

# MahoningKidsMatter



Mahoning County  
Children Services

THE EXCLUSIVE PUBLICATION FOR STAFF, STAKEHOLDERS, DONORS & FRIENDS

SPRING-SUMMER 2022

## Agency Now Seeking & Hiring New Child Welfare Caseworkers



**NOW HIRING CHILD WELFARE CASEWORKERS!**

**Help Protect Children & Preserve Families**

Mahoning County Children Services

Apply online [mahoningkids.com/careers/](http://mahoningkids.com/careers/)

Mahoning County Children Services held its first Career Fair on Saturday, May 21 to recruit Child Welfare Caseworkers. The Ohio Child Welfare System has not been immune to the current job climate dubbed the “Great Resignation,” like the private sector, public children services agencies in Ohio are vying for qualified candidates to fill child caseworker positions. The Agency has several Case-Worker-in-Training Unit positions to fill in addition to other support staff vacancies including an IT Technical Specialist, and Recruitment and Retention Officer.

**NOW HIRING**  
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## MAHONING COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES EARNS FIRST-PLACE RANKING IN STATE FOR TIMELY INVESTIGATIONS

Mahoning County Children Services received a **FIRST PLACE RANKING** in the state of Ohio for completing timely child abuse and neglect investigations. The Agency also ranked in the Top 25% of Ohio’s largest counties for in-person Face-to-Face Visits with children and families according to a monthly report issued in March by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS). The Agency jumped into **FIRST** place after ranking second in the state in February 2022 for completing child abuse and neglect investigations ‘On-Time.’ According to the ODJFS report, investigations are considered “On-Time” if the investigation completion date occurs within 45 days or less of the date when a decision is made to open a case. If an open case cannot be completed within the 45 days or less, Children Services agencies can request a 15-day extension. If an extension is approved, the Intake investigation completion date must occur within 60 days or less of the decision date when the case was opened. From October 2021 through March 15, 2022, ODJFS reports that 96.7% of Mahoning County Children Services’ monthly child abuse and neglect Investigations were completed On-Time.



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

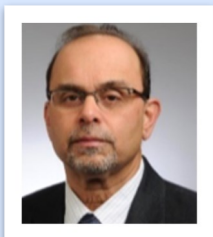
# About Us

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## Children Services Advisory Committee Adds 3 New Members

**Dr. Joseph Mosca** joins the Children Services' Advisory Committee after seven years of distinguished service on the Mahoning County Children Services' Governing Board. During his time on the Children Services Board (1/1/2013-12/31/2021) Dr. Mosca served in several key roles including Board Chairman since 2018, Chair of the Personnel Committee and Secretary of the Board. He will remain active serving on the Agency's Advisory Committee. **Welcome Back Dr. Mosca!**



**Tadarrelle Lett**, has recently joined the Mahoning County Children Services Advisory Committee. Tadarrelle is currently the Career Services Manager at Youngstown Area Goodwill Industries, Inc. He recently moved back to the Youngstown area.



He joined the Advisory Committee because: "I am committed to advocating for children in foster care through community outreach and engagement within Mahoning Valley. I am passionate about inspiring and motivating the next generation." **Welcome Tadarrelle!**

**LeAnn Laster** is our most recent addition to the Children Services' Advisory Committee. **Welcome LeAnn!**

For a complete list of Current Advisory Committee Members and the Committee's Mission and Purpose: Visit the Agency's website: [Mahoningkids.com](http://Mahoningkids.com)

## 2022 Executive Staff, Board, Advisory & Commissioners

### ADMINISTRATIVE EXECUTIVE STAFF

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

**Assistant Director**  
Rona Curtis

**Intake Services**  
Bradley Smith, Program Administrator

**Family Services**  
Julie Rudolph, Program Administrator

**Placement Services**  
Anthony Paris, Program Administrator

**Fiscal Officer**  
Denise Barnes-Carper

**Human Resources**  
Susan Babinec, Manager

**Information Technology**  
Joshua Cayson, Manager

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

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**  
Nancy Walker-McCain

### MAHONING COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD \*

**Dr. Benjamin McGee**,  
Chairman

**Daniel Wakefield**,  
Vice Chairman

**Marilyn Montes**,  
Secretary

Sherri Lovelace-  
Cameron, Ph.D.

Rev. Dr. Lewis W.  
Macklin, II

Maria Pappas

Richard White

Kriss Wolford

### MAHONING COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DJ Depp  
Megan Ellashek  
Katrina Harris  
Michele Kuhar  
LeAnn Laster  
Tadarrelle Lett  
Tracy Lamb  
David Magura  
Andrea L. Mahone  
Lisa Manente  
Pete Milliken  
Dr. Joseph Mosca  
Mary Alice Noble  
Officer Shawnacie Ott  
Patricia Sciarretta  
Mary Jo Truman  
Yvonne Wilson

### MAHONING COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

David C. Ditzler  
Carol Rimedio Righetti  
Anthony Traficanti

*\* Mahoning County Children Services Board is comprised of nine members who are appointed by the Mahoning County Commissioners.*



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## Farewell & Best Wishes

**Dr. Joseph Mosca** departs the Mahoning County Children Services Board after seven years of distinguished service. During his time on the Children Services Board (1/1/2013-12/31/2021) Dr. Mosca served in several key roles including Board Chairman since 2018, Chair of the Personnel Committee and Secretary of the Board. He will remain active serving on the Agency's **Advisory Committee**.



**Loisjean Haynes-Paige** was appointed to the Children Services Board in 2018 and served one full term. Best Wishes!



**Samuel Moffie** appointed to the Children Services Board in 2020 and was currently serving in his first term. Best Wishes!

## Children Services' Board Officers

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**DR. BENJAMIN MCGEE**  
CHAIRMAN



**DANIEL WAKEFIELD**  
VICE CHAIR



**MARILYN MONTES**  
SECRETARY

## Mahoning County Commissioners Appoint 3 to Children Services Board

**Magistrate Richard White**

**Sherri Lovelace-Cameron, Ph.D.**

**Maria Pappas**

**Welcome Aboard!**

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## FIRST PLACE

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Mahoning County Children Services had the highest percentage of timely Intake Investigations when compared to the 28 largest counties in the state. Mahoning County Children Services exceeded the state-wide performance average of 67%. Only three other Ohio public children services agencies designated as a 'large' county achieved a 95% or above percentage performance.

Percentages are statewide and by county/by agency for baseline and for each completed month within the review period. ODJFS extracts the data monthly ---any day between the 11th and 15th of each month. Mahoning County Children Services' Intake Department is responsible for investigating reports of child abuse and neglect within Mahoning County.

The Department is comprised of a Program Administrator, three Casework Supervisors and 14 investigative Caseworkers.

Do Your Part to  
**PREVENT**  
Child Abuse & Neglect  
**REPORT IT**  
When Suspected  
**CONTACT**  
Your County's public  
Children Services  
Agency or local Law  
Enforcement.

Mahoning County  
Children Services  
**24-Hour Report Line**  
**330.941.8888**



## Retirement Farewell & Best Wishes: Tony Paris

### MCCS Program Administrator Fondly Reflects on Career & Life Lessons Learned

**Q: How many years of service at Children Services?**

**A:** 31 years

**Q: What role did you start out at? What other roles/units did you serve in during your career at MCCS?**

**A:** Youth Leader position in one of our Group Homes. I spent over 10 years in the Intake Department as a caseworker. Then was promoted to the Group Home Coordinator position where I spent about two years. From there I was promoted to a Unit Supervisor position in the Ongoing Services department under the long-time Administrator Cathy Gagliardi who mentored me. I have spent the final 10 years of my career in the Program Administrator position in Resource Services Department.

**Q: What was your favorite role/dept/unit?**

**A:** I would have to say that I enjoyed every role I served in. Each position was different and the experience was somewhat different. There were many challenges as an Intake worker—fast pace with high case-loads back in the 1990s. The Group Home positions I held were both challenging. Many of the youth served in our Group Homes had experienced a substantial amount of trauma and loss. When a child in the group home experienced something positive, like being able to return home or step-down to a foster or kinship family, it was very rewarding though. You become attached to the youth you work with each day in that placement setting. Supervising caseworkers in the Ongoing Department was a different experience. Caseworkers need supervisors who are knowledgeable, and available to provide support and guidance to help them carry out their work. I supervised several excellent caseworkers who are now management staff.

**Q: What was your degree in? From where?** **A:** I obtained my BA in Criminal Justice from Edinboro University in Pa. and a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice from Youngstown State University.

**Q: Is there anyone from your career that served as a "Mentor" to you?**

**A:** As I stated Cathy Gagliardi. She provided me with insight into my strengths and weaknesses. She also modeled what a good supervisor and administrator is. She also asked me to for input on projects and delegated responsibilities to me. This helped me grow professionally, while also building self-

confidence and leadership skills.

**Q: Is there any particular life/work lesson you learned during your career?**

**A:** I think the most important work-related lesson I have learned is that people can change and we should not give up on them so quickly, which sadly, is easy to do in today's world. Caseworkers and supervisors in the child welfare field are in difficult positions because child safety has to come first. A parent who is struggling in life, due to substance or alcohol use/abuse, mental illness, exposure to domestic violence, etc., may reach a point in which they cannot provide a safe, stable environment for their child or sibling group. They may even expose them to abuse and neglect that leads to placement outside the home. Caseworkers must have the ability to meet the parents where they [parents] are, not judge them, and be able to empathize. Caseworkers in the field who possess these qualities, are most effective in getting the parent

or adult caregiver back on track so that children can remain in their home, or return to their home safely because that adult knows that the caseworker in genuine and actually cares about their family.

**Q: If you had to do it all over again, what job/industry would you get into or do?**

**A:** That is a tough question. Possibly, the education field.

**Q: What's been the most rewarding part of your career at Children Services?**

**A:** Seeing a family succeed and be able to function without Agency involvement.

**Q: What will you miss most about working at Children Services?**

**A:** The people I have known my entire career

**Q: What are your future plans? Hobbies?**

**A:** Not sure what my next job will be...

**Q: Anything else you would like to say/share?**

**A:** Yes, to the staff at MCCS—keep doing the work that you do—it is so IMPORTANT!!!!



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## NOW HIRING: Career Fair Recruitment Event

### NOW HIRING

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In response, Mahoning County Children Services created a Full Time **Recruitment and Retention Officer**. However, that position *remains* open. Until the position is filled, the Agency has formed a *Recruitment and Retention Committee* to help recruit and retain new and current staff. For more information on Agency job openings and how to apply, visit: <https://www.mahoningkids.com/careers/>



**Meet Casework Team Members:** Members of the Children Services' Casework Team meet with a prospective candidate. Pictured left to right: Victoria Luther, Christopher Fink and Rebecca Haddle.



**Welcome & Event Registration:** (left to right) Glenna Ressa, Caseworker and Theresa Pancoe, Adoption Unit Supervisor greet event attendees.

### Thank You To Children Services Staff Members Who Participated in the Career Fair Recruitment Event

Randall B. Muth, J.D. Executive Director  
Patty Amendolea  
Sue Babinec  
Cynthia Berend  
Rona Curtis, Associate Director  
Tina Cvetkovich  
Christopher Fink  
Bob Gessler  
Kristy Gustovich  
Becky Haddle  
Marcus Hayden  
Jennifer Kollar  
Victoria Luther  
Angela Montecalvo  
Theresa Pancoe  
Lynette Paris  
Tony Paris  
Jeff Phillips  
Glenna Ressa  
Julie Rudolph  
Liz Schmid  
Nancy Walker-McCain





# ABOUT US

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## Agency Celebrates 2022 High School Grads

Mahoning County Children Services has FIVE wonderful reasons to celebrate this graduation season! Five Agency-involved youth graduated from area high schools. Congratulations to Dakota, Eli, T'Shombe, Princess and Ayanna!

High School Graduation is always a special time for students. However, for youth in foster care, 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 to graduate is an accomplishment and the hope for a bright future for youth in the foster care system.

Each year, Mahoning County Children Services recognizes Agency-involved youth who graduate as a way to honor their achievement with a Graduation/Luncheon Party. 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, Board Members and other community stakeholders are also invited.



### Congratulations to Dakota, Eli, T'Shombe, Princess & Ayanna!



Each Grad had a special Table of Honor featuring an individual cake, cards, gifts along with a photo board.

#### Graduation Celebration Festivities and Fun!



No Party is complete without a DJ and Tunes! Thank you DJ Chris Fink.



Each Grad was introduced and walked through this Balloon Arch designed to represent their respective High School Colors.



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## Month-Long Media Awareness Campaign & Community Events Help Support National Child Abuse Prevention Month



### Special Thanks to Volunteers Who Helped Plant Our 2022 Community Pinwheel Garden

- **Bikers Against Child Abuse**, Erie Shores Ohio Chapter
- **Mediate Financial Services:** Leslie & Christopher Mediate and Staff
- **Mahoning County Children Services Staff**

#### Child Abuse Prevention Month Event Co-Directors:

Jennifer Kollar, Mahoning County Children Services  
Andrea Mistovich, Child Advocacy Center, Akron Children's Hospital, Mahoning Valley

THANK YOU **BOARDMAN PARK** FOR THE PROVIDING LAWN SPACE TO PLANT THE COMMUNITY PINWHEEL GARDEN!



Each year, child protective services agencies, organizations and individuals who advocate on behalf of abused and neglected children organize and plan events and activities to raise awareness of National Child Abuse PREVENTION MONTH in April.

Mahoning County Children Services and Akron Children's Hospital team up to plan community activities and events to raise awareness of the importance of a vigilant community in the help to prevent child abuse and neglect. This year's Child Abuse Prevention Month Co-Event Directors were: Jennifer Kollar, Mahoning County Children Services and Andrea Mistovich, Child Advocacy Center, Akron Children's Hospital, Mahoning Valley Campus.

A **Month-Long Child Abuse PREVENTION Awareness Campaign** was launched through a media partnership with WKBN/WYTV. Throughout the month, WKBN/WYTV WKBN.COM aired TV spots, and feature stories, as well as links to resources and more on the website and app.

**PINWHEEL DISPLAYS:** In addition to the media Awareness Campaign, a **Community Pinwheel Garden Display** is 'planted' in Boardman Park. Pinwheel Garden Displays are planted in communities across the nation.

**The Pinwheel Symbol:** Pinwheels are a national symbol for Child Abuse Prevention and represent individuals who advocate and take action on behalf of a child. Over a 1,000 colorful pinwheels were planted to represent community members who advocated on behalf of an abused or neglected child in Mahoning County.

**Ohio Wears Blue Campaign:** Ohioans are encouraged to wear Blue to work, school or community event in support of Ohio WEAR BLUE DAY. Ohio Wears Blue Day is held on the second Wednesday of April. The color blue is the national color symbolizing Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention.

An **Annual Community Spotlight Award** recognizes community organizations or individuals who demonstrate generosity, commitment, and distinguished on-going community service to Children of Mahoning County. **See Page 8** for the reveal on the 2022 Community Spotlight Award Recipient chosen...



## Shepherd of the Valley Selected 2022 for Community Spotlight Award

Each year, Mahoning County Children Services and the Child Advocacy Center at Akron Children's Hospital, Boardman, present "The Community Spotlight Award" to a community organization or individual who demonstrates generosity, commitment, and on-going community service to the Children of Mahoning County. The Award is officially presented in April in support of National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Mahoning County Children Services and Akron Children's Hospital proudly announce the 2022 Community Spotlight Award is presented to: Shepherd of the Valley

Shepherd of the Valley certainly could not be a more deserving recipient for the Community Spotlight Award especially for their continued kindness, service, and the generosity they have demonstrated EVERY year for over 10 years to Mahoning County Children Services.

Shepherd of the Valley's Kim Osborn, Activity Director, has led Shepherd Staff and Residents on the annual spring-time project. Kim spear-headed raising funds, purchasing items, and scheduling a team of staff and residents to assemble each basket. The beautiful Easter Baskets are filled with a variety of items such as coloring/activity books, crayons, sidewalk chalk, plush animals, bubbles, glow sticks and candy/chocolates for the hundreds of children of ages served by Mahoning County Children Services.

"We are extremely proud to be able to 'spotlight' the great work and service of deserving individuals and organizations in our community like Shepherd of the Valley who truly help brighten and enhance the lives of children of the Mahoning Valley," states Andrea Mistovich, Coordinator, Child Advocacy Center at Akron Children's Hospital, Boardman Campus.

"Mahoning County Children Services is especially appreciative of our cherished partnership with Shepherd of the Valley for adding to the joy and bringing smiles to the faces of hundreds of children in our care. This is a TREMENDOUS testament to the continued support and DISTINGUISHED service to Mahoning County Children!" states Jennifer Kollar, Public Information Officer, Mahoning County Children Services.

"This annual partnership with Mahoning County Children Services is valued amongst residents and staff of Shepherd of the Valley. Philanthropy is an important part of Shepherd's mission and as we celebrate 50 years in the Valley, we look forward to continuing this and other community programs," Jaime Gillen, Corporate Director



Left to Right: Andrea Mistovich, Child Advocacy Center at Akron Children's Hospital; Jennifer Kollar, Mahoning County Children Services; Shepherd of the Valley Staff: Kim Osborn, Activity Director, Cory Parish, Boardman Associate Director; Jaime Gillen, Corporate Director of Marketing, Sales & Communications and Rich Limongi, Chief Executive Officer.

## Agency Health & Safety Committee

Mahoning County Children Services Health and Safety Committee is dedicated to

maintaining the safety and well-being of



all Mahoning County Children Services Board (MCCSB) employees. The committee meets monthly to discuss and make recommendations to help improve the overall safety of staff, as well as the work environment of the Agency.

If staff have a question or concern, contact a committee member:

### The NEW Health and Safety Members:

Juanita Daniel-Morgan

Lisa Carlini

Nancy Walker-McCain

Terry Swadner

Gwen O'Halloran

Brittney Averhart