

# Mahoning Kids Matter



Mahoning County  
Children Services

THE EXCLUSIVE PUBLICATION FOR STAFF, STAKEHOLDERS, DONORS & FRIENDS

SPRING 2019

## April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month



### Pinwheels for Child Abuse Prevention

*The Pinwheel is the national symbol for Child Abuse Prevention Month  
WHY?? Answer on page 10*

Do Your Part to PREVENT  
Child Abuse and Neglect.  
Report it when you suspect it.  
Contact your County's public  
Children Services Agency or local Law Enforcement.

**Mahoning County Children Services**

**24-HOUR REPORT LINE:**

**330.941.8888**

## Inside this Edition

### ABOUT US

Meet Our New Children Services Board Member. . . . . 2  
In Memory: A Tribute to a Former Colleague. . . . . 3  
Meet Jackson—He's Seeking an Adoptive Family. . . . . 4

### OUR COMMUNITY

April National Child Abuse Prevention Events. . . . . 5  
Local Clubs & Ministries Support Children Services . . . . . 6  
Adoption Day Celebration. . . . . 7  
Annual Campaign Brightens Holidays for Hundreds of Kids. . . . 8

Calendar of Upcoming Events. . . . . 10

## Mahoning County Children Services Applauds Governor's Proposed Unprecedented Investments Ohio Children Services *Funding to Nearly Double*

COLUMBUS – Governor Mike DeWine recently announced an unprecedented 95 percent proposed increase in the state's investment in protecting abused and neglected children.

"That \$74 million announcement, along with related spending proposals, makes good on a campaign promise that Ohio should not be last in the nation when it comes to the state's responsibility for funding such a critical program," states Randall B. Muth, J.D., Executive Director, Mahoning County Children Services.

"This proposed investment is very needed in Mahoning County. The opioid addiction crisis has affected every agency department. We are experiencing increased reports of child abuse and neglect which has led to an increase of 53% more cases accepted for investigations and a 50% increase in child removals resulting in over 223 children placed into foster care. There is also critical shortage of licensed foster homes in the County. In addition, caseloads have become more complex and demanding and children are lingering longer in foster care due to relapse rates while reunification with the family becomes more challenging to accomplish," explains Muth.

"The Governor is saving a system in crisis and making wise investments," Muth stated. "These programs will alleviate the pressure on our county agency budget, which has struggled to pay rising costs. But more importantly, he is saving children and families by improving their chance for a better future."

CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 3  
SEE

**CHILD WELFARE INVESTMENTS**

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

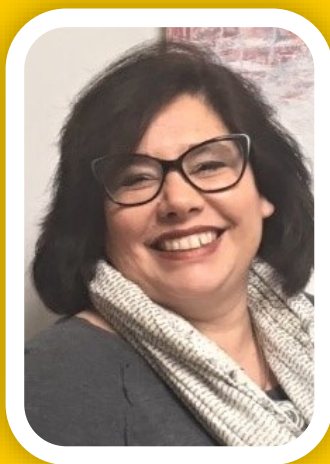
# About Us

Mahoning Kids Matter | SPRING 2019



## Wolford Appointed to Children Services Board

Kristine Wolford was appointed to the Mahoning County Children Services Board in 2019, continuing a life-long calling to serve children and their families. As an adoptive parent, Kristine has experienced the specialized care and concerns of children in foster placement and adoptive families. After two decades in pediatric healthcare, Kristine is now a Wrap-Around Coordinator and Parent Peer Support Specialist helping families to navigate systems. Kristine holds numerous professional and volunteer



**Kristine Wolford**

certifications, including that of NAMI Parent Advocate, and is a former member of the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services' ENGAGE Family Advisory Council, former Family Representative for the Mahoning County Family & Children First Council Executive Committee, and volunteers at the Purple Cat.

## 2019 Executive Staff, Board, Advisory & Commissioners

### ADMINISTRATIVE EXECUTIVE STAFF

#### Executive Director

Randall B. Muth, J.D.

#### Assistant Director

Rona Curtis

#### Intake Services Department

Brad Smith, Program Administrator

#### Family Services Department

Julie Rudolph, 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

### MAHONING COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD

Dr. Joseph Mosca, *Chairman*

Dr. Benjamin McGee, *Vice Chairman*

Delphine Baldwin-Casey

Marilyn Montes

Loisjean Haynes-Paige

Pastor Joann Pangio

Anthony Spano, *Secretary*

Daniel Wakefield

Kriss Wolford

### MAHONING COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Katrina Harris

Calvin Jones

Tracy Lamb

Brigid Kennedy

Michelle Kuhar

Rev. Lewis Macklin

Andrea L. Mahone

Lisa Manente

Pete Milliken

Mary Alice Noble

Officer Shawnacie Ott.

Dr. Matthew J. Paylo

Johanna Slivinske

Mary Jo Truman

Yvonne Wilson

## Keep Connected With Us @



#### Website:

Mahoningkids.com



Mahoning County  
Children Services  
@MahoningKids



MC Children Services  
@MahoningKids

**Mahoning Kids Matter** is the official publication of  
Mahoning County Children Services.

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Public Information Department

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### MAHONING COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

David C. Ditzler

Carol Rimedio Righetti

Anthony Traficanti



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FROM PAGE 1

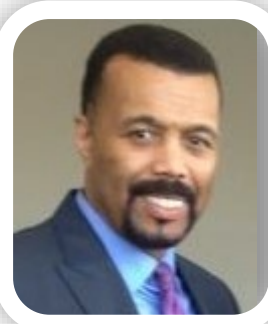
## CHILD WELFARE INVESTMENTS

"This investment will help us address the crisis in our children services system by providing funding for the rising placement costs, serving families struggling with addiction and mental illness, preventing children from coming into foster care, and providing more suitable placements for children who do have to come into custody."

In addition to increasing the State Child Protection Allocation by \$30 million per year, up from \$60 million, to give struggling county agencies the ability to pay the rising costs of serving children, Governor DeWine announced:

- \$25 million for multi-system youth will prevent parents from having to relinquish custody of children with developmental disabilities or severe mental illness so that they can get the treatment they need;
- \$8.5 million to support struggling grandparents and other kin care providers who unexpectedly find themselves caring for children, and to invest in recruiting much-needed foster parents;
- \$5.5 million to expand the Bridges program for youth who emancipate from our system without achieving permanency;
- \$4.5 million to expand evidence-based programs like Ohio START and 30 Days to Family to prevent children from coming into foster care; and
- \$2.6 million to help our caseworkers be more efficient and productive in the field.

## In Memory: Philip K. Murphy



Our dear Friend and former colleague, **PHILIP K. MURPHY** passed away November 9, 2018 at the age of 58.

Philip touched many lives in his lifetime. He enjoyed and cared about the Agency-involved children and families and his colleagues. His Children Services' colleagues describe him as patient, understanding, respectful, a great boss, great friend, funny and smart. At times, he was known to challenge and question child welfare policies which led him to be admired as a staff advocate by his colleagues.

Philip began his career at Mahoning County Children Services serving as a Youth Leader at the Agency's Group Home from 1983-1985. Over the years, he served in a variety of roles including: Group Home Coordinator, Family Services Department Supervisor and finally as the Abuse Unit Supervisor from 2001 until his retirement from the Agency in 2013—after 30 years of service!

As a life-long child advocate, Philip was committed to the children he served often donating money to various events and outings for agency-involved children. A humble person, Philip never wanted recognition or reimbursement for his contributions.

Throughout his career at Children Services, Philip was also a member of many community programs including: The School Liaison Program and The Northside Project. He also served on the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Board and Mahoning County Addiction Programs.

Philip taught Agency "Lunchtime Learning" trainings and had a clever English Language column regularly featured in the Agency newsletter. Philip also enjoyed creating Children Services' themed crossword puzzles that he proudly shared. He went on to have many other crossword puzzles published. A fierce and accomplished basketball competitor, Philip participated in Annual Community Cup Events over the years in Basketball and Tug-of-War. He also played on the Children Services' softball league.

A 1978 graduate of Struthers High School in 1978, Philip was inducted into their Hall of Fame in 2000 for outstanding Basketball achievements. He graduated from Allegheny College in 1982. He was inducted into the College's Hall of Fame in 1994 for outstanding Basketball achievements. He earned a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice and in English. He also served as an English professor at Youngstown State University and taught at the Kent State Salem Branch and online.

Philip married Zia Cochran in 2012 and also leaves his young daughter, Miah.

He leaves an amazing legacy. With so many accomplishments in his short life, his life inspires us to do our best and to give accolades when they are due.



# About Us

Mahoning Kids Matter | SPRING 2019



## Mahoning County Waiting Children Seek Families

### *Introducing...***Jackson**

Jackson is a sweet, five-year old boy who is in pre-school. He loves the Hulk and Spiderman. He enjoys watching Paw Patrol and playing with all toys! Jackson has issues with his speech and has speech therapy weekly. Jackson is bonded and attached to his current family who is willing to help him transition into an adoptive home.

**CONTACT:**

**Elizabeth Kollar, Adoption Caseworker**

Mahoning County Children Services

**Phone:** 330.941.8888 | **Fax:** 330.941.8787

**Email:** Elizabeth.Kollar@JFS.ohio.gov



**To Meet More Waiting Children Seeking Adoptive Families— Visit our website:**

[www.mahoningkids.com/waiting-children/](http://www.mahoningkids.com/waiting-children/)

## Open Your Heart & Home

Become a  
**Foster / Adoptive Parent**



Mahoning County  
**Children Services**

330-941-8888 [www.mahoningkids.com](http://www.mahoningkids.com)





# April is National Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Month

*Protecting Children, Preserving Families*



Mahoning County  
Children Services

## 2019 AWARENESS MONTH EVENTS



**Thurs. | April 4th | 1:00 p.m.**  
**14th Annual Pinwheels for  
Child Abuse Prevention  
Community Event**

Annual community event co-sponsored by Mahoning County Children Services and the Child Advocacy Center at Akron Children's Hospital to recognize and raise awareness of child abuse and neglect prevention. Pinwheels and the color blue are national symbols of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention.

**Location:** Holiday Inn Boardman

**Registration Required**

**RSVP:** [jennifer.kollar@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:jennifer.kollar@jfs.ohio.gov)  
[amistovich@akronchildrens.org](mailto:amistovich@akronchildrens.org)

**April 1-30th | All Month**

**Visit Our Outdoor Pinwheel "Garden" Display  
@ Boardman Park**

Boardman Park Front Lawn (facing U.S. RT 224)  
This annual display is sponsored by Mahoning County Children Services and the Child Advocacy Center at Akron Children's Hospital. Each year, Pinwheels are planted in communities across the nation. The Pinwheel Garden represent individuals who advocated and took action on behalf of a child.



Do Your Part to **PREVENT**  
Child Abuse and Neglect.  
**Report** it when you suspect it.  
**Contact** your County's public  
Children Services Agency or local  
Law Enforcement.  
Mahoning County Children Services  
**24-Hour REPORT LINE:**  
**330.941.8888**

**Wednesday | April 10th**  
**Ohio Wears BLUE DAY**

Wear Blue is a statewide awareness campaign that takes place on the second Wednesday of every April for Child Abuse

Prevention Month. Ohioans are encouraged to wear blue that day – to work, to school, to a community event to show support for preventing child abuse and neglect.

**Get the Blue Out!**



**Friday | April 26th**

**Above the Rim Basketball Event**

**5:30 PM Doors Open**

**6:00 PM Tip-Off**

**LOCATION:**

Cardinal Mooney High School  
2545 Erie St. Youngstown

**Info: 330.941.8888**

Friendly rivalry basketball charity tournament featuring the **"Battle of the Blue" Game: Teams:** Youngstown Fire Dept. Boardman Fire Dept, Mahoning Co. Sheriff's Office and Youngstown Police Dept.

- Music by "Bobby DJ"
- Food by **Barry Dyngles** Restaurant
- Themed Gift Basket Raffles
- Wear **BLUE** to the game to support National Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Month!

**Admission:** \$5 Adults  
\$3 children 12 and under



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330-941-8888 [www.mahoningkids.com](http://www.mahoningkids.com)





# OUR COMMUNITY

Mahoning Kids Matter | SPRING 2019



## Children Services Selected As One of Canfield Republican Women Club's "Caring for America" Projects

The Canfield Republican Women's Club as part of their ongoing *Caring for America* Project, presented coloring books, crayons, and activity books to Mahoning County Children Services. Pictured left to right: Jennifer Kollar, Mahoning County Children Services with Ruth Nabb, Chairperson, Caring for America Project, Canfield Republican Women's Club.



## Local Ministry Donates Comfort Care Bookbags



Husband and wife team Duane (pictured) and Tracie Corll are missionaries with Special Touch Ministry and coordinate the local chapter. The ministry works with families who have a member with special needs. The Corll's plan "Respite Night Events" where individual's with disabilities can come and enjoy a fun and safe evening out while their parent/caregiver can also get some much needed respite. According to Tracie Corll, one of the projects the participants worked on during several "Respite Night Events" was helping to teach the event attendees how they can serve others. The group chose to collect items and make 83 comfort care bookbags for Mahoning County Children transitioning into foster care," explains Tracie.

## Agency's Foster Care Information Events Aim to Address County Foster Parent Shortage

Mahoning County Children Services' Information Events aim to provide details about how to become a licensed foster parent. At this time, the Agency is facing a shortage of licensed foster homes especially for caregivers who are able to accommodate sibling groups and emergency placements. The opioid crisis has led to a surge in the number of children in the Agency's custody. "The Agency currently oversees 54 local, county-licensed foster homes, but we need more. We're full. We need more and as many in-county options for children who face far worse outcomes when moved out of the county for services or placement," states Jennifer T. Kollar, Agency Public Information Officer.



Jeff Phillips and Theresa Pancoe, Mahoning County Children Services, explain to event attendees the great need for foster and adoptive families to care for teens in the Agency's permanent custody.



## PINWHEELS FOR PREVENTION

VISIT OUR

# PINWHEEL DISPLAY

IN BOARDMAN PARK



### APRIL - NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT PREVENTION MONTH

# OUR COMMUNITY

Mahoning Kids Matter | SPRING 2019



## 5th Annual Adoption Day Event Celebrates “Many Faces of Adoption”

**N**ovember marks National Adoption Awareness Month. Each year courts, child welfare agencies and community partners join together on one day to do something AMAZING—create forever families!

National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the more than 117,000 children across the nation who are waiting in foster care for an adoptive family.

In support of the month, together, Mahoning County Probate Court and Mahoning County Children Services co-hosted the Fifth Annual Adoption Day Celebration Event on: Nov. 1, 2018 in the Mahoning County Courthouse Rotunda. The Adoption Day Celebration featured two Adoption Finalizations.

**Local Waiting Children:** The majority of Mahoning County waiting children are teens over the age of 15. Learn more about Mahoning County Waiting Children Seeking Adoptive Families: [www.mahoningkids.com/waiting-children/](http://www.mahoningkids.com/waiting-children/)

“This is our opportunity to bring attention to the hundreds of local children in foster care and to make a difference in the lives of these children. If we can connect one child with an adoptive family with this event, it’s a success,” states Judge Robert N. Rusu, Jr., Mahoning County Probate Court.

“Mahoning County Children Services is in immediate and great need of foster homes for youth 12-18 years of age and foster caregivers who are able to accommodate sibling groups. At any given time, the Agency has 150-175 children in foster care and that number is rising which is why we need more adoptive and foster homes.” explains Jennifer T. Kollar, Public Information Officer, Mahoning



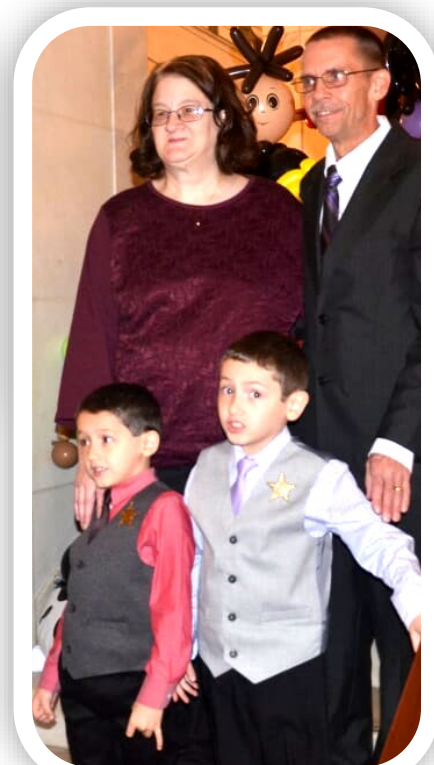
**The Tap of the Gavel Makes the Adoption Final:** (left to right). Judge Robert N. Rusu, Jr, Mahoning County Probate Court hands the gavel to Syncere Allen McGee-Taltoan (left) and sibling brothers Jordan and Joseph Brooks (right) to make their adoption final and official witnessed by family, friends, Children Services staff along with Mahoning County government offices and officials.



### Family is the Heart of It All:

(pictured above)  
The McGee-Taltoan family.

(pictured right):  
The Brooks Family



## November is: National Adoption Month

*Become a*  
**Foster / Adoptive Parent**



Mahoning County  
**Children Services**  
330-941-8888 [www.mahoningkids.com](http://www.mahoningkids.com)



## “Gifts for Kids Campaign” Brightens Holidays for Hundreds

### Bike Lady Rides into Children Services

The Bike Lady, Inc., a Columbus, Ohio organization, made a special and early Christmas trip to Youngstown to deliver 27 brand new bicycles to Mahoning County Children Services helping kick-off the Agency’s annual Gifts for Kids Holiday Campaign. The Gifts for Kids Campaign ensures that all children the Agency serves receive gifts for the holidays.

Mahoning County Children Services was one of the few counties in Ohio that received Bike Lady donations for the



Children Services Staff accept the Bike Lady Donation

holidays. The Bike Lady’s mission is to enrich the daily life experience and expand opportunities of Ohio at-risk youth by providing new bikes, helmets, and bike locks to children who have a history of abuse, neglect, and abandonment, and are served by county child protective services. The Bike Lady also provides Ohio inmate offenders a chance to give back through volunteer bike assembly community service. The bikes and helmets decorated with Christmas bows, each came with special letters written by Ohio Department of Corrections Center inmates-- who are juveniles--- serving adult sentences. The juveniles, all boys, volunteer to assemble the bikes as part of a collaborative partnership with Bike Lady, Inc. The letters of encouragement are written for kids in agency care to hang tough and get through it, but stay off drugs, stay in school, hang around good kids, and don't come to prison.



Tracy Lamb (pictured left) with staff from Ohio State Penitentiary’s Women in Corrections Department.



Vickie Palmer (left) and donated over 150 adorable Herbie the Hedgehogs—Avon’s signature plush animal to be given to all children placed in foster care.



**The Gift of Warmth:** Allison Smith (right), Director, Destiny Outreach Ministry and students presented Children Services over 22 hand-made fleece blankets with a variety of themes for children of all ages.



# AROUND THE COUNTY

Mahoning Kids Matter | WINTER/SPRING 2019



## Generous Donors

**M**ahoning County Children Services' annual Gifts for Kids Campaign has been able to make the Holidays a little brighter and joyous for hundreds of Mahoning County children thanks to the generous spirit of individual community donors, organizations, businesses and corporations. The gifts collected are given to children ages infants to 18 years, who are in foster or kinship care or receiving case management services from Mahoning County Children Services. Often, the gifts contributed by our generous donors are the **ONLY** gifts the children receive for the Holiday.



**We Called In the Marines to Help Us with our Campaign:** The always A-M-A-Z-I-N-G Marine's & Toys for Tots. (Left) Sgt. Gregory Peterkin.



Darlene Malaska (left) President, and Deb Arnsdale, Vice President, Delta Kappa Gamma Mu Chapter, comprised of retired teachers, continue helping children outside the classroom.



### Pop-Up Toy Shop

Children Services' Toy Shop 'pops' up just in time for the holidays and features all new items donated from generous individuals, businesses and organizations. Items donated include everything from toys, to winter apparel and every thing in between for infants to teens 18 years of age. Children Services Caseworkers ensure that kids on their caseloads receive age-appropriate gifts.



**Coats for Kids:** Lindsey Villanueva with her daughter delivered over 150 new coats for kids of all ages. When Lindsey learned that the Agency was in great need for new coats for kids, she sprang into action raising over \$2,000 from friends and family to help purchase the new coats featured in our 'pop-up toy shop.'



**Supporting Kids for Christmas:** Lisa Manente (left) Mahoning County Child Support Enforcement Agency.



**Avon Reps Support Kids:** Long-time donor, Carol Geise donated Avon Herbie the Hedgehog plush animals.

**The Heisman Christmas Shuffle:** Delmas Stubbs, Left, Mahoning County Veterans Service Commission and Jennifer Kollar Mahoning County Children Services have a little holiday football fun. Delmas donated a large collection of new footballs and basketballs for the Gifts for Kids Holiday Campaign.



ALL PHOTOS BY MAHONING COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

# EVENTS

Mahoning Kids Matter | SPRING 2019



**Wear Blue**  
in support of  
April's National Child  
Abuse & Neglect  
Prevention Month

## ABOVE-THE-RIM

For Children Who Need  
A Better Tomorrow

# Mahoning County Children Services Basketball Event

## 5TH ANNUAL

**Basketball Tournament**  
Featuring  
**Friendly Rivalries**

- Youngstown Fire Department
- Boardman Fire Department
- Mahoning County Sheriff's Office
- Youngstown Police Department

## Friday, April 26, 2019

**Cardinal Mooney High School Gymnasium**  
2545 Erie Street  
Youngstown, Ohio 44507

This is a fundraising event benefiting Mahoning County Children Services  
**Doors Open: 5:30 PM | Game: 6:00**  
 Admission-\$5 per person / Children under 12 years-\$3

- Live Music With Bobby DJ
- Food by Barry Dyngles Restaurant
- Themed Gift Basket Raffles
- Half-Time activities
- Fun for All Ages!

Event Planned, Sponsored, and Hosted By: Mahoning County Children Services Citizens Committee

## For more information: 330.941.8888

Event Sponsored In Part By:

## Agency EVENTS

**April 1-30, 2019**

*National Child Abuse & Neglect  
Prevention Month*

**April 1-30**

*Pinwheel Garden Display/Exhibit*  
Pinwheels are the National Symbol for  
Child Abuse Prevention

**April 4, 2019**

*Pinwheels for Prevention Event*

**April 10, 2019**

*Ohio Wears Blue for a Day in Honor of  
National Child Abuse Prevention  
Month*

**April 26, 2019**

*Above the Rim Basketball Fundraising  
Event*  
Cardinal Mooney High School

**May**

*National Foster Care Awareness  
Month*

**June**

*High School Graduation Party  
for Agency-involved youth who are  
graduating*

**November 1, 2018**

*National Adoption Awareness Month  
"Adoption Day Celebration Event"*  
**Venue:** Rotunda, Mahoning County  
Courthouse

**November—December 2019**

*Christmas Gifts For Kids Holiday  
Campaign*

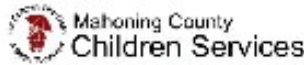
**\* Stay Tuned for Dates/  
Times/Locations \***

## Why Pinwheels for Child Abuse Prevention?

In 2008, Prevent Child Abuse America introduced the pinwheel as the new national symbol for child abuse prevention through Pinwheels for Prevention.® Research showed, that people respond to the pinwheel. By its very nature, the pinwheel connotes whimsy and childlike notions. In essence, it has come to serve as the physical embodiment, or reminder, of the great childhoods we want for all children. [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)







## Succeed

Providing Hope, Support and  
Empowerment for Primary Parents

Finding Community  
Resources

Working with  
Foster parents

Working with  
Caseworkers

Parenting  
Issues

Visitation

## Come to the Succeed Support Group

Parents with involvement with Children Services provide each other with hope, support, and empowerment. These groups are run by parents who have been through the child welfare system. In Succeed groups, parents discuss useful topics, help each other with community resources, and have social time to support each other.

### Where Parents are Helping Parents

Please join us for dinner and support

MEETINGS: Wednesdays

April 10 & April 24

May 15 & May 29

June 12 & June 26

4pm-6pm

Newport Library 3730 Market St, Youngstown, OH 44507

If you have any questions, you can contact: Elizabeth Schmid or Theresa Pancoe at 330-941-8888

[Elizabeth.schmid@ifs.ohio.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.schmid@ifs.ohio.gov) [Theresa.pancoe@ifs.ohio.gov](mailto:Theresa.pancoe@ifs.ohio.gov)

This event is located at Newport Library; the library is not sponsoring or participating in this event