



# *Finding Forever Families*

2014 Annual Report



Summit County

**CHILDREN SERVICES**

*Building Families . . . Building Futures*

Summit County Children Services provides a wide range of high-quality services to help build families and build futures.

### Intake/Alternative Response

Typically the first point of contact at the agency, Intake Services features a 24-hour hotline number for calls of concern involving children and families.

### Protective

Ongoing Protective Services provides supportive counseling to children and families to strengthen family supports and maintain children safely in their own homes.

### Kinship

Kinship Services provides immediate safety for children who are unable to remain safely in their own homes by placing them with relatives or close family friends.

### Foster Care & Placement

Foster Care and Placement Services provides 24-hour substitute care resources and support services to place and maintain children in the least restrictive setting.

### Adoption

Adoption Services matches children in permanent custody with adoptive families that can best meet their individual needs.

### Independent Living

The Independent Living Program provides support to older children in agency care to help them transition from foster care to the world of work and further education.

### Transitional Housing

Transitional Housing Services provide temporary housing and supportive counseling to young adults aged 18-25 years who have previously been in agency foster care and become homeless.

### Visitation/Family Interaction

Visitation Services provides a safe, nurturing environment for family visits while children are in agency custody using a modernized, state-of-the-art facility called the 'Blazey Family Interaction Center.'



Find us on facebook.





## *A Letter from the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees*



Julie Barnes, M.Ed., LSW  
Executive Director

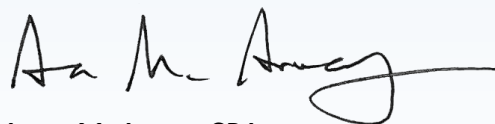
Through our mission and mandated responsibilities, Summit County Children Services (SCCS) focuses on safety, well-being and permanency. This annual report highlights the efforts SCCS has made to provide permanent homes for the children in our community, including some inspiring family 'Success Stories' focusing on foster care and adoption.

Fortunately, most children are surrounded by stability and permanency in their lives through birth parents, families and friends. For many children served by SCCS, permanency is not always a given. Planning for permanence begins with family preservation or reunification. If reunification cannot be achieved, permanence is pursued through placement with relatives, close family friends, stable foster homes or new 'forever families' through adoption.



Anna M. Arvay, CPA  
Chair, Board of Trustees

Just a few years ago, well over 100 children in agency custody were waiting for an adoptive home at any given time. Today, thanks to the hard work of agency staff, the support of valued community partners, and a variety of permanency initiatives, the number of waiting children has been cut in half. We pledge to continue diligent efforts to achieve a permanent plan for every child we serve. All children need and deserve a family that provides permanency, safety, security and love.



Anna M. Arvay, CPA  
Chair, Board of Trustees



Julie Barnes, M.Ed., LSW  
Executive Director



# Finding Forever Families

During 2014, Summit County Children Services was proud to share the Success Stories of some of its foster and adoptive families. These are real stories about real families from this community and their commitment to 'building families and building futures' through foster care and adoption.

## Meet the Brianne Booth Family

Brianne loves children and knew one day she would become a parent. She watched a friend become a licensed foster-to-adopt parent and in 2009 made the decision to become one too. Since, she has cared for seven children. Brianne initially wasn't interested in adopting but Aiden quickly changed her mind. He was placed in her home at age 4 and never left. His adoption was legalized in January, 2014. When asked 'What was it about Aiden that changed your mind about adoption?' Brianne says, "It was his eyes and smile! Seriously, he fit perfectly in my life and with my family and I couldn't see him going anywhere else."



### DID YOU KNOW ...



**Post-adoption contact with birth families can be beneficial.** Ohio is a 'closed adoption' state – meaning adoptive families are not required to have any contact with birth families. However, through the 'foster-to-adopt' approach available through SCCS, foster/adoptive families often know the birth family, providing a unique opportunity for connections that can play a role in the child's well-being.



## Meet the Booth Family



Parents always want to support their children in whatever they do. Dale and Nancy Booth went from being an alternate caregiver for their daughter, Brianne, who was a licensed foster-to-adopt parent, to becoming a licensed family themselves. They watched several of the children paced with Brianne and eventually thought, 'Why can't we do this?' Their other two adult daughters, Elizabeth and Andria followed the same path and now the entire Booth family are foster-to-adopt parents. (Andria resides in North Carolina). Another characteristic they share is that Nancy, Brianne and Elizabeth all work in the medical field and have special skills to help care for children with medical needs. Together the Booth family has cared for more than 25 children. They all agree that each child is unique and those placed in their homes have brought so much love and joy to their families. Mr. Booth shares, "It's amazing how much love we have for these children – we love them unconditionally. And it's been exciting exposing them to new things and seeing the excitement on their faces."

# Finding Forever Families

Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins learned of foster care and adoption as Summit County Children Services kinship caregivers to two girls who attended their church. The girls returned home after six

months . . . but a year later, SCCS contacted Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins again – this time to care for a baby born to one of those girls. They immediately said 'yes' and soon became a licensed foster-to-adopt family. That was 20 years ago. Since then, the Jenkins' have cared for 50 children. All but two were successfully reunified with their families or placed with relatives . . . and those two were adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins themselves. Now in Middle School, both Dzyre and Mark are dynamic and engaging within their family, school and community. When asked why they continue to foster, Mrs. Jenkins is quick to share, "Love never gets too old. If you truly love children – with love from the heart – you can do this at any age. Just do your best. . . do what's right for the children."

## Meet the Jenkins Family



### DID YOU KNOW ...

**Sibling contact provides continuity for adopted children.** Staying with siblings can provide them with a sense of self-worth and safety as well as natural supports to help transition into an adoptive home. They also experience emotional benefits and fewer behavior problems. (Child Trends 11/14)



# Finding Forever Families

## Meet the Horvath/Chandra Family

Both Rebecca Horvath and Sonal Chandra knew at a young age they wanted a family with lots of children. That is partly why they became foster-to-

adopt parents with Summit County Children Services. Since becoming licensed, they have cared for eight children. Knowing the ultimate goal for each child is to return home, Ms. Horvath and Ms. Chandra – and their extended family as well – are committed to working with birth families to achieve reunification. In one instance, they continued to provide support to a single father well after the child returned home. When asked 'why do you do this?' Ms. Horvath asks, "How can I not do this? Yes, it may be hard and yes it may hurt when a child returns home but how can you not help a child in need? Regardless of how long a child is with us, we know we are making a difference."



**DID YOU KNOW ...**  
that adopting through foster care is a less expensive

alternative than a private domestic or international adoption. According to a recent U.S. News & World Report article, while private adoptions can cost tens of thousands of dollars, adopting through foster care is an option that 'costs next to nothing' thanks to a variety of potential reimbursements, subsidies and tax credits.



# Finding Forever Families

## Meet the Johnson Family



Over the past 30 years, Gladys Johnson has opened her heart and home to nearly 150 children. She and her late husband were kinship caregivers to his brother's children when they first decided to become licensed foster-to-adopt parents. Ms. Johnson comes from a large family – one of 15 children – and her parents were foster parents, as were several of her siblings. . . so her desire to care for and love children is no surprise. Since Ms. Johnson believes that working with birth families is just as important as caring for their children, many of the children fostered were successfully reunified with their families or placed with relatives. But four of those children placed in her home as infants became permanent members of her family: Candace, Age 25, Terrell, Age 21, Alicia, Age 20 and Jordan, Alicia's 12-year-old brother. "Each child that comes into my home is special," shares Ms. Johnson. "Each one brought so much joy and happiness to our lives."

### DID YOU KNOW ...



**Children and families benefit from post-adoption supports.** Children are often dealing with feelings of grief and loss, trust and attachment issues, etc.

Adoptive parents often experience challenges resulting from their new or different roles. To help, SCCS has formed an Adoptive Parent Support Group that meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month. For more information, contact the agency at (330) 375-1675.



# Year in Review

## Recruitment Campaign Launched

A multi-media campaign to recruit foster and adoptive parents was launched in 2014 featuring print ads in local newspapers, internet ads on AkronNewsNow and Ohio.com as well as billboards throughout Summit County. To check out this series of SCCS Foster Care and Adoption 'Success Stories,' go to [summitkids.org](http://summitkids.org) and click on the family photo at the top of the page!

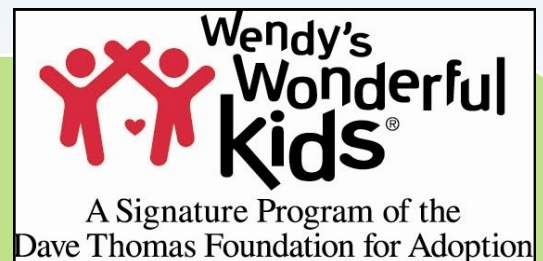


## 2015 Adoption Calendar

The new 2015 Adoption Calendar features ten children in the permanent custody of SCCS who are waiting to be adopted. The calendar also showcases two families that have adopted children through the agency ... one who was featured in the 2010 calendar. . If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the new calendar, call (330) 379-1990 and select option 2.

## SCCS Receives Wendy's Wonderful Kids Grant

Thanks to the receipt of four renewable one-year grants of \$70,000 each (\$280,000 total) SCCS and local partner organization Caring for Kids will be able to continue their innovative 'child-focused' recruitment efforts designed to help move children from foster care into permanent, adoptive homes. This is the third year SCCS has received funding from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption to assist with such recruitment efforts. For more information on Foster Care & Adoption through Summit County Children Services, log onto [summitkids.org](http://summitkids.org). For more information on the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, log onto [davethomasfoundation.org](http://davethomasfoundation.org).



# Year in Review continued ...



## Father Factor Program

In 2015, thanks to a grant from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, SCCS staff worked with Ashtabula, Franklin and Trumbull Counties to help them start fatherhood programs similar to the agency's successful Father Factor program. The Father Factor – which last year received an Ohio Fatherhood Center Achievement Award – works with community partners to locate fathers of children in agency care and provide them with resources, support, hope and encouragement toward the goal of achieving permanency for children. For more information on the Father Factor, call (330) 379-2003 or (330) 379-1096.

## Agency Forms Substance Abuse Unit

A major threat to the goal of families achieving permanency comes from the growing problem of substance abuse. In collaboration with the Summit County Juvenile Court's successful grant award for a Family Reunification through Recovery Court (Drug Court), SCCS created a specialized Substance Abuse unit last year in the agency's Protective Services Department. The five agency staff members who volunteered for the unit receive additional training in substance abuse treatment and recovery and work with families served through the Drug Court and the agency's STARS grant program which combats parental substance abuse issues.



Summit County

**CHILDREN SERVICES**

*Building Families . . . Building Futures*



*Turning lives around one child at a time.*



# Year in Review



Dozens of pairs of high-end basketball shoes seized during a heroin investigation were donated to SCCS by the Summit County Sheriff's Office.



Children got to meet Captain America at the agency's booth at Summit for Kids.



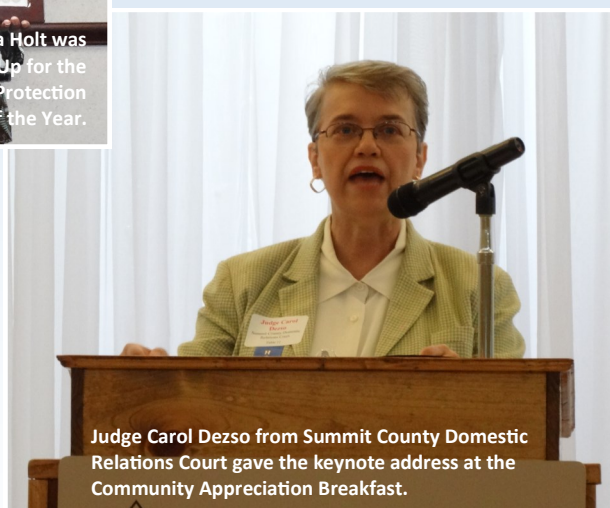
Families visited various booths at Family Expo held during Child & Family Awareness Month.



Staff member LaWanna Holt was recognized as a Runner Up for the 2014 PCSAO Outstanding Child Protection Worker of the Year.



Members of the agency's Women's Auxiliary Board helped sort materials for Child & Family Awareness Month.



Judge Carol Dezso from Summit County Domestic Relations Court gave the keynote address at the Community Appreciation Breakfast.

# Agency Leadership

(As of 1/1/2015)

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

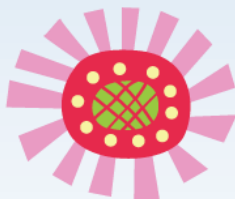
Anna M. Arvay, C.P.A., Chair, Arvay & Associates, CPA  
Anne M. Connell-Freund, Vice-Chair, Oriana House, Inc.  
GinaKaye Maddox, Secretary, First Merit Bank  
Omar S. Banks, John S. Knight Center  
Rev. Dr. Luther C. Cooper, Mount Zion Baptist Church  
Keith G. Malick, Esq., Kisling, Nestico and Redick  
Joseph R. Morris, Canal Pointe Capital  
Nancy L. Holland, Esq., Attorney at Law  
Gillian Solem, R.N., Summit County Public Health  
Katie Stoyonoff, The University of Akron  
Brittany G. Zaehring, GAR Foundation

## CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Gillian Solem, R.N., Chair, Summit County Public Health  
Beth Kuckuck, Vice Chair, County of Summit ADM Board  
Mary Bishop, Secretary, Akron-Summit Community Action, Inc.  
Margaret Baughman, Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University  
Bruce Cavalieri, Citizen Representative  
Lt. Rick Edwards, The City of Akron Police Department  
Patricia Divoky, Summit County Dept. of Job & Family Services  
Crystal Dunivant, Community Support Services, Inc.  
Beverly Foss, Women's Auxiliary Board  
Michele Mizda, Akron Children's Hospital  
Marianne Sweeney, Summit County Sheriff's Office  
Dr. Janice M. Wade, Akron UMADAOP, Inc.  
Jerry Foys, Emeritus  
Robert Stone, M.D., Emeritus

## WOMEN'S AUXILIARY BOARD

Yvette Lightner, President



## EXECUTIVE TEAM

Julie Barnes, Executive Director  
Sharon Geffken, Deputy Executive Director/Social Services  
Katerina Papas, Deputy Executive Director/General Counsel  
Gary Binns, Deputy Director, Finance  
Valarie Nash, Deputy Director, Human Resources & Support Services  
Chris Vasco, Deputy Director, PR/Community Relations



# 2014 Summary of Financial Statements

Beginning Fund Balance, January 1, 2014 \$32,495,500

## REVENUES

Operating Levy (Net)	\$25,645,990
Federal Funds	\$14,239,530
State Funds	\$ 2,740,956
Local & Other Funds	\$ 441,497
Total Revenues	\$43,067,973

## EXPENDITURES

Employee Salaries	\$18,794,034
Employee Fringe Benefits	\$ 7,024,637
Placement Care	\$13,610,711
Clothing, Food Services & Transportation	\$ 681,736
Health-Related Expenses for Children	\$ 370,361
Building, Supplies & Contracted Services	\$ 2,360,307
Community Education & Staff Training	\$ 249,574
Grant-Specific Expenses	\$ 1,147,156
Other Expenses	\$ 354,517
Total Expenditures	\$44,593,033
Excess of Expenditures over Revenues	\$(1,525,060)
*Ending Fund Balance, December 31, 2014	\$30,970,440

The primary funding source for Summit County Children Services is a 2.25 mill six-year property tax levy approved by voters in 2007 and renewed in 2012. The levy generated \$26 million in 2014, representing over half (60%) of the Total Revenues. The remaining 40% of revenues came primarily from Federal and State funding sources in support of the Agency's social services programs and operations.

\*The agency Fund Balance is a service delivery insurance fund for emergency and mandated services.



# Summit County CHILDREN SERVICES

*Building Families . . . Building Futures*

Phone: (330) 379-9094 | Hearing Impaired: ORS 7-1-1 | [summitkids.org](http://summitkids.org)  
24-Hour Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline: (330) 434-KIDS (5437)

## Our Mission

SCCS is committed to the safety, permanency and well-being of all children served, in partnership with families and the community.

## Our Vision

Because we believe in family preservation and that all children deserve a safe, stable and permanent home, we will:

- Intervene only where necessary and only to the proper degree;
- Assess the community's concerns of abuse and neglect focusing on safety, risk and family strengths;
- Serve as partners with families and in teamwork with partner agencies in the community;
- Actively engage families, and their extended families and supports, in the decision-making process;
- Diligently work towards reunification when a child must be removed from home;
- Seek permanent homes for all children who cannot safely return to their parent or guardian;
- Remain mission-focused in our everyday work;
- Recruit and maintain diverse staff committed to serving all children and families;
- Approach our work with integrity, ethics and compassion;
- Be fiscally responsible.



## Our Values

We Believe:

- All children have a right to a safe and stable home.
- All children should be in permanent homes, i.e., their own home, a relative's home or an adoptive home.
- The well-being of all children is vital to us, the child, the family and our community.
- All families deserve our best efforts to partner with them and to treat them with respect and honesty.
- We have an ongoing responsibility to increase our knowledge and improve our services by learning all we can about the diversity of our families and community.
- We have a duty to remain objective and consistent in all of our interactions with families and children.
- We must be creative and innovative in the delivery of services so as to heighten the efficiency and effectiveness of our work with families.
- We have a responsibility to be able stewards of taxpayer resources.



## 2014 by the Numbers

**Total Intake Calls: 10,304**

