

ACCENT_{on}KIDS

A Publication of Franklin County Children Services

SUMMER 2014



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Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

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SUMMER 2014

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Franklin County Children Services

- Community Outreach
- 855 W. Mound St.
- Columbus, OH 43223
- Phone: 614-275-2523

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Join Us at FamJam for Family Fun This Summer

By Bruce Cadwallader

We are throwing a summer party for Franklin County families!

Franklin County Children Services and Mayor Michael B. Coleman's Neighborhood Pride Block Party have once again partnered to present the annual FamJam - A Family Enrichment Festival, on Saturday, August 2, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at downtown's destination park, Columbus Commons (160 S. High St).

The event is free and open to the public. Families and children in the city and throughout Franklin County are welcome to attend. Entertainment featuring youth performances will fill the stage, along with bounce houses, face painting, free food, and many more games and activities throughout the park. An array of community organizations and exhibitors will be present to share valuable family information and prizes.

In keeping with Franklin County Children Services' mission to protect children by strengthening families, FamJam will allow participants to engage in educational and interactive activities while having fun.

"We are excited to once again partner with city and county leaders to bring FamJam to our community," said Chip Spinning, executive director of Franklin County Children Services. "We hope everyone comes out to enjoy the day and receive some helpful information."

Children Services staff will provide parenting tips, as well as information about adoption and volunteer opportunities. Attendees will also learn home and neighborhood safety tips from the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, Columbus Division of Police and the Columbus Division of Fire. For more information, call (614) 341-6085 or visit: www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services or www.columbus.gov/pride.

Other community partners include Target, Molina Healthcare, Kroger, Lowe's, AT&T Pioneers, Dr. Pepper/Snapple Group, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Xclaim Dance, CME Federal Credit Union, and a host of city and county agencies. FamJam is free and parking is ample at a minimal cost.



Two FCCS Youth Receive Agency Scholarships

By Marion Thompson

Two Franklin County Children Services youth, who have overcome difficult circumstances, plan for promising futures. One aspires to be an entrepreneur, while the other hopes to become a veterinarian. Each was recently awarded a college scholarship through FCCS at the Child Abuse Prevention Breakfast.

Joshua Hatch - Jack Donahue College Scholarship Recipient

One word that describes Joshua Hatch is “ambitious.” He has plans for the future that include receiving a bachelor’s degree in management and hospitality and a master’s degree in business, as well as opening his own large-scale restaurant.

Joshua has been busy preparing himself to reach these goals. He recently graduated from Centennial High School and received a culinary certificate from The Columbus Downtown High School. He also completed an internship with an Explorers Club restaurant. This busy and hard working young man has been accepted at Wright State University, where he will take part in the Independent Scholars Program.



Joshua Hatch



Elizabeth Saultz

Joshua is determined to overcome the challenges he faced throughout his childhood and make his dreams come true. “With my own sweat and tears, I’ll do what it takes to get where I want to be,” he said.

Elizabeth Saultz - Alvin Hadley UNCF College Scholarship Recipient

Elizabeth Saultz intends to be the first college graduate in her family and is on her way toward reaching that goal. She has maintained a 3.5 GPA, while working a part-time job. She will be attending Morehead State University in the fall. Because of her love of animals, Elizabeth plans to major in veterinary science and become a veterinarian.

Another important goal for Elizabeth is to inspire others. “I plan to set an example for my younger siblings and children with backgrounds similar to mine, so that they will be able to look at me and say, ‘she did it and so can I.’ All it takes is hard work,” said Saultz.

Donahue Scholarship Honors a Lifetime of Work

By Pam Prosser

Since 1995, Franklin County Children Services has been awarding the Jack Donahue College Scholarship to deserving FCCS youth who want to attend a four-year or two-year college. The scholarship funds come from generous community donations and go into the agency’s Children’s Fund. The scholarships are awarded by the FCCS Citizens Advisory Committee.

The scholarship is named in honor of Jack Donahue, retired Franklin County Children Services deputy director and interim executive director, who devoted more than 40 years to child welfare. Because of his own life experiences, Donahue was always a strong advocate for helping FCCS youth achieve their goals, even after they aged out of agency care. Under his leadership, during the early 1980s, the agency started using Children’s Fund donations to help some youth who were accepted into college or trade schools.

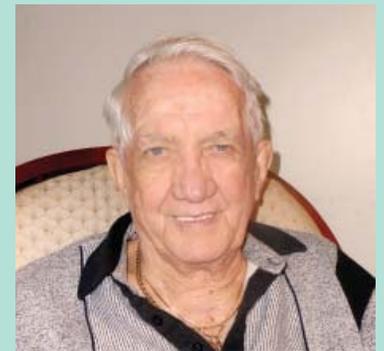
“I remember one of the first kids that we gave tuition money to wanted to go barber school,” said Donahue. “He was so excited and honored that we cared enough about him, that he promised to pay us back. He went on to become a barber. He kept his word and eventually paid us back.”

At age 11, his own family circumstances led Donahue to be placed in a children’s home, where he lived until his high school graduation. Thanks to two scholarships (one from the League of

Women Voters), Donahue was able to attend college at Southern Illinois University. Upon his graduation in 1952 with two degrees (sociology and history), he was drafted into the army and was sent to Korea. While stationed in Pusan, Korea he witnessed the abandonment and infanticide of babies, many the offspring of GI and Korean women. He saw the deplorable conditions of the overcrowded orphanage. So along with other American soldiers, Donahue helped raise money and build bunk houses for the local orphanage.

“That was when I knew I wanted to go into social work,” said Donahue. “I wanted to save the children of the world.”

The Jack Donahue College Scholarship is awarded each year to an agency youth at the FCCS Child Abuse Prevention Breakfast. Donahue regularly attends the event to cheer on the youth that now have the opportunity to achieve their goals.



Jack Donahue

Community Partner Spotlight: Franklin County Family and Children First Council

By Cynthia Greenleaf

For more than two decades, Franklin County Family and Children First Council (FCFC) has bettered the lives of thousands of central Ohio children and families. From brand-new babies to teenagers to the elderly, there's no segment of the population that this organization isn't helping through its wide-ranging programs and service coordination. (Per Ohio Revised Code, there are 88 FCFCs in Ohio, one in every county.)

FCFC will assist anyone who comes through its door, providing a "road map" to figure out what the issue is and if appropriate, making referrals for needed services. There is no typical child or family FCFC works with, according to Jane Whyde, FCFC executive director. She notes that clients are usually at the high end of need, and have experienced hospitalization or residential treatment due to their particular issues. FCFC also steps in when there's an adoption in process that's at risk of disruption. Whyde observed that they're seeing more and more referrals of younger children who might have extreme behavior, present safety concerns or who have been struggling in school. "Those severe behavior disorders are beginning to happen earlier," she said.

No matter what the issue is, FCFC's ultimate goal when working with children and families is to help them gradually gain stability and become self-sufficient. "Building that natural support network is paramount," Whyde said.



Franklin County Family and Children First Executive Director Jane Whyde.

Here's a quick overview of FCFC's range of programs and initiatives:

One of FCFC's main programs is Help Me Grow, a coordinated network of early childhood professionals who evaluate children for possible developmental issues and link them to needed services. Help Me Grow works closely with parents of newborns and toddlers, encouraging a better understanding of what their child's

needs are and how to best meet them. "It's about helping the parent know how to work with the child," Whyde said. Help Me Grow is one of FCFC's and Franklin County Children Services' biggest areas of collaboration, as every child age 0 to 3 with an open case through FCCS is referred to this voluntary program.

HOME Choice is another service that FCFC coordinates. This program's objective is to help individuals get back home and maintain their independence. Whether it's a senior citizen ready to leave a rehabilitation center, a child with developmental challenges transitioning from residential treatment or a premature baby ready to leave the hospital, HOME Choice can ease the transition process. With

access to a range of resources and services, this innovative program is able to get creative and "meet most any need" in ensuring a safe, healthy home

environment, according to Whyde. "We can have services ready the day they walk out the door," she said. In addition to HOME Choice, FCFC has another independence-oriented program set to launch this summer. Called Engage, this new program will aid transitioning youth ages 14 to 22 as they move into adulthood, linking them with adult services and helping them find housing and financial resources.

Another key FCFC objective is encouraging better understanding of the enduring, complex consequences of childhood trauma. Its Building Better Lives communitywide initiative is based on the groundbreaking work of childhood trauma expert Dr. Bruce Perry, examining the impact trauma has on a child's brain development, and how this directly affects learning and behavior in countless ways. From educators, employers and childcare providers to social workers, health care professionals and adoptive, foster and kinship families, this initiative is training thousands of individuals throughout Franklin County. For those who interact with these children on a daily basis such as teachers and parents, the Building Better Lives background should prove invaluable, helping them recognize the behavioral signs of childhood trauma and educating them to respond in a supportive, constructive manner. "If they know where this [behavior] comes from, they can help that child be healthy," Whyde said. "It's the lifetime trajectory we're trying to impact."

For more information on the many ways FCFC is helping children and families in central Ohio, visit www.helpmykid.org or call (614) 275-2511.

A key Family and Children First Council objective is encouraging better understanding of the enduring, complex consequences of childhood trauma.

FCCS Celebrates High School Grads



High school graduate Lehniah Jackson won a door prize and is lent a hand by FCCS Executive Director Chip Spinning.

The Franklin County Children Services Family Center recently became a party zone, when students, their friends, family, volunteers and FCCS staff members gathered for a graduation celebration. This was the chance for 60 youth who are involved with the agency to commemorate their high school graduation or receiving their GED with the important people in their lives. The crowd enjoyed food and music, and many were coaxed into line dancing. A photographer snapped individual photos of the graduates so that they would have keepsakes from the event. In addition, they received door prizes thanks to generous donations from volunteers, staff and community members.

Many of these youth might not otherwise have had the opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments, due to difficult family situations. Earning a high school diploma can be a significant challenge for children who are in foster care or are otherwise involved with FCCS due to abuse or neglect. And so, FCCS made it a priority to recognize and congratulate them on receiving their diplomas. It was important for these young people and their families to have a fun experience as well as a huge pat on the back.

Emancipation Program Sets Youth on Track

By Bruce Cadwallader

A 20-year-old under FCCS care has done what it takes to launch out on his own and live independently. He is one of 150 active examples of the youth who participate in FCCS's Emancipation Program which teaches life skills to those aging out of foster care.

It took two years of coaxing and coddling and time spent with a host family, but Edward Martinez is finally living on his own, working as a shift leader in a convenience store, and saving money for the future.

"He is so focused he always puts \$25 aside for spending each week and the rest in his savings. He rarely uses the \$25," said FCCS Emancipation Caseworker Neshawn Coleman. "It's very rewarding for us as a department to see that it's really working. I've really had no problems with him."

In August, when Martinez turns 21, the duo will formally have to break ties under Ohio law and agency policies. But Coleman said he will continue to check on Martinez.

Martinez is so humble, he still asks Coleman for permission to spend his money on cable TV and a pair of shoes and keeps detailed receipts. He doesn't want a phone or a car and walks to work every day. His host family trusted him with daily chores and the security of their home each time they were away last year. They too are still involved in Martinez's life.

His only side trip is to the library for another stack of books - his favorites are fiction and comics series. Martinez also has written 90 short stories by hand in his spare time.

Martinez has received his certification as a phlebotomist - a technician who draws blood samples - and is looking for work in that field. "College didn't seem right for me, so I found something that I could be good at," he said.



Edward Martinez (right) with his FCCS Emancipation Caseworker Neshawn Coleman.

Martinez has been living on his own for a month in an efficiency apartment. The agency has assisted him with some utilities and furnishings so his apartment lifestyle could start.

Coleman has worked with Martinez since 2012. Emancipation workers specialize in facilitating transitional living arrangements for youth age 17 or older under agency care, sometimes offering tutoring assistance, counseling, rent and utility assistance, groceries, bus passes and college or vocational training. Youth attend life skills classes which last 10 weeks and include budgeting, cooking and shopping tips.

For more information about FCCS's Emancipation Program, call (614) 278-5972 or visit franklincountyohio.gov/children_services.

Volunteers and Mentors Honored

By Elizabeth Crabtree

Who are the people who breathe hope, promise and inspiration into the lives of youth who have experienced abuse, neglect or other difficult home conditions? For some children involved with Franklin County Children Services, they are agency volunteers and mentors. FCCS recently celebrated 50 years of the volunteer program, and the amazing work volunteers do on behalf of children. At the 2014 FCCS Volunteer Reception, volunteers and mentors were also honored for years of service.

They included 20-year Friendship Volunteers **H. Keith Milhone and Daniel Trevas**, as well as 25-year Simba Mentor **Norman Brown**. Brown feels mentoring has been rewarding for him as well as the youth. "Working with the Simba program, I get to see the young men transform into wonderful, thoughtful, strong and intelligent people."

Milhone is currently matched with Jonathan and said their relationship is so much more than mentoring. For 15 years, Trevas has been matched with Daniel. Trevas says now that Daniel is an adult, they have both realized how much their relationship has enriched their lives.

Lori Steigerwald was honored as the West Region Friendship Volunteer of the Year after 18 years of service. Over the years, she has worked with four different girls.

Greg Hageman was honored as the Central Region Friendship Volunteer of the Year. Hageman, who has mentored a young man

since 2009, has been credited by his mentee with providing desperately needed support.

Zoa Henderson was recognized as the East Region Friendship Volunteer of the Year. She has been a consistent guide and support to her teenage mentee, talking her through decisions about boys, school, social media and life goals.

The College-Bound Mentor of the Year was **Heather Yomboro**. She has been a source of support and guidance

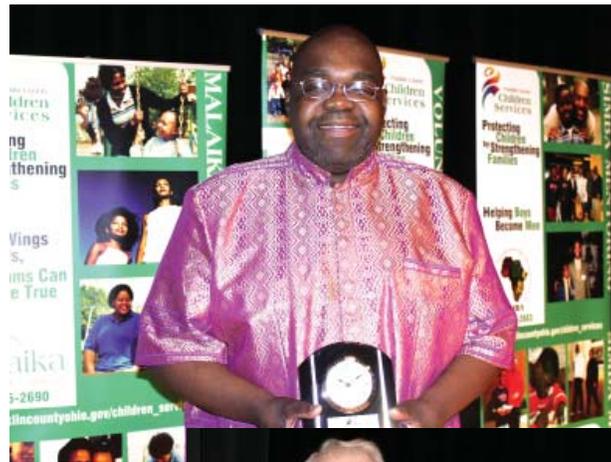
for her mentee Christina as she made the transition from high school into adulthood. Christina's family says about Yomboro, "She's gone above and beyond."

The Malaika Program honored **Marlie Dulaurier** as the Malaika Mentor of the Year. While her mentee has been in several placements and has even moved out of the area, Dulaurier has been there for her through it all. "She keeps me focused, does not judge me and always encourages me," said Dulaurier's mentee.

The Simba Mentor of the Year was **Dr. Eric Jones**. His mentee's mother says, "Mr. Jones is such a wonderful man. He is consistent and that is crucial for my son. He also has a way of conveying a message that my son understands and does not question."

Molly Rhoadhouse was selected as the Crisis Center Volunteer of the Year. She is very motivated and excellent at providing for the needs of children while they are at the agency's Intake and Assessment office.

For more information about FCCS volunteer programs visit www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services or call (614) 275-2690.



Pictured from top to bottom:

- 25-year Simba Mentor Norman Brown
- 20-year Friendship Volunteers H. Keith Milhone (left) and Daniel Trevas
- Malaika Mentor of the Year Marlie Dulaurier (left) and FCCS Malaika Director Monique McCrystal
- East Region Friendship Volunteer of the Year Zoa Henderson (left) and FCCS Volunteer Coordinator Leesa Evans

2014 FCCS Levy: Partnering For Children

By Deborra Armstrong

Franklin County Children Services is fortunate to have many partners that help fulfill its mandate of child protection. Joining the agency's professional caseworkers and support staff in their daily work on behalf of abused and neglected children are foster and adoptive parents, kinship families, volunteers and numerous child-serving partner agencies. Helping the community understand the value of these partnerships and the impact on the safety and well-being of children will be particularly important this year as the agency moves forward in its 2014 levy campaign.

The FCCS board has asked the Franklin County Commissioners to place a 10-year renewal of the 1.9 mill levy, which expires at the end of the year, on the November 4, 2014 General Election ballot. The decision was made to seek a straight renewal without an increase based on a five-year view rather than a 10-year view of funding needed for the agency to maintain services and manage operations. The agency will have another opportunity to evaluate its needs in five years when the 3.1 mill levy, approved by voters in 2009, expires in 2019. Passage of the 1.9 mill levy will not increase property tax cost for homeowners. The cost to owners of a \$100,000 home will remain at the current \$54 per year.

The request is currently in the hands of the Human Services Levy Review Committee (HSLRC) that studies all requests from levy-funded agencies. The HSLRC expects to finish its

review in July and will submit a report to the Franklin County Commissioners, who must take action and file a levy request and ballot language with the Franklin County Board of Elections by August 6, 2014.

As this process is taking place, a special committee has begun work on the levy campaign. Children Services is not permitted to spend public money for a campaign and election laws limit what staff can do on agency time and in agency facilities. Therefore, the Committee4Children (C4C), comprised of community leaders, representatives from corporations and social service agencies and concerned citizens have taken on this role. But FCCS staff can show their support by volunteering their off-duty time to support the campaign. Information about the

"I have seen firsthand how dedicated Franklin County Children Services is in making sure that children are protected and families in crisis receive the help they need to recover."

Yvette McGee Brown, Committee for Children Chair

levy campaign and volunteer opportunities can be found on the C4C website at www.committee4children.com.

"I have seen firsthand how dedicated Franklin County Children Services is in making sure that children are protected and families in crisis receive the help they need to recover," said C4C Campaign Chair Yvette McGee Brown. "I hope that staff and the community will join me in supporting this campaign so that vital services can continue at the same quality level. We cannot take anything for granted. Successful campaigns do not just happen. It takes everyone working together," said Brown.

Mother Rejoices After Reuniting with Sons

By Pam Prosser

Rachel Robinson has been through some hard times. In 2012, there was no shortage of love for her two young children, but there were scant resources and an abusive relationship with her boyfriend. Both children had severe medical issues and developmental delays. Then the family lost their apartment and FCCS was called in to help. Since Robinson was unable to care for her sons, they went to live with a foster family while Robinson worked through her problems.

She told her FCCS caseworker Amber Ford that she would do whatever was needed to be reunited with her children. Robinson separated from her sons' father and learned about domestic violence. She followed her case plan and went to counseling and parenting skills classes, all while working several part-time jobs and attending college. Robinson didn't have a car, so her caseworker gave her a pair of walking shoes for her 8-mile journey on foot to work and back.

Robinson had regular visits with her boys, Stephfon and Jayden, now 3 and 2 respectively. She attended speech, occupational and physical therapy sessions with the boys and worked with a Guidestone parent mentor, Early Child Development, Help Me Grow and the boys' foster mother.

This past January, mother and sons were successfully reunited and they now live with Robinson's mother. Robinson has been

linked with state and local services to help with the boys and continues to pursue her degree at Capital University.

"I feel like a stronger and wiser mother and am grateful for all of the support I have received from Children Services," said Robinson. "I wouldn't be where I am today without their help."

Ford is proud of Robinson's success. "Rachel is determined to remain focused on achieving her goals because she loves her children. Seeing where the family started and where they are now is absolutely amazing," she said.

For the work she has done to preserve her family, Franklin County Children Services awarded Rachel Robinson the 2014 Family Achievement Award at the annual Child Abuse Prevention Breakfast.



Rachel Robinson (left) with Jayden and her mother Allison Malech with Stephfon.



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How Do You Get Your Teenagers to Listen?

Every minute spent in raising children is a teaching moment. Parents take pride in helping their children learn how to ride a bike when they're young, and making sure they know the importance of not texting and driving, when they are older. For most parents, the real challenge comes in raising teenagers. Parents with teens face several obstacles in directing them in the right way to go, including pressure from peers and society in general. One of their greatest challenges is getting their teens to listen to them.

The key to overcoming this obstacle may be for parents to become good listeners themselves and to be willing to discuss any issue. Author Vicki Hoefle believes that parents fair better in communicating with their children, when they aren't afraid to tackle any subject and are willing to show their own vulnerabilities.

Here are a few tips to assist parents with their teens:

- Take time out to meet at a neutral place to talk.
- Be open and honest with the subject matter.
- Have a sense of humor.
- Share personal experiences on the topic.
- Agree to disagree.
- Do some research on the topic of discussion.
- Set ground rules.
- Remember what it was like to be a teenager and show empathy.

For more FCCS parenting tips, visit franklincountyohio.gov/children_services.

