



BE THE
REASON
For
LASTING IMPACT

2019 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Summit County

CHILDREN SERVICES

Building Families . . . Building Futures

Executive Team

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Community Action Akron Summit

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The House of the Lord

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Fostering Independence, Inc.

Sgt. John Ross
*Akron Police Department
(as of January 2020)*

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President

A Letter to the Community

from the Executive Director and Chair of the SCCS Board of Trustees

We hope you enjoy reading our 2019 annual report which describes several initiatives and programs that have been implemented over the last year that support children, families and our workforce.

In 2019, "**Be the Reason for Lasting Impact**" defined the work of Summit County Children Services (SCCS). We began a campaign to recruit foster and adoptive homes. The number of children in the custody of the agency has increased by more than 45% since 2013, and our need for foster and adoptive homes is greater than ever. The theme of our recruitment campaign is **Be the Reason**. It is a call to action to the community to consider providing a child with a home and a family while parents work towards reunification. Sometimes, children cannot return to their birth family and need permanent solutions through adoption. Our foster and adoptive parents give children the love and care they need to live stable, happy and fulfilling lives.

The **Be the Reason** campaign has taken on bigger meaning as we engage with the greater community to support the work of SCCS. In addition to our foster and adoptive families, we rely on relatives caring for children, community agencies and providers serving families, support of donors and volunteers, and our caseworkers and other staff providing services and guidance to help families succeed.

Substance use disorders continue to be the primary reason for families becoming involved with our agency. This report includes information about our participation in Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma), an intervention program for specialized services to families through mentorship. Along with our community partners and providers, we continue to look for new and creative ways to serve and support families struggling with substance use.

SCCS is proud to be one of eight counties in the State of Ohio participating in a national research project to look for ways to reduce caseworker burnout by addressing secondary trauma, and building resilience and coping skills. We have also provided various opportunities for leadership growth and development for staff at all levels.

Thank you for your interest in SCCS, and on behalf of the SCCS Board of Trustees, administration, and committed staff, we want to thank you for **being the reason** abused and neglected children are safe in our community.



Anna Arvay
CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES
2019



Julie Barnes, M.Ed., LSW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Be the Reason Campaign — addressing the urgent need for foster parents

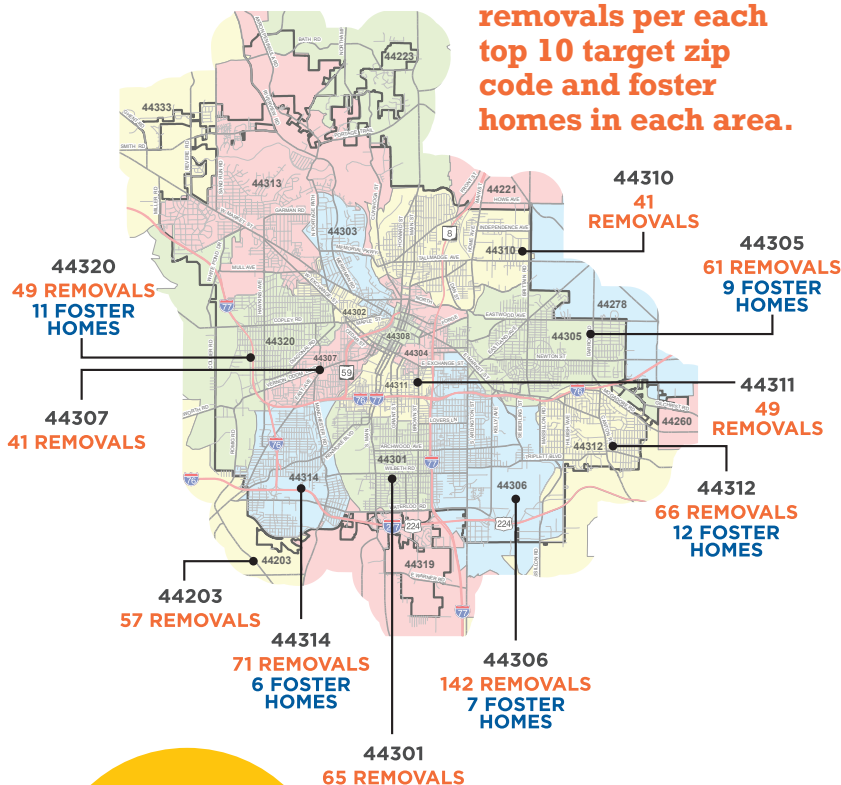
Throughout 2019, SCCS saw its custody numbers remain above 800, reaching nearly 900 children in May. Conversely, SCCS has 155 licensed foster homes — clearly not enough to care for the abused and neglected children in Summit County.

To address this urgent need, SCCS launched a new marketing and outreach campaign in 2019 to help with the recruitment of foster parents. Themed ‘Be the Reason,’ this message highlights the positive effects that foster parents have on children while reinforcing the idea that the simplest acts can have a lasting impact.

Foster parents deserve to be recognized for their selfless acts of love, and through this campaign, we are able to not only celebrate current foster parents but also encourage potential foster parents.

The campaign will continue in 2020 and will include print ads, radio, and billboards, along with social media and community outreach efforts. The ‘Be the Reason’ message helps to raise awareness, elicits a strong call to action, and re-emphasizes the lasting impact of the foster and adoptive parents’ everyday care for children in need in our community.

**Number of
removals per each
top 10 target zip
code and foster
homes in each area.**



**Total #
of Children
Who Received
Agency Services
2019
10,672**

**Percentage
of Children
Reunified
with Family
2019
80%**



**Monthly
Average
Number of
Families Served
2019
733**

Leadership development initiatives continue at SCCS

In 2019, SCCS expanded its leadership development initiatives with the launch of the second **Leadership Academy Class**.

The goal of SCCS Leadership Academy is to build the leadership skills of staff at all levels of our agency and to anticipate and prepare for the future leadership needs of the agency and community.



Leadership Academy Class, Standing (L-R): Candy Ross, Beatrice Flett, Jessica Miller, Kristen Stark, Dana Klapper, Kimberle Wilcox, Jennifer Dougherty; Sitting (L-R): Chelsay Finney, Stephanie Collins, Katie Kintz

Leadership Akron Diversity on Board members from SCCS

Diversity on Board provides leadership development, education, and board matching services to develop more diverse talent for service on nonprofit and public Board of Directors. Two of our staff participating in this program, Taranna Francisco and Marion Foster, will have an in depth learning experience about the roles and responsibilities of being a board member. They are advocates and through this type of opportunity, will lend a voice from a diversity perspective for future leadership roles in the community.



Taranna Francisco



Marion Foster

New hands-on intervention program provides specialized services to families through mentorship

Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma) is an intervention program that provides specialized services to families struggling with substance abuse and childhood trauma issues. A key element of this program is a certified peer mentor that is paired with a Children Services caseworker to provide intensive case management and support. This program is intensive and uses a hands-on approach. This model was new to the agency in 2019.

Beth Smyntek is the agency's START caseworker who works closely with Erin Mills, Family Peer Mentor, to provide an intensive and collaborative approach to those families struggling with substance abuse disorders. Due to this close model of support, timely linkages will be made to treatment and recovery services. As a Family Peer Mentor, Ms. Mills supports and encourages those involved in the program who are seeking and sustaining recovery.



Beth Smyntek



Erin Mills



of Reports
Assigned
For Assessment/
Investigation
3,898

Monthly
Average #
of Children
in Custody
833

Resilience Alliance (RA) program supports child welfare caseworkers

SCCS is participating in the first-ever national research project to look for ways to reduce caseworker burnout in the field of child welfare. The agency is one of 8 child welfare counties participating in the state. This project is a unique opportunity to learn more about turnover and other staffing challenges.

Ohio has chosen the intervention of CoachOhio: Promoting Optimism and Resiliency.



RA group creating positive vision boards

The desired outcomes of Coach Ohio are:

- Supervisors engage in supporting, recognizing and empowering behaviors
- Caseworkers acquire enhanced skills of reflection, emotional regulation, coping, social support and client engagement
- Caseworkers feel less stressed, less traumatized and have a high-quality relationship with supervisor
- Caseworkers have increased job satisfaction and intentions to stay with the agency
- Caseworkers are retained longer
- Families and children are more responsive and less resistant in interactions with staff
- We see better child and family outcomes in safety, permanency and well-being

Legal permanence through adoption increased in 2019

The ultimate goal for children and youth in out-of-home care is for them to transition to a safe and permanent family as quickly as possible. In most cases, children are reunited with their families, but children may also find permanent families with other relatives or adoptive homes.

Permanency, part of the mission of SCCS means a legally permanent, nurturing family for every child involved with the agency. Last year, SCCS worked to reduce the number of children waiting adoptive placement. A total of 91 children experienced legal permanence through adoption in 2019, an increase of 40% from the year prior. Legal permanence through



The Yost family. Adoption Day, July 2019.

adoption, for example, provides children with legal and social stability, continuity of life-long relationships and ideally maintains cultural identity.

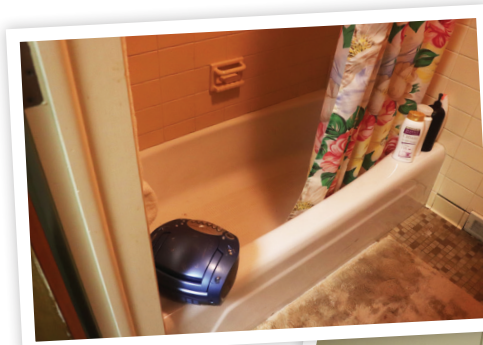


Simulation Lab allows caseworkers to practice and develop new skills

SCCS has implemented a new training program concept that utilizes an innovative simulation lab. The simulation lab reproduces a model living environment that can be staged to create various home settings. This type of training opportunity allows caseworkers and students to practice in a variety of realistic potential scenarios. SCCS is using a building for the simulation lab that was previously used when the agency housed children on the campus.

Students, professionals and newly hired caseworkers in child welfare are able to learn, improve and practice their skills for real-world application and assessment in a safe, controlled environment where both the supervisors and peer learners can support participants firsthand.

Training child welfare caseworkers involves developing participant knowledge, skills and values. The Professional Development and Training staff at SCCS prepares and assists with the simulation as it is a different type of training experience. The staff has the ability to demonstrate the skills being taught and can provide feedback to those in training to help develop their competence.



Unsafe bathroom environment for training purposes.



Unsafe sleep environment for training purposes.



Professional Development and Training supervisor with bachelor and master's student interns. Standing (L-R): Beth Kinney (supervisor) Cassidy Lindberg, Savanna Wagner, Christen Smith-Misja; Sitting (L-R): Hannah Pittman, Maggie Smith, Kristen Williams

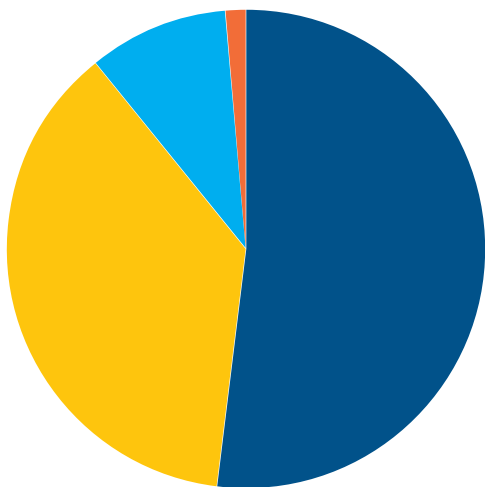
Total # of
Intake Calls
10,021

Monthly
Average # of
Children in
Kinship Homes
358

Average Age
of Children
on Case Plans
7

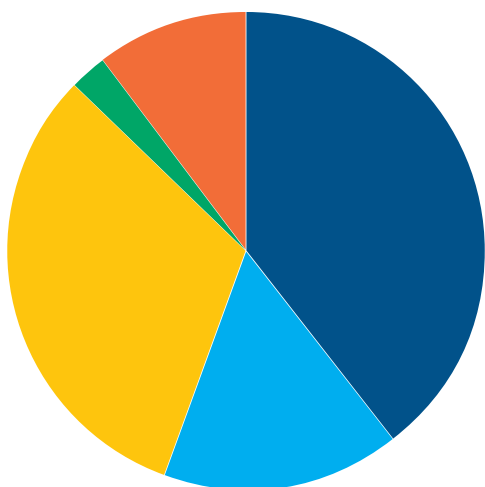


2019 Summary of Financial Statements



REVENUES

Operating Levy (Net)	\$ 26,105,370
Federal Funds	\$ 18,602,497
State Funds	\$ 4,682,524
Local & Grant Funds	\$ 626,396
Total Revenues	\$50,016,787



EXPENDITURES

Wages	\$ 20,780,227
Benefits	\$ 8,506,537
Placement	\$ 16,684,153
Other Child Related	\$ 1,269,860
Other Operational	\$ 5,334,245
Total Expenditures	\$52,575,022

**Make a difference.
Make a call.**

**24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline:
330-434-KIDS (5437)**

Social Services Division

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 START staff

Placement & Permanency Planning Services

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



Summit County

CHILDREN SERVICES

Building Families . . . Building Futures



330.379.1990 | summitkids.org