



2009 Report to The Community

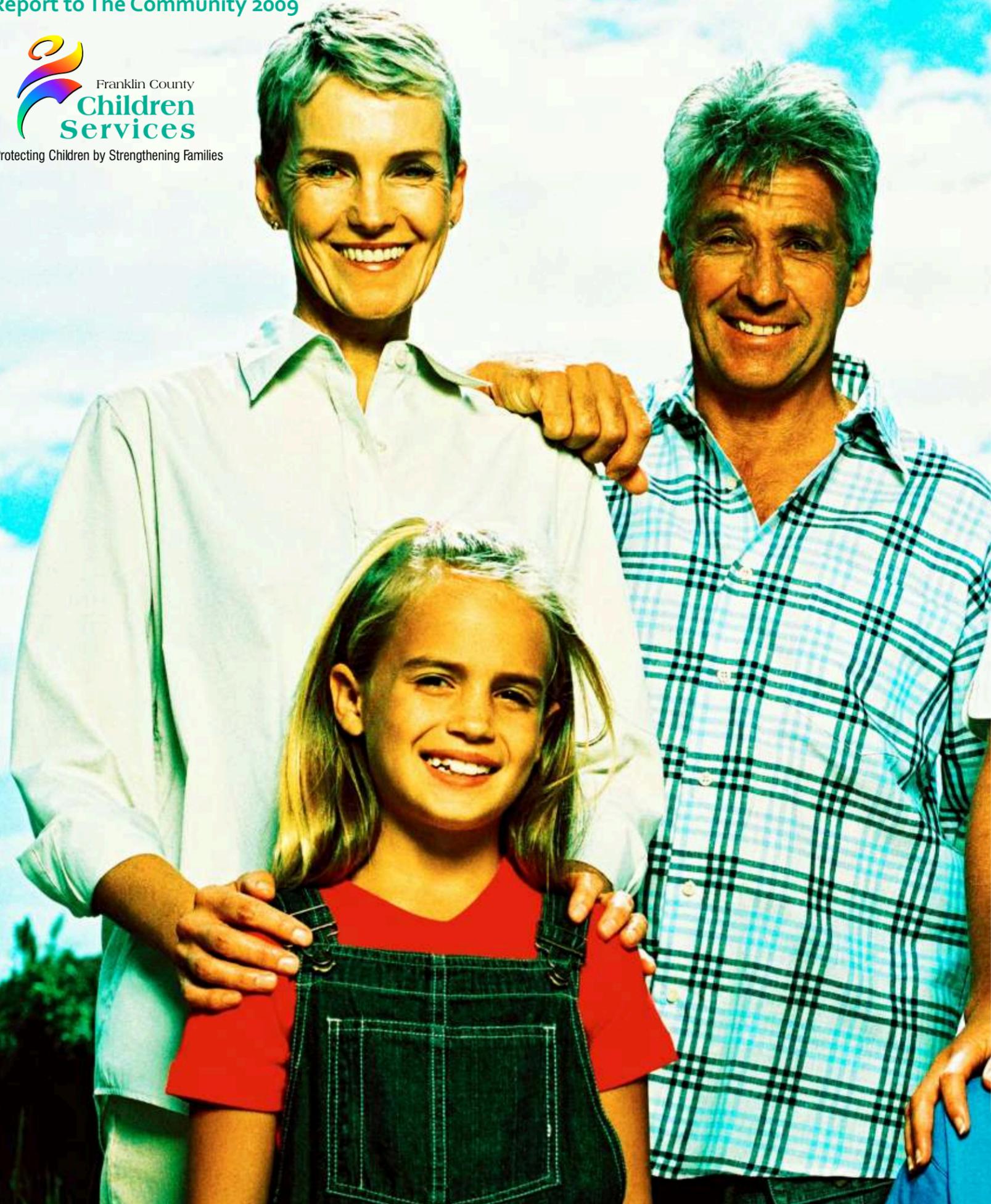


 Franklin County
**Children
Services**
Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

Community Connections:
Creating Ties That Bind



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families



Community Connections: Creating Ties That Bind

Dear Franklin County Community,

Child welfare institutions, even at their very best, are not places to raise children. Children grow, thrive and flourish in families, hopefully their birth families, supported by a loving, generous community.

That's why the theme of this year's annual report is so meaningful. It reflects the direction that Franklin County Children Services is moving. "Community Connections: Creating Ties That Bind" embraces the philosophy and current practice model of our agency.

We believe the community supports this new road map as evidenced by our overwhelming levy victory this past November. As we pay our gratitude to the voters, we also pledge our continued commitment to quality services that reinforce families and create ties to their communities.

In this report, you'll read about our Alternative Response program that has been expanded to serve even more families with an alternative to our traditional investigative focused interventions. By strengthening our front door, we are able to refer families to community-based organizations that are responsive to their needs and can provide quality services in a timely fashion. With the passage of our levy, we are also devoting more resources to our Family-to-Family initiative and working closely with organizations that have existed in our communities for many years. These efforts and others have helped reduce the number of children in paid care by 29% over the last three years.

The stories in this annual report reflect some of the reasons our agency has received local, state and national acclaim. Recently, our agency was featured in the Casey Family Programs annual report with a focus on our efforts to partner with community providers to keep children safely in their own communities. And our Alternative Response initiative has resulted in agency representatives being invited to share our experiences with other organizations across the country. In addition, this also led to an invitation for me to serve on the National Advisory Council in support of Alternative (Differential) Response.

As child welfare professionals, Children Services is proud to help influence public policy by serving on the Ohio Supreme Court/Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Subcommittee for Abuse and Neglect, serving as chair of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio Board of Trustees and serving on the National Association of Child Welfare Administrators' Executive Committee.

But none of this is important unless we are making a real difference in the lives of the children and families we serve in our own communities. We believe we are. We hope that after reading our 2009 annual report that you agree.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric D. Fenner".

Eric D. Fenner
Executive Director
Franklin County Children Services



Helping Families Help Themselves ...Alternative Response



When life gets challenging, sometimes just a little extra help or guidance can make a profound difference. This was definitely true in the case of LaTonya, a struggling single mother of two who needed to attend her job training program or she would lose her benefits and child care. When LaTonya's car unexpectedly broke down and no other transportation options were available, suddenly everything was at stake—the family's finances, food, shelter, healthcare and overall stability. Thankfully, Franklin County Children Services' Alternative Response team got involved and helped LaTonya get her car repaired so she could stay on track and keep her family together.

LaTonya is just one of the many success stories to come out of the agency's Alternative Response program, which emphasizes engagement and collaboration, helping families to help themselves. Research has shown that this innovative approach results in increased family involvement, increased family satisfaction and most importantly, an increased ability to achieve safety sooner through more rapid engagement with families. "We've really come together with families to make sure children are safe," said Lara LaRoche, Franklin County Children Services' director of intake assessment and investigation. "Families want their children to be safe, but don't always have the resources to do so."

Alternative Response allows caseworkers flexibility when assessing and providing services to families who have a screened-in report of abuse or neglect. Linking children and their families to necessary services much sooner in the process is a central part of this approach, as is an increased agency partnership with community-based resources.

While serious cases of child maltreatment continue to have traditional investigations, Alternative Response has proven to be a useful tool in dealing with less severe incidents—it helps families like LaTonya's stay on track. It allows the agency to examine the needs of the child and family first and foremost, and offer services without a formal investigation. "The agency is partnering with families in a different way than we ever have before," said LaRoche. "As our guiding principle states, families really are the experts of their own experience."



Antoinette Marshall and her family

The Power of Community Support ...Family-to-Family

Antoinette Marshall has seen her share of adversity. This stressed-out, single mother of three was once overwhelmed on a daily basis, struggling with family conflict, parenting challenges and serious medical issues. After getting involved with Franklin County Children Services' Family-to-Family program, however, things have turned around for the better.

Now in a stable, healthy place, Marshall is just one of the many success stories to come out of Family-to-Family, a community-based partnership that began in 2000 between Franklin County Children Services and five settlement houses located throughout the Columbus area. Focused on helping needy families achieve strength and stability, Family-to-Family recognizes that children and families are best served in their own communities—it's about neighbors helping neighbors.

Working as an extension of the Children Services team, these long-standing community partners—St. Stephen's Community House, Gladden Community House, Neighborhood House, Central Community House and South Side Settlement House—link at-risk families to needed services and resources right in their own neighborhoods. The program is far-reaching, helping families in 10 of Columbus's 29 zip codes. It serves 61 percent of the city's residents living in poverty, and almost half of the city's minority population.

"A supportive community is central to protecting children and building strong families," said Walter Torain, director of Franklin County Children Services' community development department, which oversees the Family-to-Family program. This dedicated partnership between Children Services and the settlement houses fosters family well-being and self-sufficiency. "Family-to-Family is there for families when they're struggling, providing support, advocacy and resources right in their own communities," Torain said.



Community Connections: **Creating Ties That Bind**





Safe Havens for Infants

During the summer of 2009, Central Ohio had two situations where newborns were abandoned. A baby girl, just hours old, was left in an open garbage bag on the steps of a vacant house on the east side of Columbus. Near Powell, a newborn boy was found lying in a grassy area near a shopping center. Although both abandoned infants survived their ordeals, the situation could have easily turned tragic.

The Safe Havens for Infants law allows infants up to 30 days old to be left with an officer at a law-enforcement agency, a medical worker at a fire or EMS station, or a medical worker at a hospital. If this is done, the birth parent can surrender the unharmed baby anonymously and avoid prosecution.

Having a baby can be scary, especially if the mother isn't ready to raise a child. "If you are in this situation and don't want anyone to know you had a baby, don't look for the quickest, nearest place to leave your infant," said FCCS Executive Director Eric Fenner. "Using the Safe Havens program helps to ensure that the child will be healthy and safe."

FCCS gathered community partners, social service staff, medical professionals, foster and adoptive parents, and local media at Fire Station 10 in Columbus to create awareness about the Safe Havens program and ask the community to help spread the word to save the lives of babies.

The event brought back memories for Chris Arni, joined by her adoptive son Jonathan (pictured top) who was left at a hospital six years ago as a newborn in the Safe Havens program. Since the inception of the law in 2001, Ohio has seen the rescue of 70 infants (13 in Franklin County). **If you or someone you know is at risk of abandoning a baby, call the Safe Havens for Infants Hotline at 614-229-7200.**



Holiday Visitation

The holidays are a time when families come together to enjoy special moments and create memories. For some, this season can also bring sadness and added stress, especially when children and parents are not together. Family visitations are essential components of the reunification process. With this in mind, Franklin County Children Services planned an agency-wide holiday visitation event for families with children placed in out-of-home care.

Held three days in December, this event transformed the agency's West Mound Street building into a welcoming winter wonderland, so the children and birth families could share some extended time together in a holiday setting.

The days were coordinated so that families could have their photos taken with Santa and the children could enjoy a variety of crafts, face painting and cookie decorating. Children were also able to open gifts and share a meal with their families.

**"This is a wonderful experience..."
said Stephanie Purdy.**



"This is a wonderful experience and I really love the family setting," said Stephanie Purdy as she happily embraced her children, Sky, Skylar, Marcus and Barbara (pictured right) who were all dressed up in their holiday attire. Like many of the families attending, Purdy was working on reunifying with her children and expressed appreciation for this special time together. "The kids have something fun to do, there are plenty of toys and good food to eat . . . this is fantastic," she said.

The entire three-day celebration was coordinated by agency employees – from food preparation and decorating to the "elves" who escorted families through the wonderland or even volunteered to dress up as Santa.

It was the smiles, the warm embraces interspersed with tears of joy and youthful laughter that made this effort worthwhile and brought to light the agency's guiding principles of valuing every child and honoring families.

Choose Your Partner Carefully

Far too often a child is abused or even killed when left in the care of a parent's partner, usually a mother's boyfriend. Franklin County Children Services, in partnership with the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Nationwide Children's Hospital, has launched a campaign urging single parents, especially mothers, to carefully consider who they allow to care for and be with their children.

The Choose Your Partner Carefully campaign has a simple, yet profound message which states, "Never leave your child with someone you don't trust with your child's life, and when you choose a partner for yourself, you are choosing for your child too."

Since 2007, eight Franklin County children have died at the hands of a parent's abusive partner. Parents need to remember that their children should not be introduced to every dating partner. The Choose Your Partner Carefully campaign stresses that partners should only be introduced once a commitment to the relationship and shared values have been established.

The following are a few essential questions parents should ask themselves about their new partner:

- Does your partner have children of their own? What kind of parent is he or she?
- Does your partner show anger or impatience when your child cries or has a tantrum?
- Does your partner ridicule or call your child bad names?
- Does your partner think it's funny to scare your child?
- Does your partner exhibit controlling behavior or get physically aggressive with you?

If you answered "yes" to even one of these questions, your child may be at risk.

For more information and parenting resources call the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at 614-722-8200 or Franklin County Children Services at 614-341-6060.



A Year of Community Connections: Creating Ties That Bind 2009



Social Work Month



Pinwheels for Prevention



Child Abuse Prevention Breakfast Honorees



Teen Talent Show Opera at the Zoo



FamJam: A Family Enrichment Festival



Choose Your Partner Carefully

Safe Havens



Children's Day at COSI



National Adoption Day

Holiday Wish



Levy Campaign



Protecting by Children Strengthening Families

Volunteer Reception



Foster Parent Appreciation Banquet



Statehouse Rally

Kinship Back-to-School Event



National Family Week



Holiday Visitation

Emancipation Teens Visit D.C.



College-Bound Day at Easton





Creating Ties That Bind Report of Services

In 2009, Children Services provided help for 24,533 children and their families through direct services by the agency's professional staff and by purchasing services from provider agencies.

Prevention

Franklin County Children Services believes that its mission to protect children by strengthening families can best be carried out by offering a variety of support services to families at every stage of a case. Prevention services are designed to provide help to families and children to prevent case openings, to prevent placement of children on the open caseload, to prevent further maltreatment of children, and to prevent the recidivism of children who have returned home following placement.

Services are aligned with the Children Services mission and with meeting federal goals in four areas, including safety, placement, permanency and well-being.

Safety

Children Services Intake and Investigations staff provide protective services by investigating referrals of children who are alleged to be abused, neglected or dependent. These services are provided 24 hours a day. The agency also accepts referrals from the Franklin County Juvenile Court on youth who are unruly or delinquent.

When investigations indicate a need for ongoing services, a case is opened and sent to one of the agency's three regions or two managed care partner agencies. Children Services provides case management, protective and supportive services, and purchases services from community agencies within a case plan agreed to by the family and Children Services casework staff.

- 23,467 intake referrals received
- 11,683 family investigations completed
- ongoing services for 5,185 cases
- protective services for 14,876 individual family members
- family services to 3,388 children through managed care partnerships
- 11,069 children served on the active ongoing caseload

Placement

Every effort is made by Children Services to keep children with their families whenever safely possible. When out-of-home placement is necessary, the agency's goal is to place children in the least restrictive environment, to provide opportunities for and to facilitate regular visitation, and to reunite families as soon as can be safely accomplished.

The numbers below represent the various categories of placements which the agency uses.

- 4,420 children in agency custody
- 3,308 children in paid care
- 687 children served in agency foster homes
- 1,962 children served in purchased foster care
- 1,294 children served in group or institutional care
- 878 children placed with relatives

Permanency

Children Services is committed to assuring a safe, permanent home for each child who cannot remain with or return to family.

- 153 children's adoptions were finalized
- 274 older youth received emancipation or independent living services to enable them to make a transition from being cared for to being on their own
- 110 agency youth graduated from high school, with 61 going on to higher education

Well-being

Children Services provides special opportunities and services to children and youth to enhance their well-being.

- 561 children and youth received volunteer or mentoring services from 637 volunteers or mentors
- 4,296 children received gifts through the Holiday Wish program provided by 1,223 individuals and 559 groups
- 334 children and youth received services through the Therapeutic Arts Program

by **Protecting Children**
Strengthening Families

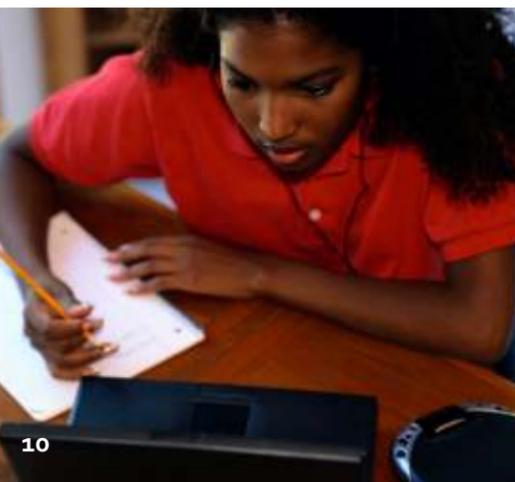


24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline:
(614) 229-7000

Adoption & Foster Care:
(614) 341-6060

Volunteers and Mentors:
(614) 275-2690

Communications:
(614) 275-2523



Local & Miscellaneous Funds (68%)

Federal Funds (29%)

State Revenue (3%)

INCOME

Operating Fund Balance as of January 1, 2009 **\$61,788,724**

Income (Cash Basis):

Local & Miscellaneous Funds \$118,307,826

Property Taxes	\$116,373,203
Interfund Revenue	421,811
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/PRC	216,304
Board & Care from Parents	243,907
Miscellaneous	1,052,601

Federal Funds \$51,562,470

Title IV-E Placement (Administration)	\$5,780,094
Title IV-E ProtectOHIO Waiver	23,328,293
Title IV-E Administration	17,320,045
Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, VA Benefits	961,462
Title IV-B - ESSA (Emergency Services Supplemental Assistance)	450,804
Independent Living Program	877,525
Miscellaneous	2,844,246

State Revenue \$4,985,388

Regional Training	\$790,935
Child Protective Allocation	3,922,717
Miscellaneous	271,736

Total 2009 Income \$174,855,683

Beginning Balance Plus 2009 Income \$236,644,407

EXPENSES

Operating Expenditures (Cash Basis):

Protection Program \$79,828,177

Intake & Investigations	\$15,605,256
Casework Protective Services	33,289,863
Care Partnerships	25,487,526
Family Support Services	5,445,533

Placement Program \$66,530,517

Family Care Services	\$7,275,134
Foster Home Care	27,365,239
Group Home Care	8,943,158
Institutional Care	22,946,987

Permanency Program \$21,588,646

Adoption Services	\$10,957,089
Child Enrichment Services	1,458,009
Emancipation Services	9,173,549

Total 2009 Operating Expenditures \$167,947,341

Operating Fund Balance as of December 31, 2009 \$68,697,066

Ending Balance Plus 2009 Expenses \$236,644,407

(Slight variances possible due to rounding.)

Protection (47%)

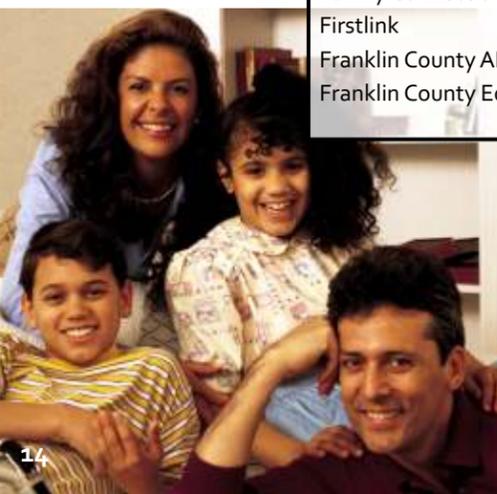
Placement (40%)

Permanency (13%)



Report to The Community 2009 Purchased Services

Community Connections: Creating Ties That Bind



Adriel School Inc.	\$ 552,089	George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania	\$ 251,770
Advantage Adoption and Foster Care	1,537,717	Gladden Community House	109,670
Agape	45,208	House of New Hope	1,109,762
Alliance Human Services, Inc.	278,169	Huckleberry House	39,402
Alps	106,572	Indiana Developmental Training Center	586,795
Applewood Centers Inc.	773,071	Jewish Hospital & St. Mary's Healthcare	41,077
Bair Foundation	1,864,680	Jireh Services, Inc.	581,539
Beech Brook Spaulding	56,152	Keystone Richland Center LLC	1,138,072
Bellefaire Jewish Children's Bureau	787,524	Legal Aid Society of Columbus	269,997
Berea Children's Home and Family Services	551,577	Life Start Inc.	400,564
BHC Fox Run Hospital	142,535	Maryhaven, Inc.	1,126,275
Big Brothers Big Sisters Association	42,544	Mentoring Center of Central Ohio	51,349
Buckeye Ranch/Square One for Youth	6,705,568	National Youth Advocate, Inc.	3,618,967
Buckeye Ranch (Care Management)	11,427,391	National Youth Advocate (Care Management)	14,587,757
Caregivers Helper, Inc.	393,763	Nationwide Children's Hospital	73,337
Center for Child and Family Advocacy	40,942	Neighborhood House Inc.	152,390
Center for Child and Family Development	31,473	New Horizon Care Network, Inc.	126,260
Center for Vocational Alternatives	273,715	New Leaf Inc.	912,118
Central Community House	99,040	North Central Mental Health Services	535,392
Chileda Institute Inc.	54,729	Oasis Therapeutic Foster Care	364,573
Christian Children's Home of Ohio	28,600	Oesterlen Services for Youth	437,718
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center	1,025,373	Parenthesis Family Advocate	1,325,017
Columbus Health Department	95,457	Pomegranate Health Systems	4,293,229
Community Refugee & Immigration Services	80,744	Preventative After Care Inc.	537,205
Compdrug Inc.	176,043	Rosemont Center	2,401,097
Consumer Support Services, Inc.	2,297,567	RTC of Columbus	1,076,724
Cornell Abraxas Group, Inc.	266,319	South Side Settlement House	91,080
Correctional Management Co. LLC	428,554	Specialized Alternatives for Families & Youth	1,843,435
Devereux Foundation	287,613	St. Stephen's Community House	187,304
Directions for Youth	27,504	St. Vincent Family Centers	201,953
Department of Youth Services	468,021	Starr Commonwealth	3,533,283
Dungarvin Ohio LLC	365,550	Syntaxis Youth Home	1,204,285
Eastway Corporation	369,248	United Methodist Children's Home	3,783,594
Fairfield Academy	105,075	Viaquest Behavioral Health of Ohio	2,401,132
Family Connection Inc.	35,360	Village Network	3,246,604
Firstlink	156,863	White Deer Run Inc.	209,570
Franklin County ADAMH Board	280,000	Youth Advocate Services	1,134,174
Franklin County Educational Services	899,463		

Subtotal	\$87,142,285
Payment to Children Services Foster & Adoptive Homes	\$8,167,793
Other Purchased Social Services	\$616,294
Total Purchased Social Services	\$95,926,372

Report to The Community 2009 Boards & Committees

Franklin County Commissioners

Paula Brooks, *President*
Marilyn Brown
John O'Grady

Franklin County Children Services Board

Necol Russell-Washington, *Chair*
Joseph Mas, *Vice Chair*
Joy Soll, *Secretary*
Rev. Michael Bean
Gale King
Margaret Lewis
Douglas Moore
Charles Perotti
Annette Scott
Shadya Yazback

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Ruth Cavin, *Vice Chair*
Gwen Abbott
Joyce Dennis
Marilyn Gravely
Gena Phillips
Heather Popio
Tony Ransom
Kristian Rose-Anderson
Sinuon Som
Emma Thomas

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Mark Miesse, *Secretary*
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Beth Escue
Kenneth Golden
Lynn Kidd-Freeman
Mike Myers
Nancy Page
Jim Ryan
Debbie Sartori

Foster Parent Association

Gregg Oberlander, *President*
Christy Robison, *Vice President*
Amanda Scott, *Secretary*
Carol Jones, *Treasurer*



Creating Ties
That Bind



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families



Franklin County Children Services Report to The Community 2009



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families



855 W. Mound St. Columbus, OH 43223 www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services