

Mahoning Kids Matter

The Exclusive Publication for Mahoning County Children Services, Staff, Stakeholders and Friends

WINTER 2017



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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

Protecting Children. Preserving Families.



Mahoning County Children Services
Protecting Children. Preserving Families.

Forging Ahead Into A New Year!

On behalf of everyone at Mahoning County Children Services, it is with warmest wishes we welcome you to *Mahoning Kids Matter*—the official publication exclusively designed for our Staff, many Friends, and Stakeholders. This is only our Second Edition. Our Inaugural Issue made its debut in July of 2016.

As we forge full-steam ahead into this New Year, you can expect each edition of *Mahoning Kids Matter* to be packed with exclusive Agency news, events, and highlights, along with articles on topics relevant to child welfare that may be of interest to not only our staff but our Mahoning County community, stakeholders and many friends—because *Kids Matter!*

Connect and Follow Us via:



Website: mahoningkids.com



Facebook: Mahoning County Children Services



Twitter: MC Children Services
[@mahoningkids](https://twitter.com/mahoningkids)

OUR COMMUNITY

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Suitcases, Tote bags Donated for Kids

AT&T Pioneers, a network of active and retired employees from the Youngstown Chapter presented 100 overnight suitcases to Mahoning County Children Services for children who are placed in foster care. "AT&T Pioneers in Youngstown realize how precious our children are and saw an opportunity to make their world a little better," states Steve Kristan, AT&T Director of External and Legislative Affairs.

The idea to provide suitcases and tote bags was a much needed and creative solution that many agencies adopted nationally to combat placing children's belongings in plastic trash bags when they are placed in foster care.

The Canfield, Ohio Girl Scout Troop #80174 also donated backpack totes. The donated suitcases and totes contain a blanket, stuffed animal and toothbrush kits.

When children are placed in foster care, many arrive on short notice and with only the clothing they're wearing. Often, their belongings are placed in plastic bags or trash bags. The suitcases 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.



Above: Canfield Girl Scout Troop #80174
Below: Steve Kristan, AT&T, State Representative John Bocchieri present 100 suitcases to Jennifer T. Kollar, Mahoning County Children Services.



Fence Building Project for Foster Family Keeps Siblings Safe

Members of the local Union Counselors tackled a fence building project benefitting a Mahoning County Children Services' licensed foster family.

The foster family cares for two siblings with special needs. The residence is located on and near two busy streets. The location of the home along with the special needs of the children has made it difficult and nearly impossible for the children to play outside safely.



Local Union Counselors at the Fence Build Project.

The family used alternative venues for playtime and exercise. The family now plays outdoors without worry.

The Union Counselors represent a variety of professional tradespeople and

The family used alternative venues for

provide building expertise, labor and materials contributing to numerous community service projects.

"Everything we do is rooted in enriching the lives of others in our community," states Tony DiTommaso, Jr. Senior Representative of the Union Counselors.

The Best Gift You Can Give a Child is a Home.

Become a Foster/Adoptive Parent



Mahoning County
Children Services
330.941.8888
www.mahoningkids.com



New Year. New Foster/Adoptive Families Needed

Mahoning County Children Services is in immediate and great need for new Foster and Adoptive Families especially for teens 14-18 years of age and sibling groups, emergency placements and respite breaks.

Learn more about fostering and adopting through Mahoning County Children Services.

330.941.8888
mahoningkids.com

OUR COMMUNITY

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Kids Helping Kids for the Holidays

Nothing is better than kids helping kids especially for the holidays. Thank you to Dobbins Elementary Students, Staff and Parents for helping keep kids warm all year long. Dobbins Elementary has collected and donated new winter apparel for Mahoning County Children Services for over 10 years and the tradition continues. The students and staff at Choffin Career & Technical Center also have a long-standing tradition of collecting mittens and scarves for the Agency.



Students Representing Dobbins Elementary School



Angela and Isabelle Davis representing Canfield Girl Scout Troop #80174 donated Christmas stockings stuffed with activity books, and candy for Mahoning County children.

Gifts for Kids Year Round

- Make a monetary donation in any amount (donations may be tax deductible).
- Donate unwrapped, new toys, clothing of any kind or gift cards of any amount for children ages infants to 18 years of age.

"Gifts for Kids Holiday" Campaign Provides Gifts for Hundreds of

Mahoning County Children Services has been able to make the Holidays a little brighter and joyous for hundreds of Mahoning County children thanks to the numerous and generous spirit of individuals, organizations, businesses and corporations who sponsor children, donate toys, and provide financial gifts.

The gifts collected are given to children—including infants to 18-years-old—who receive case management services from Mahoning County Children Services.

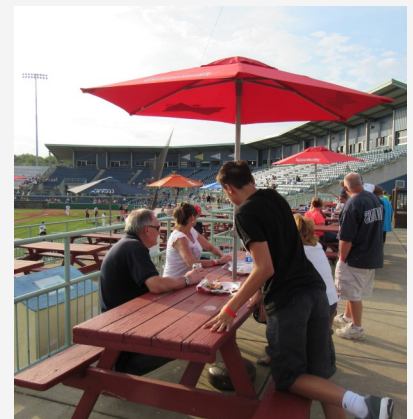
Often, the gifts contributed by our generous donors are the ONLY gifts the children receive for the Holiday.



Gifts for Kids!

Adoption Mixer Event

Mahoning County Children Services hosted an Adoption Mixer Picnic Event at Eastwood Field—home of the Mahoning Valley Scrappers. All children in foster care, current and prospective foster and adoptive families along with staff from other child welfare agencies and organizations participated in the end-of-summer event.



OUR COMMUNITY

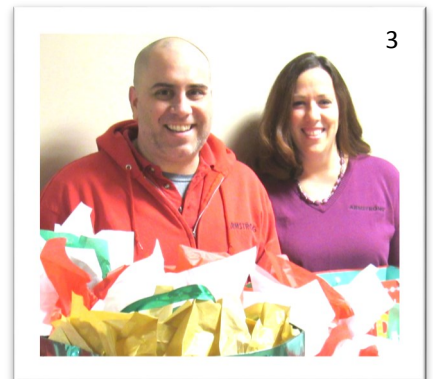
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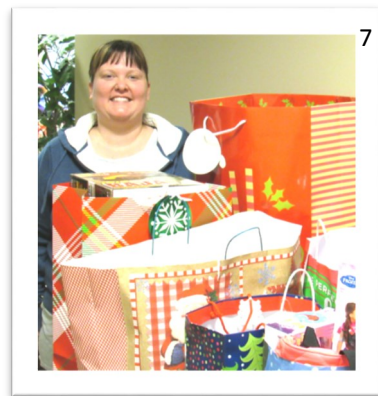
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11

1. Kory Geary, YSU Student Social Work Program
2. Jim Kelly & UAW Local 1714 Community Services Committee
3. Megan Ellashek, John Yurko, Armstrong Cable, Boardman
4. James MacGregor, YSU Emerging Leader Program, Jenn Moore (left), Jenn Kollar, Children Services
5. "Santa's' Workshop" at Children Services office.
6. Lisa Manente, Child Support Enforcement Agency
7. Wendy Kittle, Salon K
8. Ryan Carpet Sales & Service
9. Carol Geise, Avon
10. Jessica Webber, State Alarm
11. Marc Caminetti, Nashbar Inc.



Third Annual Adoption Day Celebrates Foster Care Adoptions

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

In support of the month, together, Mahoning County Children Services and Mahoning County Probate Court celebrated their Third Annual Adoption Day Celebration Event inviting the public to the event held November 2nd in the Mahoning County Courthouse Rotunda.

"If we can connect one child with an adoptive family with this event it's a success."
—Judge Rusu.

In Ohio, adoption services are provided by public children services agencies like Mahoning County Children Services.

This year's event featured an "Adoption Renewal Ceremony" and an Adoption Finalization. The event also included the East High School Junior ROTC Color Guard and performances by the Canfield High School Drum Line along with the Courthouse's first-ever indoor Balloon Launch!

"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," states Judge Robert N. Rusu, Jr.



Judge Robert N. Rusu, Jr. welcomes event guests.



Singing in the Halls: The Anthony, Jacinda & Randy Madison Family perform acapella songs which echoed majestically through the Courthouse Rotunda.

Change a Life. Support Foster Care Adoption.



Inspirational Words:
Pastor Joann Pangio, a member of the Mahoning County Children Services Board offers words of encouragement and inspiration.



Drumming to their Own Beat: Members of the Canfield High School Drum Line.



AROUND THE COUNTY

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Judge Robert N. Rusu, Jr. congratulates April and newly adopted Aurora. The family's adoption was finalized earlier during the Event.



Celebrating the Past and Present: The Mark Gambrel family with Judge Robert N. Rusu. The 2016 Adoption Celebration Event featured the Gambrel Family's "Adoption Renewal." The photo the family is holding was taken at their actual adoption hearing finalization several decades ago!

The Amazing Adoption

Team: Judge Robert Rusu, Jr. congratulates members of Mahoning County Children Services as they receive public recognition for their incredible work. Last year, Children Services' Adoption team along with Mahoning County Probate Court celebrated a second record-setting year



Behind the Scenes: WFMJ-TV Reporter Janet Rogers interviews Jennifer T. Kollar, Public Information Officer, Mahoning County Children Services. "Our goal is to decrease the number of children waiting for permanent homes and identify and recruit new permanent and foster homes." states Kollar.

Leading the Way: Master Sergeant Douglas Moon directs East High School's Junior ROTC Color Guard to present the National Colors as they march to a special drum cadence by a Canfield High School Drummer.



PHOTOS BY JOSHUA CAYSON
MAHONING COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

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

About Us

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Agency Staff Changes, New Roles & Faces

Children Services has been strategically working to reorganize, restructure and modernize the way the Agency delivers services. As a result there are many staff in new roles, new positions and new staff hires in 2016.

Retirement

Glenna Ress retired in November 2016 after 28-years with the Agency. Glenna began her career as a Caseworker. A series of promotions enabled her to serve in a variety of roles and positions including Group Home Supervisor, Training Officer and Supervisor in the Family Services Department. She most recently served as a Supervisor in the Intake Services Department until her retirement. Best Wishes Glenna!

New Roles

Rona Curtis promoted from Program Administrator of the Family Services Department to Assistant Executive Director.

Nikki Posterli promoted from Fiscal Officer to Program Administrator of Business Operations.

Julie Rudolph promoted from Supervisor, Family Services Department to Program Administrator, Family Services Department.

Brad Smith promoted from Supervisor, Family Services Department to Program Administrator, Intake Services Department

Meghan Tarantino promoted from Caseworker, Foster Care Unit to Supervisor, Foster Unit, Placement Services Department.

Jennifer Moore transferred from Ongoing Unit, Family Services Department to Foster Care Unit, Placement Services Department.

Marisa Litch promoted from Caseworker, Family Services' Ongoing Unit #4 to Supervisor of Ongoing Unit #3, Family Services Department.

Katrina Simms transferred from Caseworker-in-Training to Caseworker, Intake Services Department.

Becky Haddle transferred from Caseworker, Adoption Unit to Caseworker, Intake Services Department.

Cynthia Berend transferred from Caseworker, Ongoing Unit #3, Family Services Department to Caseworker, Intake Services Department.

Shaunte Rogers transferred from Ongoing Unit, Family Services Department to Foster Care Unit.

Paula Libbey transferred from Caseworker Supervisor, Family Services Department to Supervisor, Intake Services Department.

Brittney Averhart promoted from Caseworker, Ongoing, Family Services Department to Supervisor, Intake Services Unit.

Lisa Kaneski transferred from Caseworker, Family Services Department to Caseworker, Foster Care Unit.

Constance Massey-Hight transferred from Caseworker, Family Services Department to Caseworker, Adoption Unit.

Valerie Johnson transferred from Caseworker, Foster Care Unit to Caseworker, Adoption Unit.

Natalie Finamore promoted from Technical Typist, Clerical Unit to Caseworker in Training

Nikki Hinchcliffe promoted from Technical Typist, Clerical Unit to a Caseworker-in-Training.

Denise Douglass promoted from Caseworker, Intake Services Department to Supervisor, Intake Department.

Diane Foster promoted from Caseworker, Placement Services Department to Training Officer/Casework Supervisor.

Lori Robinette promoted from Technical Typist, Ongoing Unit #1 to a Clerical Specialist, Placement Services Department.

Venus Kitchen transferred from Caseworker In Training to Caseworker in the Abuse Unit.

Erica Romeo transferred from Caseworker In Training to Caseworker, Ongoing Unit #4, Family Services Department.

Rose Starghill promoted from a full-time Youth Leader to Caseworker-In-Training position.

Nicole Mrofchak accepted a Caseworker position in the Family Services Department.

Matthew Amatore promoted from Application Specialist to Computer Specialist, IT Department.

Gwen O'Halloran promoted from a Clerical Specialist to an Application Specialist, IT Department.

Robert Gessler, transferred into the Business Support Department.

New Faces

Chantell Morgan accepted a Unit Aid position, Intake Services Department.

Dayesha Lomax, accepted a Caseworker position Ongoing Unit #1, Family Services Department.

Ashley Mayer, accepted a Caseworker position, Ongoing Unit #3, Family Services Department.

Terri Cercone accepted a Technical Typist position.

Sarah Jilg accepted a position as a Caseworker-in-Training.

Kayla Babos accepted a position as a Caseworker-in-Training.

Alexandria Pancoe accepted a position as a Technical Typist in the Clerical Unit.

Jessica Carter accepted a position as a Caseworker, Ongoing Unit #2, Family Services Department.

Connie O'Dell accepted a position as a Technical Typist, Clerical Unit.

Donna Napolitan accepted a position as a Account Clerk, Fiscal Department.

In Memory

Our dear friend and colleague, **DOROTHY**

BAIRD STAAF, passed on October 31, 2016. The Children Services Board

publicly recognized Dorothy's lifetime achievements with a formal resolution presented at the Board's December 6, 2016 meeting with Dorothy's family in attendance.

Dorothy was a beloved mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, great-aunt, a trusted and true friend and mentor to many. She provided outstanding leadership, wisdom, guidance and her warmth, humor and vibrant spirit resonate with anyone she called friend. Dorothy served with honor, integrity and great distinction while a Staff Member of Mahoning County Children Services for over 17 years when she was hired on October 4, 1999. Dorothy demonstrated a lifetime of commitment in both her personal and professional life as a devoted advocate and champion of the welfare of children and families. Dorothy will be forever missed.



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SPECIAL EVENTS!

April	Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month
3	"Pinwheels for Prevention Community Event"
1-30	Pinwheel Garden Display (Boardman Park)
12	Ohio "Wear Blue Day"
28	"Battle of the Blue" Basketball Fundraiser
May	National Foster Care Awareness Month
	"Annual Foster Caregiver Appreciation Dinner"
June	High School Graduation Party youth graduating who are in agency custody
August	Canfield Fair our biggest Community Outreach Event
October	Halloween Treats at the Agency with Eagle's Christian Preschool
November	National Adoption Awareness Month
	"Adoption Celebration Event"
December	Gifts For Kids Holiday Campaign

Stay Tuned for Dates/Times/Locations To Be Announced



Mahoning County Children Services

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:

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Public Information Officer

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