babinec, Manager

**Information Technology Department**  
Joshua Cayson, Manager

**Public Information Department**  
Jennifer T. Kollar, Public Information Officer

### 2017 Mahoning County Children Services Board

Brigid Kennedy, Chair  
Anthony Spano, Vice Chair  
Delphine Baldwin-Casey  
Dr. Benjamin McGee  
Dr. Joseph Mosca  
Pastor Joann Pangio

### 2017 Mahoning County Children Services Advisory Committee

DJ Depp  
Denise Dick  
Megan Ellashek  
Katrina Harris  
Calvin Jones  
Rev. Lewis Macklin  
Andrea L. Mahone  
Pete Milliken  
Mary Alice Noble  
Officer Shawnacie Ott  
Dr. Matthew J. Paylo  
Crystal Shells  
Mary Jo Truman  
Yvonne Wilson

### Mahoning County Commissioners

David C. Ditzler  
Carol Rimedio Righetti  
Anthony Traficanti

## STAFF COMPOSITION

At the conclusion of 2017, Mahoning County Children Services employed 103 employees to serve and support the services of children and families in Mahoning County.

**6 Administrative Staff**

**14 Management/Supervisors**

**57 Caseworkers**

**6 Social Service Aides**

**20 Support staff**

**Qualifications:** All caseworkers possess bachelor's degrees in Social Work, Sociology, Psychology or a related social services field. All Supervisors possess a master's degree.



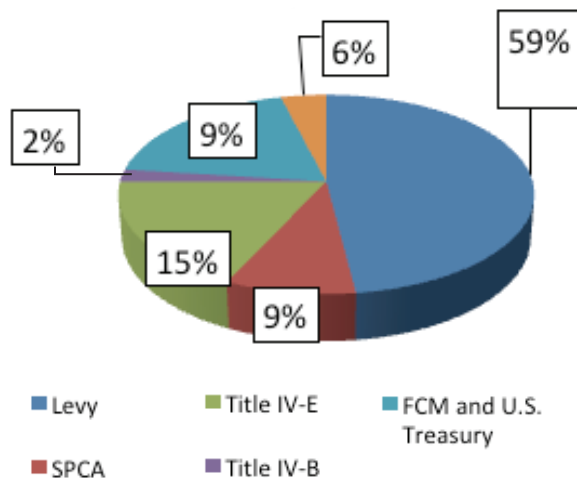
**Mahoning County Children Services**

# FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2017

MELINDA POSTERLI,  
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR  
BUSINESS OPERATIONS

## 2017 RECEIPTS



## 2017 RECEIPTS

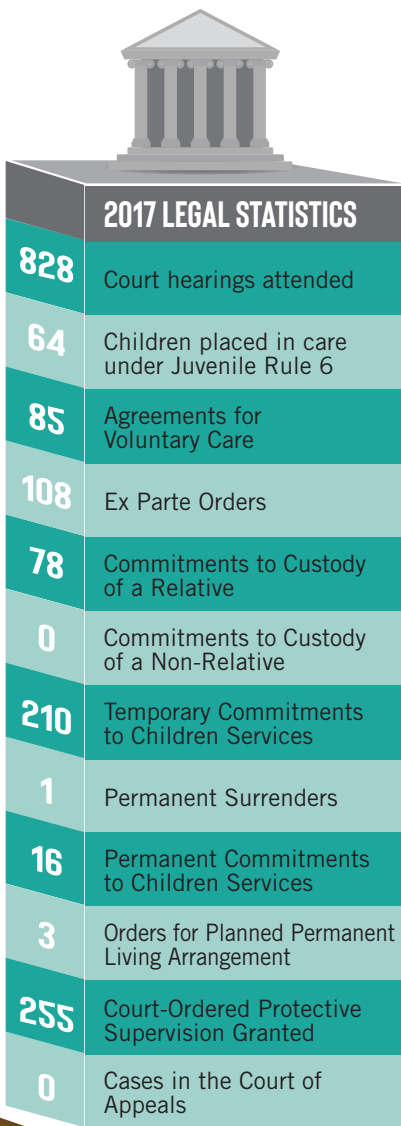
Real Estate Taxes	\$8,274,395.70
Manufactured Home Taxes	\$7,828.69
Tax Loss Reimbursement	\$14,184.72
Homestead Credit	\$1,484.41
Rollback Credit	\$469,743.97
Child Welfare Subsidy IV-B	\$146,263.00
Title IV-B (ESAA)	\$107,273.00
Independent Living Skills Allocation	\$100,654.00
PASSS	\$72,170.39
Title IV-E	\$2,273,149.11
U.S. Treasury	\$42,899.00
Foster Care Maintenance	\$1,256,858.98
Bureau of Support	\$18,923.88
BWC True Up Charges	\$6,584.19
State Child Protective Allocation	\$1,272,171.50
Kinship Permanency Incentive	\$39,150.00
Reimbursement	\$744,914.33
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$14,848,648.87</b>

## 2017 EXPENDITURES

Salaries	\$4,462,869.52
PERS	\$1,027,829.33
Medicare	\$65,309.54
Workmen's Compensation	\$45,538.13
Unemployment	\$46,688.83
Hospitalization	\$1,528,826.54
Hospitalization Opt-Out	\$17,033.02
Life Insurance	\$2,167.68
Tuition Reimbursement	\$23,114.64
BWC Claims Expense	\$15,702.95
Food	\$14,912.51
Medical Supplies	\$6,054.54
Postage	\$15,000.00
Materials and Supplies	\$12,631.18
Office Supplies	\$38,827.55
Automobile Gasoline and Service	\$918.51
Equipment	\$40,713.45
Seminars/Conferences	\$19,220.43
Travel	\$221,652.40
Organization Dues	\$22,330.23
Contractual Agreement	\$383,981.36
Professional Services	\$54,787.96
Water/Sewer	\$109.68
Telephone	\$61,617.25
Electric	\$341.34
Gas	\$1,536.32
Medical Assistance	\$3,976.00
Advertising	\$48,453.15
Printing	\$9,593.45
Maintenance Agreements	\$226,810.01
Audit Fees	\$7,661.72
Data Board Service Agreements	\$1,380.00
Insurance Liability Casualty	\$39,867.70
Equipment Lease	\$15,213.32
Board and Care Clothing	\$54,768.89
Public Assistance	\$17,351.91
Daycare	\$134,433.25
Public Foster Care	\$604,860.38
Residential Placement Costs	\$1,962,312.24
Therapeutic Foster Home Placements	\$1,568,926.31
ESAA Preservation	\$117,372.20
ESAA Reunification	\$61,694.42
Subsidized Adoption	\$274,865.49
PASSS	\$85,883.79
Independent Living	\$38,637.02
Non-Recurring Adoption	\$4,342.00
CSB - Kinship	\$47,487.05
Repairs and Maintenance	\$190.00
Data Equipment	\$35,856.66
Taxes Aud/Treas Collection	\$143,186.60
Non-Reimbursement Exp	\$48,794.84
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$13,683,633.29</b>

# LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Mahoning County Children Services is represented in Juvenile Court by Attorney Lori Shells, Assistant Mahoning County Prosecutor and Attorney Kerry Limbian, Assistant Mahoning County Prosecutor.



# CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT DEPARTMENT

RONA CURTIS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Mahoning County Children Services employs a full time Quality Improvement Specialist who is supervised by the agency's Assistant Director. The department offers mandated reporter training and presents information about Mahoning County Children Services to organizations upon request. In 2017, 118 community educators received mandated reporter training. We also ensure compliance with State and Federal rules and regulations as it relates primary permanency planning.

## 2017 Continuous Quality Improvement Reviews

The Assistant Director reviewed a total of 11 disposition appeals; of those 7 dispositions were amended; 4 remained unchanged.

7 Formal Complaints received; amenable solutions reached on 3 complaints and, 4 complaints remained unchanged.

Mahoning County Children Services is preparing for our national accreditation renewal through the New York-based Council on Accreditation (COA). The annual maintenance cycle has been completed with anticipation of full reaccreditation by August 2019.



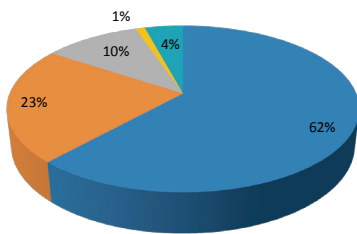
The COA accreditation renewal process involved a detailed review and analysis of the agency's administration, management and service delivery functions against international standards of best practice, including an on-site review by specially trained volunteer peer reviewers. COA accreditation demonstrates accountability in the management of resources and increases organizational capacity and accountability by creating a framework for ongoing quality improvement.

Founded in 1977, COA evaluates community-based behavioral health care and social service organizations across the United States and Canada.

The CQI department reviews and complies Client Satisfaction Surveys. The results of 2017 survey:

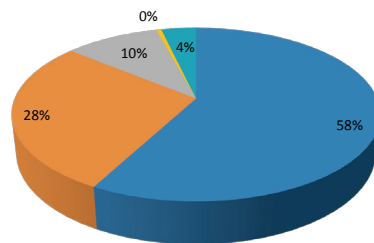
### 1. How satisfied are you with the casework services received from our agency?

Very Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied



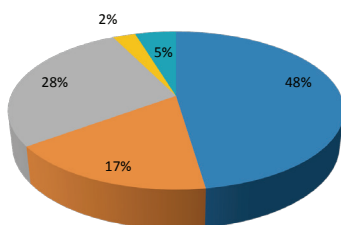
### 2. How satisfied are you of the caseworker or supervisor's availability to you when needed?

Very Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied



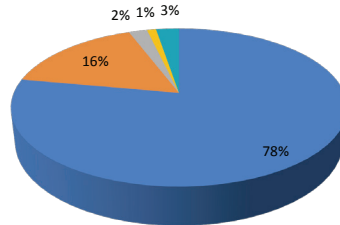
### 3. How satisfied are you that your situation improved because of CSB being involved?

Very Satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied



### 4. Were you treated with courtesy and respect by your caseworker or other agency staff?

Very Much Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Very Much Disagree



# INTAKE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

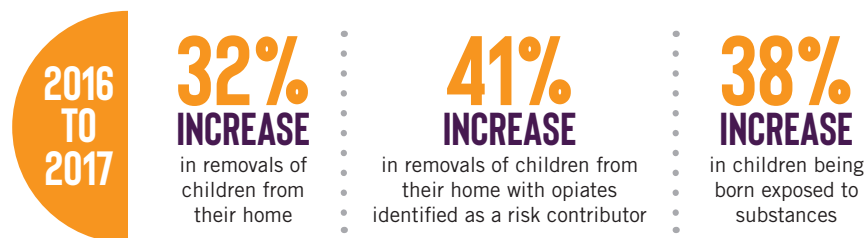
BRADLEY SMITH, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

**4902**  
REPORTS RECEIVED

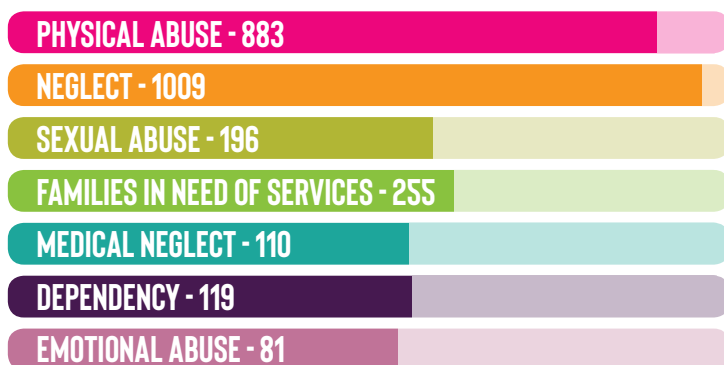
**2270**  
CASES INVESTIGATED

**584**  
INFORMATION/REFERRAL

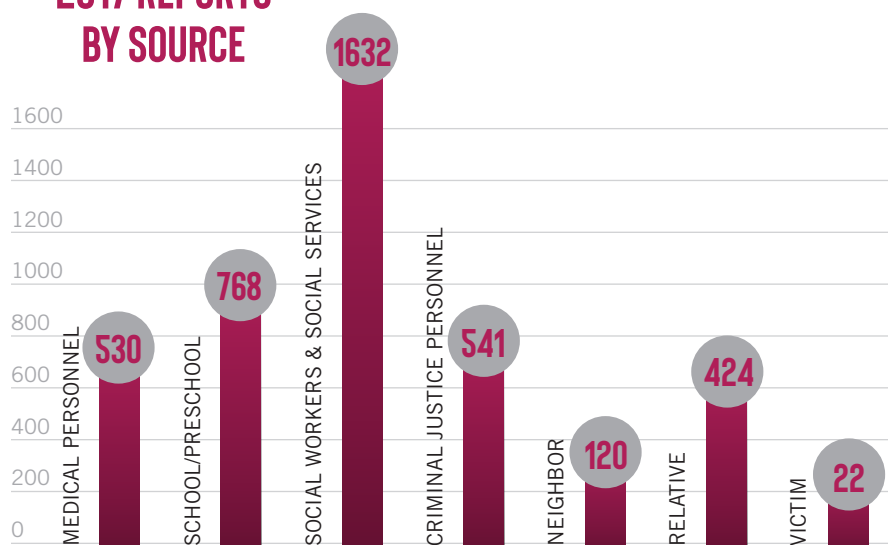
In 2017, the Agency investigated and assessed 35% more cases than 2016.



## REPORT TYPE / NUMBER OF CASES



## 2017 REPORTS BY SOURCE



## PLACEMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

ANTHONY PARIS,  
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Placement of children occurs along a continuum of care. When a child or sibling group requires out of home placement, our staff utilize the most appropriate, least restrictive, placement settings which is driven by an approved level of care assessment tool which helps us determine a child's needs. Ohio Rule requires that we give serious consideration to barriers to visitation with family and proximity to the child's current school district. The placement of children encompasses several programs: Kinship Care, Public Foster Care, Adoption and Independent Living Services to prepare teens ages 14-18 for emancipation out of foster care.

## 2017

- 177** total children in placement
- 48** children placed in Agency licensed foster care homes (public foster care)
- 14** adoptions finalized
- 93** teens prepared for emancipation out of foster care and provided support and education
- 99** kinship families were identified for placement of child relatives



# 2017 FAMILY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

JULIE RUDOLPH, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR



## Ongoing Services Program Statement

The primary role of Ongoing Services is to assist at-risk families to keep their children safe from abuse and neglect in their own homes. This is best accomplished in partnership with the family through family engagement and protective services provided by the agency and community. Ongoing services include: engaging the family in the decision-making process, shared case plan development, ongoing assessment of child safety and risk, as well as casework and case management activities which allow professional staff to effectively respond to the changing conditions or needs of the family. Continual contact, assessment, and evaluation of family progress are pivotal to child safety and to family stability.

Family Services casework staff must possess a unique combination of knowledge and skills to assess risk and safety to intervene in situations that place children at risk of abuse and neglect, and to assist families in becoming healthy, nurturing and safe.

Family Services staff are in the challenging position of maintaining children's safety while working to preserve families and to provide permanency. At times, it may be necessary to separate children from their family until the family is able to meet the needs of the children in a safe environment.

It is the belief of the agency that parents are the most appropriate caretakers for children unless the parents are unable or unwilling to protect their children from danger. We further believe that when children cannot safely remain with their parents, relatives/kin are the best alternative. In cases where placement is needed to prevent further abuse or neglect, it is the goal of the agency to return the child to his/her family, and if reunification is not possible to develop another permanent home for the child as quickly as possible.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

**In 2017 the composition of the Family Services Department included: 1 Program Administrator • 5 Unit Supervisors (4-Ongoing Supervisors & 1-Training Unit Supervisor) • 21 full-time Casework Staff • 4 Training Unit Caseworkers • 4 Family Services Aides**

**Case Transfers-**There has been a 63% increase in the number of cases transferred from the Intake to Ongoing Departments between 2015-2017; in 2017, Ongoing Casework Staff provided a myriad of child welfare services to an average 220 families monthly.

**Family Services Department participated in the following specialized programs to preserve families and protect children:**

**Mahoning County Family Dependency Treatment Court-**The goal of the FDTC collaboration is to provide immediate and comprehensive treatment to the substance-abusing parent so the family can remain intact or achieve reunification.

**Succeed Parent Program-** Succeed is a program designed for primary parents who have been successful in working with their Children Services agency to lead support groups for other primary parents who are currently going through a case plan.

**Mahoning County Crossover Youth-** Mahoning County Children Services and Mahoning County Juvenile Court have collaborated since 2012 to implement the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM). The program is designed to address the unique issues presented by children and youth who are known to both the Child Welfare system and Juvenile Justice System. With goals of reducing the number of youth placed in out-of-home care, a reduction in the use of congregate care, a reduction in the disproportionate representation of children of color, and a reduction in the number of youth becoming dually-adjudicated.

**IF YOU SUSPECT  
CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

**REPORT IT!  
330.941.8888**

**24 HOURS  
7 DAYS A WEEK**

# OUR COMMUNITY

JENNIFER T. KOLLAR,  
PUBLIC INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

**Increased** awareness of *National Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Month* in April via a community luncheon and a "Pinwheel Garden Exhibit" with over a 1,400 Pinwheels in Boardman Park. Pinwheels represent individuals who advocated on behalf of a child. Agency staff also supported *Ohio Wears Blue Day*. Blue is the national color for child abuse prevention.

**Provided** caseworkers' frontline experience working with children and families for *WKBN Investigates Heroin Crisis: Impact on Families*, a special one-hour TV program.

**Invited** a representative from the Ohio Attorney General's Heroin Unit to address Agency caseworkers and the community on the status of Ohio's opioid epidemic.

**Conducted** several trainings for Agency staff and community partners focusing on child welfare topics.

**Launched** a multi-media advertising campaign "The Best Gift You Can Give a Child is a Home," via billboard, TV, radio, internet and direct mailers addressing the shortage of licensed foster and adoptive homes in Mahoning County.

**Created** a partnership with WFMJ to feature monthly live segments that focus on timely child welfare and safety topics and Agency Events on the Mid-Day News anchored by Jennifer Brindisi,

**Hosted** two Foster/Adoptive *Informational Community Open House* events to recruit new foster/adoptive parents in May and October to help address the shortage of Agency licensed foster homes needed in Mahoning County.

**Honored** four Agency-involved youth at a special *Graduation Party Event*.

**Celebrated** *National Adoption Month* to raise awareness of foster care adoption and agency waiting children seeking an adoptive families at our annual *Adoption Celebration* event, co-hosted with Judge Robert Rusu, Jr., Mahoning County Probate Court.

**Sponsored** an *Adoption Mixer Event* at the Ice Zone to connect waiting children with adoptive families.

**Awarded** a "Community Spotlight Award" to the Local AFL-CIO Union Counselors for building a fence for an agency licensed Foster family to keep foster siblings safe. The Award recognizes organizations demonstrating service/commitment to Mahoning County children.

**Fulfilled** over 500 Mahoning County Children's Christmas Wishes. Individuals, businesses and organizations helped make kids' wishes come true through the Agency's *Christmas Gifts for Kids Campaign*.

**Outreached and provided** agency programs and services information at community events including but not limited to: African American Male Wellness Walk, Boardman Park's "Family Night Out", Foster Parent Association Golf Event, Mahoning County Child Support Enforcement Agency's "Back to School Fair," Coalition for a Drug Free Mahoning County's Symposium, Campbell School System's "Community Night", Boardman Rotary Club, Boardman Civic Association's "Candidates & Issues Forum" and The Canfield Fair—our biggest outreach event of the year.

**Ran, swam and walked and tugged** over 50 Children Services' staff members participated in the annual *Community Cup* event sponsored by the Youngstown YMCA. Children Services earned Third place in their Division.

**Raised funds and fun** at the Agency's *Signature* event—*Above the Rim Basketball*. The annual event features a charity "Battle of the Blue" basketball game pairing local organizations with friendly rivalries. Youngstown Fire clinched the 2017 win against the Youngstown Police.



Mahoning County  
Children Services

222 West Federal Street, 4th Floor | Youngstown, Ohio 44503 | 330.941.8888

[MAHONINGKIDS.COM](http://MAHONINGKIDS.COM)

