



Allen County Children Services



**OUR CHILDREN. OUR FOCUS.
OUR FUTURE.**



**2014 Annual Report
to the community**



Network for Life



Child abuse is a systemic issue with no easy answers and no simple solutions. The circumstances surrounding child abuse and neglect are increasingly complex as are the community responses needed to ensure the safety of children while adequately addressing their needs and the needs of their families.

Our focus is to promote, safeguard and protect the overall well-being of children and families, to intervene on behalf of children who have been abused or neglected, and to work with children and families to assure that every child has a safe, permanent, and nurturing environment.

When the only possible means to ensure child safety is to place that child in out-of-home care, it is imperative that we find a safe, permanent home as quickly as possible. In most circumstances, children can be reunited with their families, but in some cases children find homes with relatives or adoptive families. We know that nationally, children in foster care who are placed with relatives are more likely to reunite with parents, have fewer total foster care placements and a lower probability of return to foster care after removal. A relative caregiver provides a child with a familiar and stable living environment while maintaining family connections and cultural traditions.

It's a common practice: relatives step forward to offer their homes, their time, their food, their love to grandchildren, nieces, nephews, brothers, sisters and other kin whose parents can no longer care for them. It happens in all cultures and in all locales—big cities, rural towns, and suburban communities. It is happening right here in Allen County.

January of 2014, marked the implementation of our pilot program known as Network for Life (NFL). Network for Life is aimed at supporting relatives so they may provide the very best care possible to these children. Services provided were: information and referral, food and clothing assistance and financial stipends to help with the costs incurred and impact of an additional household member. The Network for Life program serviced 71 families and 118 children in 2014. Program expansion for 2015 is planned and will include the addition of services such as respite, mentoring/tutoring, formation of a relative caregiver support group and an appreciation banquet for all relative caregivers in September, the official kinship/relative caregiver month.

Cynthia Scanland, MSSA
ACCS Executive Director

Local Youth State Winner

Demetrius Williams of Allen County received a 2014 Rising Up and Moving on Award, for achieving success in the face of adversity. Demetrius has always been an advocate. At 15, he sought agency intervention when his mother's addiction prevented her from caring for him. He settled in quickly with his foster family, thriving in a home with routines, structure, and consistency. He played football and ran track at Allen East High School, achieving All League recognition in the former and qualifying for the state meet twice in the latter. Demetrius is attending Tiffin University and will graduate in 2015 with a B.A. in criminal justice. He makes the dean's list, runs track, maintains part-time employment, and recently completed an internship with the Lima Police Department. Law enforcement agencies in Toledo and Cleveland have reached out to him with job opportunities. Outside of school and work, he serves as president of the Allen County Youth Advisory Board and mentors younger youth in the independent living unit. The award was presented in October at the annual state conference of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio.



ACCS is Tops in Ohio



A review by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services of child protection agencies in Ohio's 88 counties found Allen County was the only one in the entire state to be in compliance with federal outcome measures. The Child Protection and Oversight Evaluation Stage 9 review randomly selected local cases from April 1, 2013, and used nine indicators to measure the performance of Children Services. Allen County was the only agency to meet all 9 indicators. Furthermore several effective agency practices were noted, including safety outcomes, permanency outcomes and child and family well being outcomes. The

ACCS Board and staff were pleased with the review and pledge to continue to provide the highest quality of services to the families in the area.

ACCS Board Members Added

Allen County Commissioners appointed two local men to the Allen County Children Services Board in September of 2014. Danny Howard and Jason Stolly will each serve a 4-year term. Howard is a sergeant with the Allen County Sheriff's Department. Stolly is a Producer with Stolly Insurance Group. The board supports the mission of children services to protect children by supporting and strengthening families in partnership with the community. The board now has 12 members.



Family Stability Unit

The Family Stability Unit's motto is "Keeping the Family Unit Together." This unit primarily services cases in which a family has agreed to work with the agency on a voluntary basis and cases in which a relative or kinship provider has temporary custody. During 2014, the unit serviced a total of 121 families and 261 children. The unit provided case management services to these families and linked them with the necessary community resources.



Another component of the Family Stability Unit is the agency's Network For Life (NFL) program. The NFL program was designed to assist relatives and kinship providers in their willingness to care for the children. During 2014, the agency piloted this program with great success. There were a total of 71 families and 118 children serviced through this program. The agency was able to access many resources for these families, including financial assistance. We look forward in partnering with other community agencies to assist in maintaining and growing this program.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids



Allen County Children Services is in its fourth year with Wendy's Wonderful Kids, a program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. Wendy's Wonderful Kids is a grant funded program that provides child focused recruiters for children needing permanency through adoption. These recruiters use child focused strategies to match deserving children with families.

The Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter meets with the child to understand the child's needs, behaviors and interests. The recruiter spends time learning what the child wants in a family and in their life. The recruiter stays on as a resource and consistent person for the child during the adoption process. The recruiter's essential role is to be a permanency advocate for the child. There were 6 children matched for adoption and 3 adoption finalizations for children on her case load.

On-going Services

The East and West Family Services units provide ongoing case management and supportive services to families and children. The units work with families, who are in need of strategic interventions, including safety planning, service referrals, drug screening, parent education and the identification and strengthening of support systems, all aimed at safe and long lasting outcomes for the family as a whole. During 2014, case workers serviced a total of 227 families involving 454 children.



Cases within the Family Services units are often involved with the Allen County Juvenile Court through an order of Protective Supervision. Protection Supervision cases allow the family to work on identified areas of need, such as unsafe home conditions, substance abuse, domestic violence and neglect while the children continue to reside in their homes.

There are cases however where due to imminent safety concerns for the children, they are unable to remain with their families. In these particular situations the children are placed in the temporary custody of relatives or with the Allen County Children Services Board. The Family Services Units work with families to safely reunify the children.

Family Support Unit

The Family Support Unit consists of Family Aides and Case Aides. The unit provides supportive services that help empower parents and assist with reunification efforts through visitation, parenting education, transportation, home economics and applying for available resources. In 2014, Family Aides serviced 166 families throughout the community. Case Aides monitored 1,349 visits and provided 153 transports to support parent-child visitation.



Foster Care/Adoption



Highlighted accomplishments for the unit in 2014 were the 15 finalized adoptions that took place. These children were able to gain permanency and have a home to call “their own.” Even more impressive is that each one of these children was adopted by families in our foster care network. This continues to speak to how dedicated our homes are in creating permanency options for our children.

The unit also successfully licensed 15 new foster and adoptive homes. We ended the year with 50 licensed foster homes and another eight homes were adopt only. A total of 69 children were placed in these homes at year end. As the placement numbers continue to increase, these homes have continued to accept placements that may be out of their desired comfort areas.

The independent living program remains strong. The group is very active and participates in several local events, as well as, attending many statewide initiatives and annual conferences. Several of the youth are gainfully employed and others are attending post-secondary educational options.



The mission of Allen County Children Services is to protect children by supporting and strengthening families in partnership with the community.



Intake & Assessment Units

At Allen County Children Services (ACCS), there are two Intake/Assessment units, comprised of two supervisors, ten assessment caseworkers, two intake screeners and one clerical specialist. Following the receipt of a child abuse and/or neglect report, the primary responsibility of the assessment caseworker is to assess safety and risk to the children in the home. There are many tools utilized in order to assist with this task, including the Safety Assessment and Family Assessment. Referrals are often made to community organizations and other social service providers to assist the family in the reduction of safety threats and risk contributors.



If a child is not safe in the home, the assessment caseworker has many options to ensure safety. The least restrictive option is encouraging the family to utilize their own strengths to develop a safety plan. Another option is seeking a court order to place the child in the temporary custody of relatives or kin. The agency files a motion with the Allen County Juvenile Court for temporary custody of the child only as a last resort and when safety cannot be assured with parents, relatives or kin. When a child is placed into foster care, it is the responsibility of the assessment worker and other agency staff to explore all possible relative or kinship placement options to keep the child in the least restrictive setting and reduce trauma the child experiences. Once risk is reduced and no safety threats exist, the child will be reunified with the parents, kinship or extended relatives.

In 2014, assessment caseworkers served 2,195 children. The Intake/Assessment units completed 640 traditional response (TR) assessments. TR assessments are often higher risk cases involving serious physical abuse, sexual abuse or other serious abuse/neglect that may result in a criminal investigation. TR assessments identify an alleged child victim and a formal disposition is made regarding the allegation. In 2014, the Intake/Assessment units completed 315 alternative response (AR) assessments. AR assessments do not identify an alleged child victim or alleged perpetrator and no formal disposition is made. AR allows ACCS to provide a different approach for these lower-risk cases. The approach acknowledges that family members are experts with regard to their own household and should be involved in the decision-making process from the beginning of the case.



2014 Financial Summary

Executive Director

Cynthia Scanland, MSSA

Directors

Robert Bruni

Brenda Kidd

Michelle Vorhees

2014 Allen County Commissioners

Jay Begg

Cory Noonan

Greg Sneary

2104 Board Members

Dr. Jennifer Hughes, Chair

Brook Eggart

Phil Hayne

Dr. Thomas Holmes

Sgt. Danny Howard

C. M. "Buzz" Long

Chris Provaznik

Dan Reiff

Linda Buckley-Skaja

Jason Stolly

Dr. Peter Suter

David Voth

2014 Expenditures

Direct Service to Children & Families

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Intake & Assessment | \$751,769.56 |
| Family Stability | \$329,633.54 |
| East Family Services | \$343,427.00 |
| West Family Services | \$441,731.79 |
| Foster Care /Adoption/Independent Living | \$445,223.93 |
| SDM/Family Aides & Case Aides | \$274,062.18 |
| Subtotal | \$2,585,848.00 |

Services for Children in Placement

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Foster Care Placements | \$1,238,604.89 |
| Misc. Foster Care Expenses | \$79,041.54 |
| Adoption Subsidy Payments | \$195,828.15 |
| Independent Living | \$42,414.48 |
| Adoption and Foster Care Recruitment | \$22,953.20 |
| Subtotal | \$1,578,842.26 |

Other Direct Service Programs

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Family Emergency Support | \$190,682.78 |
| Family & Children First Council | \$16,500.00 |
| Medical Expenses | \$6,360.52 |
| Prosecutor Services | \$185,737.11 |
| Subtotal | \$399,280.41 |

Other Cost Categories

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Human Resources & Administrative Staff | \$665,722.87 |
| Support Staff | \$378,029.30 |
| Staff Training & Education | \$30,121.67 |
| Facility Operations | \$129,568.44 |
| Administrative & Operational Costs | \$225,923.89 |
| Subtotal | \$1,429,366.17 |
| Total Expenditures | \$5,993,336.84 |

2014 Revenue

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Federal | \$2,907,212.97 | 47.12% |
| State | \$592,718.24 | 9.61% |
| Local | \$2,670,158.91 | 43.28% |
| TOTAL | \$6,170,090.12 | 100% |



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ACCS in the Community

