

E-Alert

A NEWSLETTER OF THE CLARK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

Support orders increase among other Child Support improvements in FFY 2005

Clark County Child Support Enforcement saw performance improvements in the Federal Incentive categories for Federal Fiscal Year 2005, which ended September 20.

Clark County's paternity establishment rate was 102.71%, while experiencing an increase of nearly 5% in the number of children born out of wedlock. Legal paternity establishment is essential for all children born out of wedlock. Not only does it lay the groundwork for a child support order, but it enables children to be eligible for Social Security, medical and other benefits from their biological fathers. The majority of these cases had paternity established as the result of genetic testing at Clark County CSE. Paternity can be established by signing a paternity affidavit.

The majority (89.44%) of all child support cases in Clark County have a support order established. The order can either be for cash support, medical support or both. Child support orders are established either in house through the administrative process or in court. The county's order establishment rate increased by 1.21%. While this number may not sound large, this occurred while our overall case load increased from 15,508 IV-D cases in 2004 to 16,795 by September 2005.

[See CHILD SUPPORT, Page 6]

A Perfect Fit

Wittenburg alum Brenna Theiss knows she made the correct career choice at Clark County Family and Children Services

A little over six years ago, Wittenberg University student Brenna Theiss listened to Wittenberg University alum, Danielle Harper, discuss her career and the Family Stability Unit at the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services. It was at that moment that Brenna realized what it was that she wanted to do. Bre, as she is known throughout the agency, became an intern in the Family

[See A PERFECT FIT, Page 7]



In Brief



Hurricane Katrina

Update • Clark County DJFS has served eighty-four evacuees through Ohio's Hurricane Evacuee Assistance Programs since mid September. These programs were created specifically for Gulf Coast residents that were forced to leave their homes as a result of the damage done by Hurricane Katrina. Working in cooperation with other organizations in the community, CCDJFS has become part of a network of services to provide both financial and social services to these new arrivals in Clark County. The thirty-nine evacuees' cases have received \$37,500 through these special disaster assistance programs.

WORKPLUS Tax Services

The Clark County Department of Job & Family Services will provide free tax services again this year. The IRS Certified VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program will be up and running mid-January 2006 to provide free tax services to employees and the public. CCDJFS employees and partners have joined together to provide this service for our community once again. Volunteers will be required to attend training on Saturday, Jan. 7th, to obtain IRS certification on tax law and basic tax preparation. Volunteers must successfully pass a test to become certified as a volunteer at the site. Ed Garrity, CPA, MT, from Clark, Schaefer, Hackett & Co., will again volunteer his time to provide the training necessary for the VITA site workers. Ed provided the training last year while working with the VITA site throughout the tax season.

The site will be electronically filing basic 1040EZ and 1040A returns with no itemized deductions and no retirement, pension, or social security in-

WorkPlus Center named outstanding One-Stop

The WorkPlus Center was recognized by the American Legion as the outstanding provider of employment and training services to veterans in the State of Ohio. Lehan Peters, WorkPlus Center Director, and Amy Donahue, coordinator of One-Stop services to employers, accepted the award at a recognition event in Cleveland on November 18.

Coordinator of Business Services Named

OIC of Clark County was selected by the WorkPlus Board to coordinate employment and training services to local business. Effective December 1, Amy Donahue will serve as the Local Hiring Coordinator, working with area businesses to ensure that services provided through the WorkPlus Center are tailored to meet critical needs. While Amy will concentrate first on serving those companies receiving tax abatements through the City and County, it is the goal of the Center to accommodate all employers desiring services.

More Help During the Heating Season

In anticipation of a sharp increase in heating bills this winter, increased assistance will be available through the Home Energy Assistance Program, otherwise known as HEAP. Income eligibility guidelines have been expanded as has the amount of assistance available for each family. For the first time, a HEAP office will be opened at the Department of Job and Family Services, 1345 Lagonda Ave. For an appointment, call 325-8366. (Walk-in appointments will only be accepted at the OIC office, which is located at 10 South Yellow Springs Street.) #

National Adoption Awareness Month

Fact Sheet

THE CAUSE

November was National Adoption Awareness Month, an event celebrated annually since 1990 to create national attention for the growing number of children in America's foster care system who are available for adoption, yet wait for permanent families.

THE NEED

- There are approximately 500,000 children in foster care in the United States. Clark County has 170 children waiting for adoptive homes.
- 118,000 of these children are available for adoption and currently wait for permanent families. 25 children in Clark County are waiting for adoptive homes.
- 50% of the children available for adoption are 8 years of age or older. 18 children in Clark County are 8 years of age or older.
- The average stay in foster care before being adopted is nearly 5 years.

MYTHS ABOUT FOSTER CARE ADOPTION

A National Adoption Attitudes Survey funded by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption identified the following commonly held misperceptions about foster care adoption:

- "Adoption is expensive." Domestic infant adoption and international adoption can range from \$5,000 to more than \$50,000; however, foster care adoption costs are minimal and families who adopt frequently qualify for tax credits and ongoing subsidies.
- Adopted children have long-term behavioral issues." Studies show that once a child receives a permanent, loving home at any age and when the family is provided the support it needs, the long-term outcome is similar to biological children.
- "Birth parents can take back the child." Once a child's parental rights have been terminated, the parents no longer have any legal rights to that child.

THE OPPORTUNITY

- 63 percent of Americans think very favorably about adoption and 78 percent believe the country should be doing more to encourage adoption.
- Four in 10 American adults, or more than 80 million people, have at some point considered adoption.
- If only one out of 500 Americans adopted out of the foster care system, every available child would have a permanent family.

THE DAVE THOMAS FOUNDATION FOR ADOPTION

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) public charity dedicated to increasing the adoptions of the more than 118,000 children in the U.S. foster care system who are available for adoption and wait for permanent families. The Foundation accomplishes this mission through signature national awareness and service programs and by providing grants to organizations that move children out of foster care and into permanent families.

For more information about foster care and adoption in Clark County, please call 937.327.1760.

Children under our protection who remain in their own homes

September 2003	September 2004
751	682
March 2005	September 2005
568	646

Individuals paying on child support orders

September 2003	September 2004
8,062	7,943
March 2005	September 2005
8,174	8,205

QUICK STATS

A quarter-by-quarter look at the conditions and circumstances under which Clark County families live, and the performance of the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services in its response.

Individuals receiving food stamps

September 2003	September 2004
13,829	14,867
March 2005	September 2005
15,763	15,746

Individuals receiving job training assistance

September 2003	September 2004
447	591
March 2005	September 2005
530	522

Individuals receiving health insurance through Medicaid

September 2003	September 2004
23,894	24,892
March 2005	September 2005
25,609	25,732

Children under county protection who are in custody

September 2003	September 2004
185	154
March 2005	September 2005
134	160

Children receiving subsidy for child care

September 2003	September 2004
782	734
March 2005	September 2005
663	653

Families receiving ongoing cash assistance

September 2003	September 2004
734	640
March 2005	September 2005
691	691

Mandatory Managed Care

In an effort to control the growing cost of medical services and provide quality health care to Medicaid recipients, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will be moving towards a mandatory state-wide plan of managed care. Counties will be making this transition in small groups over the next year. Initially, families will be converted with the Aged, Blind and Disabled population towards the end of 2006.

**is coming to
Clark County's
Medicaid
population**

Last November, Clark County families covered under the Ohio Medicaid program were notified that they would no longer have an option to receive the state's traditional fee-for-service Medicaid card. Instead, they will have to choose one of two managed care organizations (MCP's) that will take over this region's Medicaid program by the end of 2006.

For the past several years, county residents have had the option of choosing Care Source, a private managed care plan, to provide their Medicaid services. If they did not choose Care Source, they could opt to receive the traditional Medicaid card directly from the State. Beginning in December 2005, all families covered in the county will have to choose between Care Source and a new managed care plan operating in this region, Molina Healthcare of Ohio. It is important that families choose the plan that includes their doctors, hospitals and other providers of choice. If families do not notify the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services of their choice, they will be randomly assigned to one of the two MCP's.

During the first 90 days of assignment, recipients will be able to change MCP's. Once the 90 days expire, they must stay with their assigned MCP until July of the following year. July of each year will continue to be the window of open enrollment during which recipients will be able to change their MCP provider.



Springfield City Schools

Win SSAFE Grant

Springfield City Schools has been awarded a SSAFE (Springfield Schools and Families Engaged) Grant worth \$2,567,124 for the next three years. The grant represents a partnership between faith-based organizations, community service agencies, and the schools.

The grant writing process was supported by the Family & Children Services Division of DJFS, Clark County Mental Health Services, Springfield City Schools, Tri-County Women's Network and the Children's Rescue Center on behalf of the Nehemiah Foundation's Ministry Leaders Forum.

The grant will support a Safe School/Healthy Students Comprehensive Plan which will be composed of an integrated, comprehensive, communitywide, community-specific plan to address problems of school violence, alcohol and other drug abuse, focused on six elements:

Child Support

CONTINUED

In terms of child support collections, the county also saw an increase. While the total may appear modest (\$247,000), this increase occurred while the amount due also increased. Currently in Clark County, \$31,371,585 is owed to families. Collections on arrears did not meet expectations, decreasing 1.66%. It is, however, important to remember that the total amount of arrears owed to families increased from \$77,429,466 for FFY 2004 to \$82,207,742 for FFY 2005.

The ability to collect child support is impacted by many factors outside of the control of the CSE. When economic conditions are poor in a county, the collections become very difficult. The department has worked hard to do everything under its control (i.e., establishment of paternity and orders) so that when the party ordered to pay does find employment, child support orders are enforced quickly.

Tax Help

CONTINUED

come. This year our volunteers will be trained in assisting customers with the completion of their local city income tax returns. Community members as well as employees may call 327-1770 for a screening process. An appointment time will be given if the caller meets eligibility. The customer service unit will be assisting in taking incoming tax calls and making appointments. Hours of operation will remain the same as last year, Monday and Wednesday evenings from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Saturday hours from 8:00 am to noon as needed. Again, the site will open in mid January and will remain open thru April 12th.

Please help spread the word throughout the community about this free tax service! Interested volunteers can contact VITA site manager, Beth Patton at 327-3672.

- 1) Safe school environment.
- 2) Alcohol and other drugs, violence prevention and early intervention programs.
- 3) School and community mental health preventive and treatment intervention services.
- 4) Early childhood psychosocial and emotional development programs.
- 5) Supporting and connecting schools and communities.
- 6) Safe school policies.

The grant will also utilize the Partnerships for Success process:

- 1) to describe gaps in services, infrastructure, and resources, and
- 2) as a linkage to long-term planning and mechanism for sustaining and integrating SS/HS (SSAFE) in the community.

A Perfect Fit

CONTINUED

Stability Unit. Upon graduation, Bre became a full-time social worker in the Intake Unit. Throughout her career, she has worked in both the intake and the ongoing units of Family and Children Services. In August 2004, Bre was asked to work at Kenwood Elementary as a school social worker. Immediately, Bre knew working in the schools was a perfect fit. Bre says that she loves the interaction with children on a daily basis and getting to know the families on a long-term basis. Working with the students on a daily basis allows Bre the opportunity to identify needs of families within the school. Often, needs can be addressed before problems escalate into emergency situations. As she says "the kids have her heart."

One of Bre's greatest accomplishments at Kenwood has been working with the special education teacher, Ms. Septemberlyn Daniel, to form the Kenwood Dance Company. Students are invited to audition to be a part of the company. Currently, there are approximately 40 children in the program. The company fosters confidence and leadership, while exposing the participants to different dance forms and other cultural experiences. The company has performed for various civic groups and has attended performances by the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, the South Dayton Dance Theatre and the Wittenberg Dance Company. In addition, the Dance Company works hand-in-hand with the teachers for

effective classroom management. Members of the company must keep their grades up, be respectful, and accept responsibility.

When asked what her experience in the schools has meant to her, Bre replied "This experience has shown me that the smallest gesture can mean so much. Things I take for granted, a hug, warm gloves, and extra slice of pizza, can mean so much to a child or a family. It is amazing the impact that one person can have in doing the smallest acts."

Truly, this is a perfect fit for Bre, the agency, the schools, and most importantly, children in the community.

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of Job and Family Services

Forward this pdf. file as an attachment,
and encourage others to contact Robin Maynard at
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to be put directly on this newsletter distribution list.