

JOB AND FAMILY MATTERS

1ST QUARTER 2024

JANUARY * FEBRUARY * MARCH

GREAT Things are happening in Children Services.....

The Support Unit, led by Linda Ackerman have made various positive changes to better serve the families and children of Sandusky County. In March 2024 Kelle Greene, Kim Bailey, Teri Robinson, Morgan Lockhart and Grace Ott all attended a three-day course and are certified Nurturing Parenting Facilitators. This certification will provide evidenced based parenting that goes beyond the classroom. Also in March 2024, Kelle Greene, our senior parenting instructor began a nine-month program through the J.A.I. Institute. Kelle will become certified as a Parenting Coach. This certification will open the door for many of our families who need a more intense approach in order to keep their children in the home and as well deal with challenging behaviors.

All of this training will help the support staff be prepared to work with families. As a result of the above training the support unit has taken on a new pathway in our service. The implementation of three new programs; Reunification Support Services, Intensive In-Home Parenting, and Parent Aide Services.

Reunification Support Services is designed for families whose children are removed from the home and have made progress in case plan services to the point they don't pose a safety hazard. This program is a joint effort between visitation and other parenting services. Our team includes Grace Ott, Teri Robinson, Kelle Green, and Kim Bailey. Research shows child reunification is more likely with frequent and normal contact outside the agency. The family must be accepted into this program and all visitations will be supervised in the community or parental home.

Intensive In-Home Services is designed for families who are in danger of having their children removed from the home. The goal of this service is to prevent removal by putting in concrete supports as well as agency support to increase safety and reduce risks in the home. This program is led by Kelle Greene. She has been working with one family for the past two months. At this point, Kelle is at the home at least two times each week and ensures mom has transportation and is attending mental health services as well as ensuring family supports are in place. Kelle's coaching training gives her a new way to encourage and empower families.

Parent Aide Services is led by Grace Ott. Grace has been at our agency for less than four months and is doing amazing things to help families. Her services include helping families with budgeting, housing, job search, and obtaining community resources to assist in meeting children's basic needs.

Independent Living Services is led by Morgan Lockhart. Morgan was actually a past employee who worked for both children services and Ohio Means Jobs. Thanks to her dedication and love for working with youth she made the decision to come back. Morgan provides services to youth ages 14-21 who are in foster care. She provides them with activities, support, and opportunities to be successful in all areas of their life. Currently, Morgan is working with 9 youth in total. Of those 9, three will be leaving foster care this spring and summer. As you all know housing is the biggest barrier! Morgan has gotten creative by using mental health and housing through the college. Morgan is doing amazing things to help our youth.

Other services the support unit provides for families and casework staff include Fiscal and Clerical Support Services. Our agency could not function without Megan Sweeney and Kelsey Prescott. Kelsey and Megan have been working hard to get scanning, legal, fiscal, and front desk stabilized.

On a personal note, as I approach my 26 years here at Sandusky County Children Services, I am thankful for the support of our new administrator Michele Hoffman and our Director Melanie Allen. Both of them have been instrumental in giving me the freedom to implement new services at our agency. As many know working in social services is always a challenge, but doing things you love will always make you stay. Thanks to all of you who support our efforts in always working towards making things better.

Please Welcome and Congratulate the following changes in Children Services

Training Supervisor, Kristi Beall

Natasha Bor moving from Ongoing to Investigation Services

Lydia Ray moving from Investigation to Ongoing Services

Angela Wheeler being promoted from Training Officer to Supervisor

CHILD SUPPORT

By Krista Hovis

Spring has arrived...well, chronologically anyway. It's actually still kind of cold, wet and gross outside.

If you're reading this, that means you have survived the *Eclipse*. Woo hoo! While I'm sure it was cool (I'm writing this prior to the event), we in Child Support have some equally big things to focus on now...equally big in our world anyway. Since the beginning of child support time in Ohio legal custody was required in order to have a support order. Actual residence was irrelevant without a custody order. The only exception was if the parents were unmarried at the time of the child's birth. Then it was just presumed the mother was the custodial parent. While the presumption is not changing, how we view the actual residence of the child is about to become very relevant.

As of April 3, 2024, Child Support agencies in Ohio are going to be required to investigate and possibly redirect orders when we are notified a child is not living with the custodial parent. This will only apply if the child is reportedly living with a caretaker or in the custody of a caretaker agency. The other biological parent is not considered a caretaker and will still require a legal change of custody.

So, how is this going to work? Quite honestly, we aren't entirely sure yet. We have a local procedure in place but are anticipating that it will probably need tweaked along the way once we put it into practice. Once we are notified that a child is not living with the custodial parent—either by the caretaker, one of the parents or through an automated referral from PA—our administrative hearing officer (shout out to Cassandra!) will do an investigation. Part of that investigation will be to verify the child has been in the residence of a caretaker (not a biological parent) for at least 30 consecutive days and that person is the primary caregiver for the child.

If all of that turns out to be true we will put a hold on any existing child support case and begin the process of redirecting that order and establishing a new order for the custodial parent to pay. The parties can appeal to court if they disagree with our findings.

This won't be a quick process but it's better than what we have had in the past, which was nothing. Caretakers will now be able to get the child support they need to care for kids in their home. Isn't that what it's all about? The State isn't stopping with this directive though. Nope!

Coming soon to a CSEA near you: Deceased Obligees. Each county has been left up to their own devices on how to handle this situation, but no more! Next month we will need to start on a procedure for it based on the State's guidance...basically a Handbook For The Recently Deceased. (Yes, I just made a Beetlejuice reference. If you've seen it, you'll know.)

Public Assistance

The Public Assistance Division is fully staffed with the upcoming addition of McKenna Waggoner this month. Shhhhh.....don't say it too loudly and maybe knock on wood. Wahoo!! We welcome McKenna with open arms and hopes and dreams of a speedy training period 😊 We can really use all the help we can get with the increase in applications and phone calls coming in to the call center.

We have also seen an increase in skimming and cloning EBT card cases. In 2023, there were only 10 people who were a victim of having their benefits stolen. So far, in 2024, there have been 26 people....and it is only April folks. The amount of stolen benefits has reached over \$12,000. These benefits won't be able to be replaced forever so we are strongly urging our customers to frequently change their pins. They can also utilize the cool feature on the app that allows them to turn off their card while they are not using it.

Here are some numbers from our 2023 annual report:

In 2023, there were 4,952 applications filed for Sandusky County residents, an average of 412 applications per month. An average of 15,890 people were on Medicaid. \$13,050,381.00 was issued in SNAP. That is about all I can tell you about those two programs since the state dashboard has yet to update the end of year stats. It's fine. No rush 😊

Our PRC unit was busy last year in helping fund 183 families throughout the year. This was through helping with car repairs, home repairs, furniture, rental assistance, school supplies, and some special projects made available by Covid-related grants. We hope to continue aiding the community throughout the year. Stay tuned for our next backpack/school supplies drive.

In our Fraud Unit we were able to collect \$46,401.90 in overpayments. Pete has also been busy with the 41 investigations he conducted last year. We will be celebrating Fraud Awareness in May as well.

Our workers do an amazing job trying to push through as many calls and applications that come in. They deserve a huge pat on the back!!!



OhioMeansJobs®

Sandusky County

A proud partner of the
American Job Center network



In January, HYPE participated in HUD's Youth Homeless Demonstration Program, providing information to help with system modeling for youth experiencing homelessness. We were so excited to have four HYP participants represent youth. These youth also serve on GLCAP's Youth Action Board (YAB).



OhioMeansJobs appreciates small business! In January and February, we attended 6 small biz blitz in Sandusky County, one being with Representative Marcy Kaptur at Kuns Northcoast Security!

We're still getting interest from employers in the county about apprenticeships! Our most recent start up being at Missler Industries in Bellevue. We also partnered with them to pay for the apprentices spring schooling at Terra through an Incumbent Worker Training agreement.

We're starting to see the workforce pendulum swing back the other way post pandemic as in the first quarter, there were 5 employers actively laying off. Despite this slight shift, we had three hiring events were hosted in February for Countryside Manor, Norfolk Southern, and Grammers America. Norfolk Southern's event was largely successful with 9 job offers on site!

Our HYPE team has been busy in area schools with resume and interviewing skills, in addition to career exploration with our Transfr VR headsets! Stop by the OMJ Center during a break time and check them out.



(Clyde HS students helping in an ER after a car crash and performing a knee surgery).

Abby and Renee have been busy preparing Terra Students for the upcoming Career Fair on April 2. The Fremont Ross Little Giant Pathway class welcomes our team twice a year to share with students the necessities for resumes and importance of being prepared for interviews. It is wrapped up with a mock interview event with the students.



OhioMeansJobs®

Sandusky County

A proud partner of the
American Job Center network

St. Joe put together its first ever Thrive day for students, a health and wellness day with a variety of stations to help improve yourself before entering the world as an independent adult. Abby and Renee shared job interview tips and tricks, creating a LinkedIn profile and the importance of keeping your social media accounts tasteful.



Although our typical show rate and follow through with work activities is abysmal, we're excited to have some participation! We currently have 5 individuals actively going through job searching and employment activities with one participant completing work experience at the library until he obtained full-time employment. Way to go Clara and Amber in motivating these individuals to want to do more!

We continue to work with the IGNITE program in the Sandusky County Jail and attended the most recent graduation ceremony in March, celebrating the success of 9 graduates from the program!

Sandusky County was the first county in the state of Ohio to enroll participants in the QUEST grant, allowing them to obtain certifications in broadband and 5G occupations!

Finally, after receiving the devastating news that Arcadia is moving to that state up North for her next adventure, the search to fill her very big shoes began. One ending is another new beginning. Matt Kreilick was selected to be the next Business Service Consultant. Please join us in wishing the best of luck to both Arcadia and Matt!!





Big things are happening in our Treatment Foster Care space! We're still on the lookout to hire a Social Service Worker 4 to work with licensing treatment foster homes...do any of you have friends with a bachelor's degree who love working with families!?! Send them our way!

During this quarter, the state quickly began moving on offering funding to other regions in the state of Ohio to help other counties start similar collaboratives! Melanie, Casey, and Jenni presented information at PCSAO with Melanie and Jenni participating in the official presentation to the entire state on March 12 with over 100 people in attendance! We've been getting some calls from other counties asking for more information and are excited to be helping other collaboratives around the state. The best part is the state is providing some additional funds to our county to be the mentors to all these other areas. Be afraid people...Melanie, Casey and Jenni will be mentoring others across the state!

We have 7 treatment homes licensed with 4 pending home studies and made it through our first state monitoring of the program with some lessons learned.

Parent Cafes continue to be a hit with our family and treatment families, along with some attendance from parents in the community! This has been a great support to parents and the children they care for to learn new skills and get a free meal!

Event season is upon us; we currently have a Seneca County 5k on 4/27/24 and Seneca County's Max's Miles in May.

AND IN OTHER NEWS....LITERALLY IN THE NEWS.... ON TV...HOW COOL IS THAT?!!



**GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE
STATE OF THE STATE**

As a team, we had a really exciting day as we were invited to the State of the State by the Governor and Director Wente to have our Northwest Treatment Foster Care project recognized during his speech. On April 10th, our team stood up at the Statehouse as Governor Dewine bragged about the work we are doing in Sandusky County! Way to go team. We are doing some great things. We missed Casey coming with us, but she probably had a better time in Mexico!



ANNIVERSARIES

JANUARY

Marti Cummings	25 Years
Taylor Steinmetz	23 Years
Meagan Myers	10 Years
Erika Haeusser	3 Years
Bobbie Armbruster	3 Years

FEBRUARY

Nancy Haley	23 Years
Sally Zeller	6 Years
Casey Morrow	4 Years
Brittney Jahna	3 Years

MARCH

Jackie Hamann	25 Years
Janet Watt	25 Years
Kelly Beeker	20 Years
Karen Riegel	19 Years
Krista Hovis	16 Years
Lydia Ray	2 Years
Shawwna Polm	1 Year

NEW HIRES



TAYLOR HOLLAND
CLERICAL SPECIALIST – CHILD SUPPORT
01/02/2024



MORGAN LOCKHART
SSW 1 – CHILDREN SERVICES
01/16/2024



KELSEY PRESCOTT
CLERICAL SPECIALIST – CHILDREN SERVICES
02/12/2024



RODOLFO ARVIZU
SSW 2 – CHILDREN SERVICES
02/20/2024

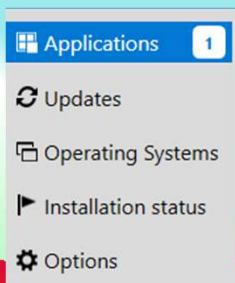


KRISTI BEALL
CHILDREN SERVICES SUPERVISOR/TRAINER
03/26/2024



MIS Marti's Megabytes

The State keeps updating our system weekly. It usually does this overnight on the network, so if you work remote on a regular basis, you may have to check your Software Center on a regular basis for any updates you might have missed. While connected to the State network, open the Software Center icon on your desktop or under Start.



You will want to check Applications, Updates, and Operating Systems.

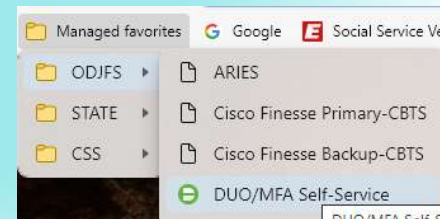
Also, sometimes when they update our web applications, we need to clear our cache and cookies. We learned this tidbit this week when they updated SharePoint. I have a How to do this in SharePoint. [How to Clear Cache and Cookies.docx](#)

It is Best Practice to change your Jabber password thru the My Self Care Portal <https://myphone3.ngtsohio.com/ucmuser/> whenever you change your MyOhio password. And if you ever click reset at the Jabber sign in screen, you will then need to successfully sign in with your Jabber [#@ngtsohio.com](#).

Our laptops can be a little quirky. If you are having troubles turning it on, hold the power button down and count to 30. Usually after 20 seconds it will start booting up.

Every once in a while, our cell phones update just like computers. Sometimes you need to restart your phone for DUO to send notifications.

DUO has its own link in the ODJFS folder of our browsers.



This is where we have to go if we get a new phone.

<https://mfa.ohio.gov/>

LEGAL DIVISION

The combined total of children services and CSEA court hearings went from 753 in 2022 to 981 in 2023: up 30%

In 2022, 87.5% of obligors in contempt successfully purged their jail sentences and four obligors served jail time or currently have outstanding warrants

The CSEA legal secretary processed 311 legal referrals from CSEA investigators in 2023, up 37 from 2022

In 2023, approximately \$75,014.00 was collected in child support from obligors participating in Seek Work Court. A 32% increase over 2022

The number of children services hearings increased from 319 in 2022 to 398 in 2023. This is likely due to a 16% increase in new cases filed with the Court and an increase in contested hearings