

Clermont County Family & Children First Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 4

Fall 2005/Winter 2006

COLLABORATION IS THE KEY

The mission of the Clermont County Family and Children First Council is to promote and facilitate communication and collaboration among Clermont County child and family serving agencies to ensure that Clermont County infants, children, adolescents and their families receive the most appropriate services to enable youth to develop adequate skills in preparation for a successful adulthood.

It has been 1 1/2 years since the Department of Job and Family Services (DJFS), Children's Protective Services (CPS), Juvenile Court (JC), Family and Children First (FCF), and the Mental Health and Recovery Board (MHRB) started meeting on a weekly basis to brainstorm and develop ideas/plans to benefit children served. The group knows that allocations from the State are decreasing and that each agency's funds must be used in the most efficient and effective way. In October 2004, the group hosted a presentation at the Armory in Batavia to show the community what the group had been working on and future plans of the group.

Several ideas from the group have been implemented and been successful over the course of the last 1 1/2 years.

- The MHRB funded an in-home services worker at Child Focus, Inc. to provide services to CPS children and their families. After a year, CPS took over the funding for the position. With the increase in home-based services, CPS has been able to provide critical services to children and families within their natural environment.
- CPS contracted with Pressley Ridge to provide in-home services. Once again, home-based services have proven to be critical to children and families to prevent removal of children from the home and teach children and families how to communicate and become self-sufficient.
- CPS also contracted with the Pressley Ridge independent living program. As children typically emancipate from the CPS system upon turning 18, providing an environment where 16 or 17 year olds can learn the skills necessary to live on their own is essential. Pressley Ridge provides supervision to the children in their care, but also teaches each child such skills as budgeting, how to use the Cincinnati bus system, and how to get a job.
- The entire team has worked together to decrease the number of children in custody placed in residential treatment. At the beginning of the effort, 52 children were in residential treatment. Through the efforts of CPS staff, JC workers, and FCF site visits, there are currently 23 children in residential treatment. Teams are working closely together to move children out of residential treatment when ready and to be creative in their thinking in order to prevent children from entering residential treatment. Moving children out of residential treatment allows children to be placed closer to home.

These are only a few of the things that the group has accomplished collectively. This group is proof that agencies can collaborate, communicate, and function as a team which results in better care for children. Look for a new service to be introduced in the next few months which was developed by the group.

Inside this issue:

Holiday Event a Success	2
2006 "Beyond the Blue Ribbon" Prevention	2
FCF Spotlights.....	2
MHRB and CPS levies fail	3
Did You Know?	3
Learn More About..	3
FAST and ABC services	4

Ohio's commitments to child well-being are:

- Expectant Parents and Newborns Thrive
- Infants and Toddlers Thrive
- Children are Ready for School
- Children and Youth Succeed in School
- Youth Choose Healthy Behaviors



Parenting Program

Do you know a parent who would like to learn more about parenting? If so, please tell them about the Child Focus Home Visitor Program. The program is voluntary and free. Anyone from the community can request the service as long as they have a child 12 years old or younger living in the home and do not have an open case with Children's Protective Services. The Home Visitor program provides 10 sessions of parent training in the family's home. Additional visits may be provided as necessary. Assessments are also provided on children 0-5. Please call 752-1555 for more information or to make a referral.



Holiday Event a Success!

On Friday, December 16th the Wildey Center in Owensville was the site of the Annual Winter Family Support Event, hosted by the Clermont Help Me Grow Family Support and Child Find Committee. The event was originally scheduled for December 9th, but due to snow and ice, had to be re-scheduled.

Children and families who receive Help Me Grow services were invited to share in an evening of food and fun. Over 180 families and children attended the event!



Everyone enjoyed the buffet dinner and the activities at the event were a huge hit! Children were excited to meet a baby reindeer and a miniature horse. Children also decorated cookies, made picture frames, had their faces painted, and of course, visited

with Santa! All children at the event received a gift from Santa and most of the families left with a door prize. Clermont Help Me Grow would like to thank the following for their generous donations of time, energy, talents, and prizes for the event: Families Connected, Clermont County MR/DD, YWCA—Eastern Area Division, Child Focus, Clermont County Family and Children First, and the Clermont County General Health District.

with Santa!

All children at the event received a gift from Santa and most of the families left with a door prize.

Clermont Help Me Grow would like to thank the following for their generous donations of time, energy, talents, and prizes for the event: Families Connected, Clermont County MR/DD, YWCA—Eastern Area Division, Child Focus, Clermont County Family and Children First, and the Clermont County General Health District.

A big thank you to the Family Support Committee and all the staff who assisted to make this such a successful event for the community.

Family Support Events are held twice a year, once in the Spring and again during the holiday season. The event is meant to be a casual

event for families to enjoy and to network with other families.

Look for the flyer for the Spring Family Support Event to be distributed in 2006.



Pictured above are Ron Halcomb, HMG Project Director, and Brenda Cox of Families Connected

2006 “Beyond the Blue Ribbon” Prevention Awards

Every year the Ohio Children’s Trust Fund and Prevention Partners Leadership Group recognize and honor Ohioans who have made a significant contribution to preventing child abuse and neglect. Awards are presented in the following categories: Outstanding Prevention Volunteer, Outstanding Business Contributor, Outstanding Media Contributor, Outstanding Early Childhood Professional, Outstanding Prevention Professional, and Outstanding Prevention Program. Anyone can submit a nomination. For more information on the how to submit a nomination, please contact Gretchen at 732-5411.

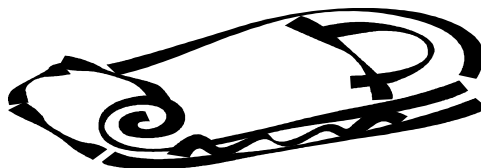
FCF spotlights Pam Burton

Pam Burton joined the FCF staff February 28, 2005 as a part-time secretary. If you call the main line for FCF or the Mental Health and Recovery Board, chances are you will talk with Pam! Some of Pam’s many other responsibilities are taking meeting minutes, maintaining the FCF information database, and updating the Resource and School Directories.

Pam’s experience includes 18 years in the check printing business and 4 years with

the Clermont County Chamber of Commerce.

Pam enjoys being part of a team that works to assist the families in Clermont County. She has learned much about the services and the needs of the community through her work with FCF.



Pam resides in Bethel and is a life long resident of Clermont County, graduating from Glen Este High School and completing a Computerized Business program at Grant Career Center.

Pam has been married for 20 years and has 2 step sons and 3 step grandchildren. She enjoyed gardening, water skiing and crafts, but her real passion is interior design.

MHRB and CPS levies fail

On November 8th, a majority of Clermont County voters did not support the Clermont County Mental Health & Recovery Board (MHRB) and Clermont County Children's Protective Services' (CPS) levies. Both were seeking replacement levies with increases.

The MHRB is in need of additional funds due to reductions in state allocations and increasing demands for services. Approval of the replacement levy would have allowed the MHRB to maintain funding of the current prevention and treatment services

provided to children and adults. At this time it is too early to know for certain which services will be cut, but due to the loss of funds, cuts are inevitable.

Children's Protective Services is



in need of additional funds due to many factors. Clermont County's

population continues to rise at a rapid rate. With the increase in population, CPS has seen an increase in the number of abuse cases that need on-going case management. Also, due to the focus of law enforcement on shutting down methamphetamine labs, the number of children in need of placement has increased substantially.

Both MHRB and CPS plan to put the levies on a ballot in the near future.



Did You Know?

- * In 2004 Clermont County's unemployment rate was 5.5%, while the state of Ohio's was 5.9%, and the US unemployment rate was 5.5%
- * Total number of births to unmarried parents in Clermont County in 2004 was 27.4%
- * The child poverty rate in Clermont



- County in 2004 was 9.3% as compared to the US child poverty rate of 23%
- * Clermont County ranks 26th among the states in the percentage of children who are poor
- * The median income for Clermont County households in 2004 was \$44,386
- * The state of Ohio has the most home foreclosures in the US.
- * Clermont County is the 13th largest

county in Ohio

- * Ohio is the 7th largest state in the US

**Information from the Children's Defense Fund and Clermont County's Coalition for Affordable Housing



- * The poverty rate for Clermont County in 2004 was 6.5% as compared to the US poverty rate of 17%
- * The child poverty rate in Clermont County in 2004 was 9.3% as compared to the US child poverty rate of 23%

Learn More About...Even Start

Even Start is a year round, family friendly program that provides parents with the training needed to complete their GED. The program also focuses on job readiness skills.

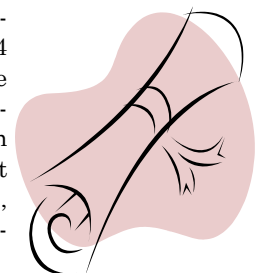
Classes provide GED preparation, life skills training, parent support workshops, and job search skill development. Each person sets individual goals and works at their own pace.

To be eligible for Even Start, the family

must have a child 7 years of age or younger, have a parent who needs to earn a GED or to work on reading or math skills, and agree to participate in all aspects of the program.

Classes are located in the Milford Pre-School building on SR 28, Monday through Thursday 8-11:30am and at the Child Focus Learning Center in Mt. Carmel, Monday through Thursday 8:30-1:30. Early Childhood Education is provided for children 6 weeks to Kin-

dergarten at the Mt. Carmel location (at the Child Focus Early Childhood Education Center) and for children 3 or 4 years old in the Milford program. To learn more about Even Start, please call 528-7224.



Clermont County Family & Children First

The vision of the Clermont County Family and Children First Council is to ensure intersystem collaboration to improve the well being of the children and families of Clermont County.



Clermont County Family & Children First staff

Gretchen Behimer, LISW	Program Coordinator	732-5411
Angie Rohde, PC	Clinical Coordinator	732-5413
Susan Hurd, LSW	Quality of Care Manager	732-5410
Pam Burton	Secretary	
Main Line		732-5412
	<u>Fax</u>	
	732-5415	

1088 Wasserman Way, Suite B

Batavia, OH 45103

(inside the Clermont County Mental Health & Recovery Board office)

FAST \$ and ABC Services

Past newsletters have highlighted funding streams which are made available to Family & Children First and the services that have been implemented with those funds. To recap, FAST \$ stands for Family and Systems Together Funds. Various agencies at the state level have pooled funds and distributed these funds to each county to better serve the children and families in their community. Access to Better Care (ABC) funds are also made available to each county. Funding for ABC comes from the General Revenue Fund (GRF) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

The following services are available to children and families involved with FCF through FAST \$:

- **Respite.** Respite is provided by St. Joseph Orphanage and Lighthouse Youth Services. Use of respite is provided to give caretakers a break from the day to day care of their child.
- **Transportation Assistance.** Transportation Assistance may be provided to families who have documented difficulties in attending mental health, Juvenile Court, Children's Services, MRDD, etc appointments due to transportation issues.
- **Support for families with children with Autism.** Children must be enrolled in the STARE program in order to be eligible to receive the support.

For children and their families to be eligible to access any FAST \$ service, the child MUST have a behavioral health diagnosis and be involved with FCF.

The following services are available to children and families involved with FCF through ABC funds:

- **Intensive In-Home Treatment.** Camelot Care provides Virtual Residential Program (VRP) and Monitor Prime to help children remain in their home. Child Focus also provides in-home services. In order to be eligible to receive intensive in-home services, the child MUST have a behavioral health diagnosis.
- **Weekend Respite.** Weekend respite is provided through Camp Allyn. Children must be at least 6 years of age and CANNOT have a behavioral health diagnosis. Children may be MRDD, medically fragile, or developmentally delayed. Family must also meet TANF eligibility requirements, specifically the family's income cannot exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- **Support for parents with children in WISHES/Early Head Start.** Children eligible to receive support CANNOT have a behavioral health diagnosis. Supportive services are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Please call 732-5411 for more information on any of the services listed above or for information on how to make a referral to FCF.