

2020 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

ZOOMING THROUGH 2020!



Summit County
CHILDREN SERVICES
Building Families . . . Building Futures

ZOOMING THROUGH 2020!

A Letter to the Community

Zoom and other virtual platforms became our way of life in 2020. This past year will be unforgettable for many years to come because of the challenges we faced across the nation. The outbreak of COVID-19 brought illness, loss of lives, isolation and economic disruptions to families. At the same time, we watched continued incidents of racial injustice. These are significant stressors for all of us, including the families and vulnerable children we serve at Summit County Children Services (SCCS).

Similar to other public or private organizations and businesses, 2020 brought challenges to the operations of SCCS. However, even in this very unprecedented year, we have accomplished a great deal, and we are proud of our employees for their perseverance, hard work and dedication. We have navigated the COVID-19 pandemic with the utmost care and compassion for our client families and our staff. Like other professions, such as medical providers and first responders, our employees have continued to do what is necessary to keep children in Summit County safe.

We have also taken opportunities to learn efficiencies, navigate a virtual world, add safety precautions in our work and in our agency that we can incorporate in the future. The painful events that brought on renewed racial and cultural awakenings this year have also caused us to pause as an agency and to look at ways to improve our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in our workplace and in our casework practice. We realize we have much work to do, but know we are on the right path and moving forward with intentional efforts.

This annual report to the community highlights some of our accomplishments amidst the challenges of 2020. We invite you to learn more about our mission, work and services and thank you for your continued support of our agency and the safety, permanency and well-being of the children of Summit County.

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



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LEAPing Toward Excellence

LEAP, the Leading in Excellence and Professionalism program, was developed from support staff feedback desiring advanced practice skills to prepare for future leadership opportunities. The 10-member class began in August and included participants from various departments within the organization.

The LEAP program engaged participants in a variety of activities to advance their knowledge in key leadership areas such as communication, job skills, customer service, professional development, and employee wellness. The class offered virtual networking and engaging opportunities to allow staff to expand their current and newly developed skills. This LEAP class was the first completely virtual leadership program provided by SCCS due to the pandemic.



The members of the SCCS inaugural LEAP class included: (from the top, left to right) Heather Cikity, Social Services Aide, Kelly Aloisi, Supervisor, Professional Development & Training, Katie Keele, Social Services Aide, Lois Juma, Social Services Aide, Kelly Sherman, Social Services Aide, Helena Blythe, Clerical Specialist, Shannon Ede, Administrative Assistant/Clerical Services Supervisor, Elboni Slaughter, Social Services Aide, Casandra Roberts, Social Services Aide, Penny Myers, Clerical Specialist, Tricia Ligotti, Legal Support Specialist.

Bringing Wonder and Magic to Families

SCCS hosted the first-ever Winter Wonderland Drive-Thru event, taking the place of the annual holiday caregiver party.

The drive-thru event featured outside holiday decorations, a socially distant visit from Santa Claus, and staff dressed in elf, reindeer, and snowman costumes. There were 95 guests who participated and 287 children who received filled stockings, stuffed animals, pajamas, and a family pass to drive thru the Magic of Lights at the Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds, courtesy of the SCCS Foster Parent Association and community donors.



ZOOMING
THROUGH 2020!

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**Average age
of children
on case plans**

87%

**Percentage of
children reunified
with family**

Developing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The SCCS Executive Director and agency staff met internally and participated in state-level conversations on race equity in the child protective workforce and the disproportional number of children of color in the child welfare system. To help formulate a long-term strategy of creating racial equity in our workforce and the services we provide to children and families in Summit County, a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Steering Committee was created.

SCCS selected a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Consultant, Ms. Kelli Scott, MS, CDM, owner of



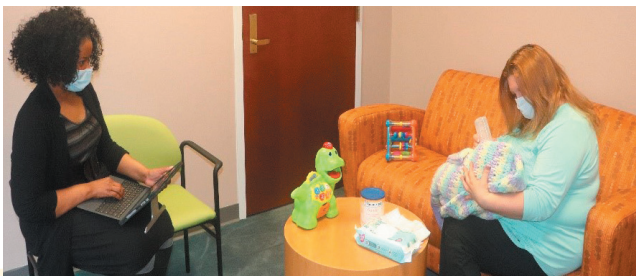
Kelli Scott, MS, CDM

Scott Strategy Partners, LLC. Ms. Scott will work with the Steering Committee and the SCCS Executive Team to develop a timeline and actionable plan to assist the agency in meeting the following initial objectives: ongoing and targeted conversations; recruitment, retention, promotion, and mentoring of staff; leadership programs; training; and the design and evaluation of a diversity committee and communication plan.

Enriching the Bonds of Family

When a child is in the custody of SCCS, regular parenting time is arranged in order to strengthen and optimize the families time together. Family interaction is an important step in working towards reunification. Maintaining connections between parents and their children helps to reassure their love for each other and promotes bonding and attachment.

A new 'Family Enrichment' area was created from existing space and designed to be a transitional environment for family interactions close to being ready for community or home visitation. This area offers a less restrictive setting for families to parent and bond with their children. SCCS staff are located in this area to supervise or monitor the families and lend assistance as needed to create an enhanced experience for all.



Awarding the Outstanding Caseworker of the Year

Beatrice (Bea) Flett was honored as the 2020 Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) Outstanding Child Protection Caseworker of the Year for the State of Ohio.

The announcement was during a virtual awards ceremony held as a part of the PCSAO annual conference. Ms. Flett, 30 Days to Family® Specialist, is committed to finding family and making connections for children served by SCCS. Across the state, she is known as one of the most talented caseworkers for family search and engagement.



Beatrice (Bea) Flett

691

**Monthly average
number of
families served**

45

**Total # of
finalized
adoptions**

804

**Monthly average
of children
in custody**

8,456

**Total # of
Intake calls**



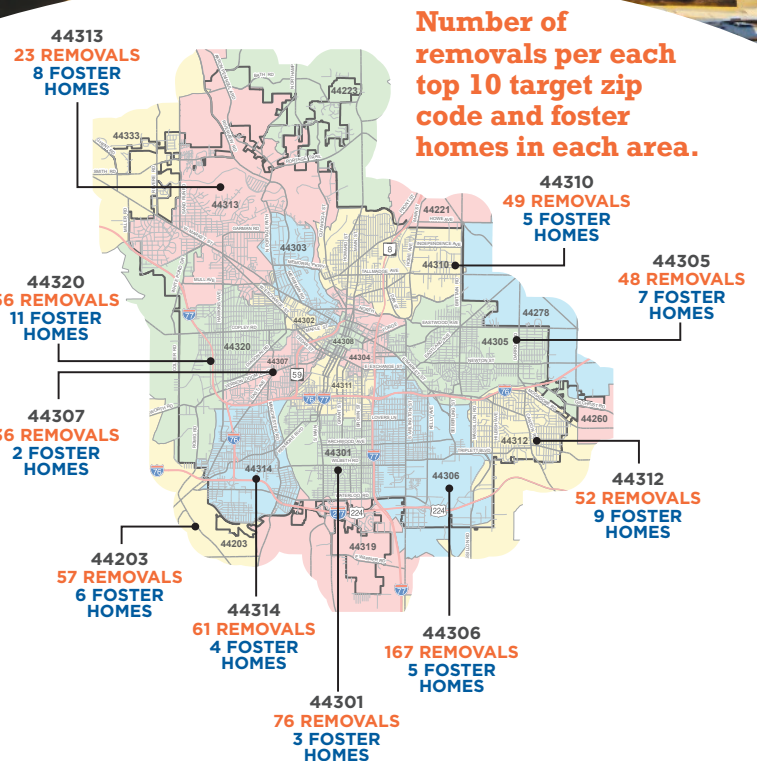
*Kemp Boyd
Executive Director
The Love Akron Network*



Partnering With Love Akron

Alongside SCCS, Love Akron is on a mission over the next year to help rally and educate the community about the needs of children in the agency's care. This partnership was officially launched at the Love Akron annual breakfast in September to raise awareness that SCCS needs more foster families.

Be the Reason, Become a Foster Parent.

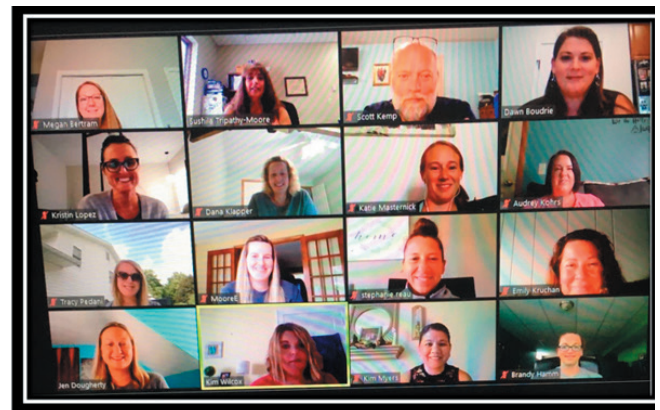


Maintaining Top Priorities

At the beginning stages of the COVID-19 outbreak, SCCS quickly transitioned to a primarily remote work environment to maintain our top priority of keeping children and families safe and maintaining a healthy workforce. The agency added numerous safety features and many upgrades to facilities to address the pandemic.

Throughout 2020, SCCS was able to maintain our headcount, minimize vacancies and experienced reduced staff turnover.

SCCS made many upgrades to our technology to support remote work during the pandemic as well as efficiencies in the future. Zoom and Microsoft Teams became critical platforms to engage with one another and stay connected.



Staff continued to participate in our national research project, CoachOhio. We received ongoing training and coaching from the national team and supported ongoing voluntary participation in the Resilience Alliance (RA) groups.

9,430

**Total # of children
who received
agency services**

334

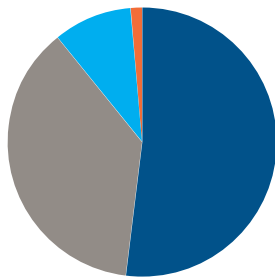
**Monthly average
of children in
kinship homes**

3,146

**# of reports assigned
for assessment/
investigation**

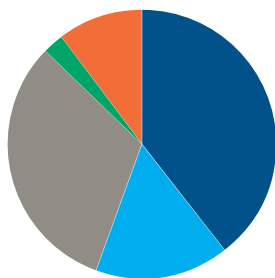
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2020 Summary of Financial Statements



REVENUES

Operating Levy (Net)	\$ 38,981,520
Federal Funds	\$ 19,836,510
State Funds	\$ 6,063,545
Local & Grant Funds	\$ 678,684
Total Revenues	\$65,560,259



EXPENDITURES

Wages	\$ 21,986,102
Benefits	\$ 9,261,907
Placement	\$ 17,991,693
Other Child Related	\$ 1,217,408
Other Operational	\$ 5,499,829
Total Expenditures	\$55,956,938

The Impact of COVID-19

Last year, the annual volume of reported concerns to the SCCS 24/7 child abuse and neglect hotline dropped by over 15% from the year before due to stay-at-home orders. This can be attributed to the pandemic limiting access of mandated reporters, especially teachers and other diminished exposure to adults, who might report suspected abuse and neglect to the hotline.

Approximately 16% of intake calls received through the hotline were on cases that were already opened with the agency. The reported information was passed on to the already assigned caseworker/supervisor.

The top priority of SCCS through its mission is the commitment to safety, permanency and well-being of all children served, in partnership with families and the community.

Our staff continued to provide essential services to children and families. SCCS creatively adapted and worked with community partners to meet system challenges triggered by the pandemic.

Make a difference. Make a call.
24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline: 330-434-KIDS (5437)

Services & Programs

Intake Services

- Assessment/Investigations of Child Abuse & Neglect
- STAT (Serious Trauma Assessment Team) Unit

Intake Screening and Supports

- 24-Hour Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline: (330) 434-KIDS (5437)
- Evening Caseworker Unit
- Training and Transition Units

Protective Services

- Ongoing Case Management Services

Protective Specialized Services

- Medically Fragile Unit
- Substance Intervention Unit
- Permanency Planning and Adoption Units
- Family Preservation Unit and Ohio Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma (START) staff

Placement Services

- Kinship Assessment Unit
- Independent Living Program
- Placement Unit
- Foster Home Support Unit
- 30 Days to Family®/ Family Search and Engagement, Kinship Navigator

Social Services Programs

- Family Meeting Unit
- Fatherhood Program
- Family Interaction Center
- Family Enrichment
- Beds for Kids Program
- Succeed Program



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