



Summit County
CHILDREN SERVICES
Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect Since 1881

Business Update

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

WINTER 2009

Executive Director John Saros Delivers Second “State of the Agency” Speech

Summit County Children Services’ Executive Director John Saros delivered on January 23, 2009 his second “State of the Agency” speech – commending staff for the crucial role they played in the agency’s very successful 2008 and also asking for their continued hard work and support in meeting the unique challenges looming in the months ahead. Following are a few key excerpts from the speech (to read the full text, log onto Summit County Children Services’ website at www.summitkids.org).

On healing the agency . . .

“2008 began with the good feelings we continued to have in coming together to pass the levy. It was truly a united effort and gave us a sense that we could do anything we set our minds to. Last year I spoke of the need to heal both within the Agency and between the Agency and the community. The healing has progressed and we are doing well in this regard. Problems and challenges remain but we are in a different place than we were a year ago. I appreciate the contributions made by Robin Schenault and the CWA toward the healing as well.”

On today’s challenging environment . . .

“However, the environment we work in has become far weaker, and is in return affecting the Agency. As we look out ahead to the year before us, and beyond, the instability in our economy and the resultant impact on federal, state and local revenues is reducing our resources on an ever-increasing basis. All over the State of Ohio public children services agencies are struggling with closing programs, laying off staff and making other cuts impacting on the critically important work of child protection.” *Continued on page 2*

Anna M. Arvay, CPA, Joseph R. Morris and Gillian Solem, R.N. Named to Summit County Children Services’ Board of Trustees

Agency Trustee William D. Evans, II, Esq. Reappointed to Second Term

Summit County Children Services has announced the appointment of three new members to its Board of Trustees. **Anna M. Arvay, CPA** and **Joseph R. Morris** were appointed by County Council to four-year terms replacing outgoing trustees Cindy S. Johnson, CPA and Richard F. Marsh. A third new board member, **Gillian Solem, R.N.** was also named to the board by virtue of becoming the new Chair of Summit County Children Services’ Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC). Ms. Solem replaces former agency trustee Mary Ann Freedman, who will remain on the CAC. In addition, **William D. Evans, II, Esq.**, first appointed to the board by County Council in 2005, was re-appointed to a second term through 2012.

“I’m very much looking forward to working with our new trustees and to continuing to work with Bill Evans and the rest of the board,” said Summit County Children Services Executive Director John Saros. “Our board is a very talented group of individuals and I’m sure the new members will bring a lot of knowledge and energy to the table as we continue our important work on behalf of the children and families of Summit County. I also want to thank our outgoing board members, Cindy Johnson, Dick Marsh and Mary Ann Freedman, for all their hard work and dedication to the agency. Their skills and leadership were instrumental in helping successfully guide Summit County Children Services through a very challenging period of our history.”

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264 S. Arlington Street
Akron, OH 44306
Phone: 330-379-9094
TTY: 330-379-2036

www.summitkids.org

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Board of Trustees *Continued from page 1*



Anna M. Arvey specializes in not-for-profit and governmental accounting and auditing services, including governmental Single Audits and consulting specialty services. Ms. Arvey has been involved in public accounting for 28 years, 19 of those years involved with not-for-profits and governmental entities.

She spent 16 years working for local firms and formed her own firm in February 1997.



Joseph R. Morris is Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer and a member of the Board of Directors of First Communications, Inc. of Akron, one of the largest competitive telecommunications companies in the country. He was a member of the senior management team founding the Company in 1998.



Gillian Solem has been Director of Nursing for the Summit County Combined General Health District since 2002. Prior to that position, she served as Nursing Supervisor for the Communicable Disease and General Public Health Nursing Programs for the Health District from 1994-2001.



William D. Evans is an attorney focusing on human resource and business matters and is president of Poly-Tech, Inc., a company that specializes in forensic services. He serves as a part-time faculty member at the University of Akron in the Department of Criminal Justice, is Chairman of the All-American Soap Box Derby, and is a 1998 graduate of Leadership Akron.

“State of the Agency” Speech *Continued from page 1*

On the local impact* . . .

“The impact upon Summit County Children Services has been significant. Just since passage of the levy we have experienced:

- A Board of Elections charge of \$197,000;
- A change in property tax valuation that has reduced levy revenues by \$200,000 per year;
- A State Child Protection Subsidy cut of \$170,000 per year;
- A second State Child Protection Subsidy cut of \$162,000 per year;
- A third State Child Protection Subsidy cut of 10% to 20% (\$250,000 to \$500,000) expected in July, 2009;
- An audit reconciliation finding of \$209,000 in MRDD/CAFS funding for the years 2001-2004;
- A 17% increase in health care premiums, estimated at \$225,000;
- TANF/PRC cuts to occur later this year in an as yet unknown amount.

We are already beginning to see the impact of these very serious budget challenges with the placing on hold of the new visitation center, the need to implement an attrition plan to reduce the size of staff, and cuts in overtime. And yet, despite these decisions, I am concerned that these changes will not suffice.”

On key agency initiatives for 2009 . . .

“In addition to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2009, there are a variety of other key initiatives now underway. These include:

- The important process of negotiating a new three-year labor-management agreement;
- Adjusting the management compensation program;
- Preparing a 2010 budget that takes into account the cuts in 2009 and those projected for 2010;
- Improving the delivery of services as measured by selected outcomes;
 - A. Maintain 90% face-to-face monthly contacts with individual children on the caseload;

- B. Reduce the number of waiting children in permanent custody without a match to 70;
- C. Improving our CFSR results to a level of at least 4 of the 6 major outcomes being met 90% of the time.
- Initiating leadership development and succession planning within the agency;
- Reducing average length of stay and the number of children in paid placement;
- Participating in the development of an in-county residential treatment center for high risk kids;
- Continuing to monitor the availability of funding for the new visitation center now on hold;
- Continuing to enhance the Agency’s measures with regard to campus safety;
- Integration of Team Decision-Making into social services;
- Establishment of an evening Intake shift and Sex Abuse unit;
- Addressing the problems created by SACWIS;
- Completion of the Council on Accreditation self-study;
- Maintaining positive relations with the media and the community at large;
- Maintaining the number of grievances at a level where we are resolving them quickly and efficiently;
- Reducing the number of children in our permanent custody.”

On the agency’s vision . . .

“Our vision for the future is of an Agency that is viewed as vital and effective in its work; intervening where necessary and only to the degree necessary, and believing that every child should be in their own home or another permanent home. It is a vision of an Agency that works and communicates well internally, that cooperates and works closely with families, relatives and all of our other partners in the community. It is a vision of an Agency that is well trained, culturally competent, focused on customer service and a commitment to continuous quality improvement in all its operations. And, above all, it is an Agency committed to protecting children and strengthening families.”

* **NOTE: Information accurate as of January 23, 2009**