

# E-Alert

2007

OCTOBER  
NOVEMBER  
DECEMBER

*Newsletter of the Clark County  
Department of Job and Family Services*

## Alternative Response Pilot Project

The Supreme Court of Ohio announced that Clark County has been selected as one of 10 counties to participate in the innovative Ohio Alternative Response Pilot Project that will provide another tool for child protection agencies working with children and families in trouble.

The team of Clark County children services administrators and supervisors who have been working to become one of 10 child welfare agencies in Ohio to participate in the pilot project were thrilled to hear about the selection. The Alternative Response Family Assessment (ARFA) represents an opportunity for children's services to work with families in a proactive and supportive manner that Ohio law presently does not allow. Clark County Family and Children Services Deputy Director Cathy Appel noted that this is an opportunity for the community to come together to support children and families in a manner often preferred and suggested by reporters outside the child welfare system.

Clark County  
is one of 10  
counties  
selected to  
participate by  
the Ohio  
Supreme  
Court.

[See ALTERNATIVE, page 10]



# Awards

## They Just Keep Coming for Department's Efforts

### Elder abuse television commercial earns Clark County national award

The National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO), an affiliate of the National Association of Counties (NACo), has recognized Clark County Department of Job and Family Services for its media and communication efforts. NACIO is dedicated to promoting a better understanding of the functions of county government, and improving the professional capabilities of its members who want to share information with other counties across the United States.

This year, NACIO bestowed Clark County with a "Superior" award in the category of Audiovisual Productions for a television commercial pertaining to elder abuse. Click here to view the poignant commercial: [http://www.clarkdjfs.org/Videos/Pages\\_highspeed/APS2\\_Video.htm](http://www.clarkdjfs.org/Videos/Pages_highspeed/APS2_Video.htm)

### *Child support enforcement receives two awards*

The Clark County Child Support Enforcement Agency received two awards at the State Office of Child Support Annual Symposium. They were recognized for the Largest Lump Sum Collection in the Passport Denial Program for the large caseload division. The

second award was for Most Improved, FFY 2005-2006, Collections on Current Support in the large caseload division. Both awards were made possible by all staff working together to effectively manage their duties for cases.



Director Robert Suver shares awards with Deputy Director of Child Support Virginia Martycz.



November is National Adoption Month and November 17<sup>th</sup> is National Adoption Day. Currently, Clark County has permanent custody of 49 children. To learn more about adoption in general, please visit the following websites:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/index.cfm>  
<http://www.census.gov/pubinfo/www/multimedia/adoption.html>.

For more information regarding Clark County's adoption program, please call Lynn House at 937.327.1811.

*A statistical 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 response.*

# THE STATISTICS

Children under our protection who remain in their own homes	June 2004	June 2005	Individuals receiving job training assistance	June 2004	June 2005
640		454	447		473
843		734	525		471

## Individuals receiving food stamps

June 2004	June 2005	Individuals paying on child support	June 2004	June 2005	June 2004	June 2005
14,752	15,605	8,347	8,568			
June 2006	June 2007	16,081	16,770	June 2006	June 2007	Children receiving subsidy for child care
				8,490	8,538	June 2004
						June 2005
Individuals receiving health insurance through Medicaid					725	935
June 2004	June 2005	24,620	25,498	June 2006	June 2007	June 2004
June 2006	June 2007	25,505	25,702	979		June 2005

## Children under county protection who are in custody

June 2004	June 2005	Families receiving ongoing cash assistance	June 2004	June 2005
140	152	673	655	
June 2006	June 2007	161	151	525
				471



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# Milestones

## Employment milestones of Department staff, by month, and number of years

### JANUARY

Shirley Ball-35  
Tara Cosby-10  
Lynnette Massie-10  
Barbara Rudy-25  
Bryan Watkins-5

### FEBRUARY

Kristen Gerard-5  
Julia Gravenkemper-20  
Kimberly Lee-20  
Joyce Phillips-25  
Nichol Smith-5  
Tammy Williamson-15

### MARCH

Marci Amato-5  
Melissa Crew-10  
Brenda Sims-5

### APRIL

April Clark-20  
Judy Lantern-15  
Kelly Valle-5

### MAY

Jack Decker-20

### JUNE

Tara Callicoat-10  
Melanie Gersbacher-10  
Diana Henderson-10  
Lynn House-30

### JUNE continued

Sam Moore-35  
Karen Shaffer-10

### JULY

Charles Booth-5  
Raymond Messer-15  
Cathleen Rogers-10  
Patricia Wagner-15  
Dawn Whitt-5

### AUGUST

Dorothy George-10  
Marilyn Lookebaugh-30  
Martha Risley-20

### SEPTEMBER

James Babyak-20  
Lori Haddix-5  
Jo Hill-5  
Vicki Houseman-5  
Robin Maynard-10  
Brooke Parker-10

### OCTOBER

Sandra Curtis-5  
Connie Flannery-10  
Michael Howard-10  
Dawn Mast-5  
Lori Skillings-10

### NOVEMBER

Denise Barnhart-10  
Jennifer Dye-5  
Jamie Fricke-15  
Marilyn Harper-5  
Thomas Trout-20

### DECEMBER

Arlene Elliott-20  
Faith McDonald-20  
Kimberly Smith-20  
Lana Stewart-10

# ‘Rise Above’ Graduates Gain Employment

*“Before I came to Jobs & More/ Rise Above Program I did not know what to expect to gain from the courses that were about to be taught. I just wanted to get a job. Today I stand proud that I completed the Rise Above Program. It made me understand the value of LIFE. I can not express in words how much the Rise Above Program has helped me.”*

a Rise Above graduate



*“When we started this program, we thought we would only be working with folks who had been unemployed for a long time,”* said Bea Smith, the Executive Director of Jobs & More, one of the WorkPlus partners that oversees the two weeks of intensive classroom instruction that is an essential part of the program. *“But we’ve discovered that people who have worked for many years may need our help too. If you haven’t had to look for a job for many years, sometimes your interviewing and resume building skills get rusty.”*

Twenty-four “Achievers” have graduated from the Rise Above program in the first two classes, each of whom then began meeting weekly with a mentor to continue discussing potential problems or barriers that might prevent the individual from obtaining or retaining a job. About half of the Achievers have already found jobs. For those that haven’t, staff from OIC of Clark County and Express Personnel Services continue to help them search.

For more information, contact Lisa Dunn at 327-3713, or Bea Smith at 327-6669.

# Emphasis on Prevention

With an emphasis on prevention, school social workers provide a variety of services to elementary students and their families. The workers may refer children to counseling services, assist families with basic needs, such as food, school supplies, clothes, hygiene items, or may connect families with positive activities like Project Jericho or Families and Schools Together (FAST). They may assist in facilitating needed medical appointments or use other DJFS partnerships to assist families with benefits, transportation or employment information. Social workers in the schools also act as educators and resources for teachers as well as staff, and work as

liaisons for other social workers who may have foster children attending school in the same building.

“Being in the schools is about establishing relationships,” says Bre Theiss, social worker at Kenwood and Horace Mann elementary schools. “As unfortunate as it may be, sometimes there is a stigma associated with social services and many parents are fearful of becoming involved with the agency. However, when you are stationed in a school, the families associate you with that building and may be more inclined to use you as a resource or a support. We hope that becoming a part of the school community promotes the idea that Clark County Family and Children Services is focused on strengthening families and preventing abuse and neglect. I feel that our presence in the schools is a very proactive and progressive step.”



(l-r) School social workers  
Dawn Mast, Bre Theiss and  
Denise Barnhart. Not pictured,  
Betsy Conn

# Clark County DJFS and Community Mercy Health Partners Enter into Cooperative Agreement

An innovative agreement between Community-Mercy Health Partners and Clark County Department of Job and Family Services is proving to be a win-win situation. The Department is providing on-site case managers to determine eligibility – eligibility for Medicaid health care coverage, for instance – at each hospital. Since beginning last June, this partnership already has improved access to medical coverage for low-income residents of the county, plus enhanced the outreach efforts of the Department, while assisting the hospitals in recovery of medical care costs for qualifying patients.

In the initial months, much attention was given to pending applications and clearing up prior billing issues. In the later part of August, the flow of new applications picked up significantly as staff on both sides of the partnership gained an increased understanding of each other's work. Entering its fourth month, the partnership is moving forward rapidly with all parties looking toward continued success in securing a more efficient system of delivering Medicaid health care.

Both hospitals will provide office space for one full-time case manager who will work with staff and contractors to screen patients for potential program eligibility, receive applications, collect documentation, and authorize applications without requiring the patient to physically visit the Department. This process will provide faster determinations and a higher percentage of approvals for eligible participants by removing transportation and other barriers often experienced by recovering patients. Case managers can provide general program information or be a direct



(l-r) Caseworker Lana Stewart, Supervisor David West, and Caseworker Joyce Phillips.

contact for hospital staff to resolve questions on current patient coverage, billing information, and the addition of newborns to active cases.

## Third Year is a Charm for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

Tax filing season for 2006 completed the Department of Job and Family Services third year of free tax service to the community.

For the season, a total of 218 Federal returns were prepared, 212 were E-filed and six paper returns were filed. This was a 39% increase from the 2005 filing season.

- Majority of returns filed single
- Average federal refund was \$1,322.46
- Total federal refund money issued back to Clark County was \$288,297.00



This was the first year INCENTA Federal Credit Union was a VITA Site partner. Daytime hours were made

# Strategic Plan

## *Keeping in Step with Our Community*

Clark County DJFS leaders have been re-examining what is to be the department's course over the next three years. **Five over arching priority goals** have been established to direct activities aimed at strengthening the ability of the department **to achieve its mission.**

In 2010, a decade will have passed since Y2K. In an ever-changing environment, the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services plays a critical role in offering individuals and family services to promote safety and stability, to strengthen families, and to empower people.

Clark County DJFS leaders have been re-examining what is to be the Department's course over the next three years by defining the vision, refining its mission and articulating the values that are to guide and shape the culture of the organization. Based on present conditions as well as the opportunities and challenges ahead, five over arching priority goals were established to direct activities aimed at strengthening the ability of the Department to achieve its mission.

### What is our purpose? Our Mission:

The Clark County Department of Job and Family Services promotes safety, strengthens families, and empowers people.

On an average day, an employment and benefits caseworker is helping a family sign up for medical benefits. In the building next door, a family and children's services social worker is assisting an elderly person into a safe living situation. Across the street, a child support worker is establishing paternity. At the same moment, MIS is fixing a computer problem in the employment resource room, and the maintenance department is setting up for a departmental meeting. Often without consciously realizing it, each of these individuals or teams is contributing to the mission, as do the many community partners that work in concert with the Department on a daily basis. The reason that we keep our mission statement posted around the agency for all to see, is that we value each employee and community partner. We seek to remind ourselves each day about our purpose so that we can realize our individual contributions to that purpose.

# Strategic Plan

## *Keeping in Step with Our Community*

Where are we going?

Our Vision:

CCDJFS is the premier developer of people through integrated services resulting in strengthened, self-sufficient families. CCDJFS staff is customer focused, possess a continuous quality improvement mind-set, and find fulfillment in their work.

Individuals and families are our business. Collectively we have a lot to offer, so it is imperative that our services are integrated across divisions to most effectively meet the multi-faceted needs of our customers. As staff, we cannot expect to do things today exactly as we did yesterday. We must seek to grow and serve our customers in better ways.

What do we stand for? Our Values: (hear Bob Suver talk about our values at [www.clarkdjfs.org](http://www.clarkdjfs.org))

Answer: Respect, Accountability, Collaboration, Trust, Diversity, Creativity, Knowledge & Experience, Compassion, Honesty, Integrity, Communication

These values are the standard for how we treat one another, our partners and our customers. They are to be the driving force behind our priorities and decisions.

What must we do to achieve our vision?

### Five over arching priority goals

- Maximize Human Capital
- Operationalize a seamless service delivery system
- Maintain and maximize community collaborations
- Enhance internal and external communications
- Successfully pass the 2009 Children's Services Levy

More than 60 staff from each of the Department's five agency divisions (Child Support Enforcement, Employment & Benefits, Family and Children's Services, Workforce Development, and Administration) has committed time and energy to share their experiences and insight to develop both departmental and agency-wide objectives for the first year's action plan to work toward these over arching goals. Each of the teams are meeting on a regular basis and are already realizing positive outcomes. Updates will be published monthly on the DJFS web site: [www.clarkdjfs.org](http://www.clarkdjfs.org)

# Alternative Response Pilot Project

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It is recognized, that frequently, clients of children services are referred to community programs and fail to engage or fully benefit from those services. Often times, this is the result of having been required or mandated to participate in a program. ARFA presents an opportunity to more fully engage families in the identification of helpful resources in the community, and voluntary participation

in those programs. The result can be better use of community resources and, more importantly, better outcomes for children and families.

According to the September 13 press release from the Ohio Supreme Court, the project design requires that a participating county apply the Alternative Response family assessment model to at least 25 percent

of their accepted child maltreatment reports. Forty percent of this group must subsequently receive services as directed by the assessment. Counties selected to participate will be reimbursed \$1,000 per family for post-assessment services with a cap of no more than 500 families included in this study. In addition to the targeted service dollars, each selected site can receive up to \$50,000 per year for two years (Sept. 15, 2007- Sept. 14, 2009) to allocate as needed to support other aspects of the design and implementation.

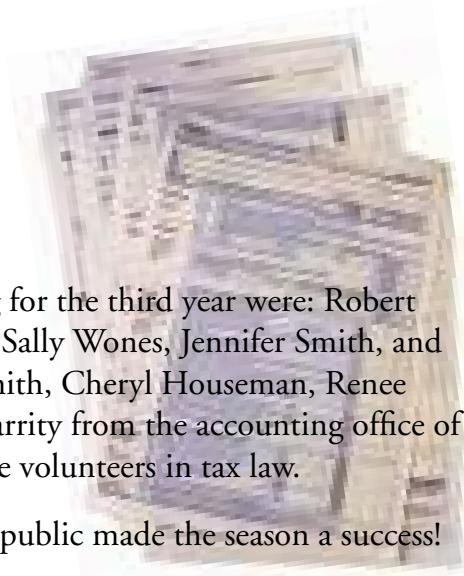
## Third Year is a Charm for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

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available for tax preparation, and savings accounts were immediately opened for the direct deposit of refund checks.

A total of 15 volunteers worked both sites. Nine volunteers returning for the third year were: Robert Severt, Donna Phipps, Tonda Hendricks, Lynn Noble, Jennifer Dye, Sally Wones, Jennifer Smith, and Beth Patton. First year volunteers included: Nichol Smith, Valerie Smith, Cheryl Houseman, Renee Southward, Bonnie Clark, Shirley Bradford, and Linda Whitt. Ed Garrity from the accounting office of Clark, Schaefer and Hackett returned for his third year of training the volunteers in tax law.

Long hours were put in by the volunteers, but appreciation from the public made the season a success!



# Making Awareness an Artform

## Child Support Awareness Month in Clark County

During August, Clark County's Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) promoted child support awareness with activities showcasing the celebration of children, and the many services that are provided by CSEA and partner agencies. The Board of Clark County Commissioners presented a proclamation declaring August as *Child Support Awareness Month*, which coincides with Ohio's theme, "*Child Support – an essential building block for a child's success.*"

The awareness kick-off began during the Clark County fair with a contest, "**C**hildren **S**haring **E**xperiences **t**hrough **A**rt," that offered children the opportunity to express their artistic interests through pictures. Each day, first and second place winners received prizes from local merchants with all pictures being exhibited to fairgoers throughout the week. In all, over 250 pictures were submitted



with each one being displayed throughout the Clark County Child Support building. Every child that submitted a picture was entered into the grand prize drawing for a backpack filled with school supplies.

Also introduced at the fair was the *Driver's License Reinstatement Program*, which was promoted only during the month of August. This program offers an Obligor (party paying child support) the opportunity to reinstate a suspended license. Letters were mailed to 389 obligors. Even though there were many responses, only 15 qualified for the program, with approximately \$1,500 collected. The program's success will be measured by charting the consistency of future payments from the qualifying individuals. [Click here](#) to view the License Reinstatement commercial:



With the promotion in full swing, CSEA staff wearing bright colored shirts that read, "*Ask Me about Child Support*," headed to the Rocking Horse Center for another art contest. Again, daily prizes were awarded with all names going into a hopper for another backpack loaded with

# Child Support Awareness Month in Clark County

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school supplies. The occasion was a special treat for staff as well as the children who were not only talented, but full of surprises and intrigue. Winning pictures from the Rocking Horse Center were added to the CSEA art gallery. The wide array of drawings provided a glimpse of the children's concepts of family life, and interests. The drawings included stick figures, animals, aliens, angels, Spiderman, cars, and a watermelon with seeds containing pictures of family members.

Commercials promoting the awareness campaign were featured on the local airwaves. Articles were reported in local newspapers and on the Department of Job and Family Services' website at: [www.clarkdjfs.org](http://www.clarkdjfs.org). Posters and information fact sheets were distributed throughout the community, and agency phones were answered with a unified message announcing that: "August is Child Support Awareness Month." The promotion enjoyed great success due to the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff, but most of all, it was because CSEA's mission was fulfilled by proving that, "*Child support is more than just a check.*"

A special **Thank You** goes to sponsors and friends at The Rocking Horse Center, Joe's US Grille, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Northridge Bowling, Park Avenue Partners, Putt-Putt Bowling & Games, Wendy's Restaurant, Clark County Department of Job and Family Services Director Bob Suver, and staff.

Forward this pdf. file as an attachment,  
and encourage others to contact  
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or at [rmaynard@clarkdjfs.org](mailto:rmaynard@clarkdjfs.org)