



*Safe Children
Today
Build Strong
Families
Tomorrow*

Richland County Children Services 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Agency 2023 Synopsis

Services in 2023

Provided services to 1,775 alleged child victims.

Screening/Assessment Investigations

Calls into the Agency Screening department: 7,803. Screened-in and investigated a total of 1,150 allegations. Of those, there were:

- 359 Neglect
- 349 Physical abuse
- 135 Sexual abuse
- 54 Emotional maltreatment
- 30 Dependency
- 223 FINS (Family In Need of Assistance)

Protective Ongoing Services

Average ongoing cases per month: 275

Kinship Care

Monthly average of children in kinship care: 179

Monthly average of kinship cases: 98

Court-granted temporary custody to kin: 86 children total in 2023

Court-granted legal custody to kin: 110 children total in 2023

Foster Care/Institutional Care

Children in Agency custody: 139 average

Total days in care: 46,082

Total placement costs: \$3,388,702

At the end of 2023, the Agency had 61 licensed foster homes.

Adoption Services

Number of adoptions finalized: 21

Number of children awaiting adoption at the end of 2023: 40, although 13 of those have identified adoptive homes pending finalization

FTM's/TDM's

Held 152 Team Decision-Making meetings and 626 Family Team meetings in 2023.

Independent Living

Children aging out of care in 2023: 5

A Partner in the Community

Richland County Children Services actively participates in a myriad of community events that support children each year. We believe it's a great way to give back to the residents of Richland County. But we couldn't do this work all by ourselves. We have so many community partners (JFS, Youth & Family Council, the City of Mansfield Parks and Recreation Department, United Way of Richland County, NECIC, Mansfield Art Center, Kingwood Center Gardens, Richland County Juvenile Court, Richland County Domestic Relations Court, Richland County Prosecutor's Office, local law enforcement agencies, various mental health agencies, elected officials, and numerous private companies and religious organizations) who all help us in assisting others in various ways.

We are honored and humbled to serve alongside of these entities for the betterment of our community. Together we can ensure a brighter future for the youth and families of Richland County.

Our Vision

In our ideal community, we envision:

- ◆ The community invests in the future of its children by providing opportunities to develop their social, emotional, physical, cognitive and cultural skills;
- ◆ Every child has a permanent, emotionally and economically stable family;
- ◆ The community values and supports the work of RCCS through its funding, provision of board leadership, and excellence in county governance;
- ◆ A committed staff that is supported by the Board and the community; and
- ◆ The community respects diversity and supports the racial, cultural and ethnic heritage of its families and neighborhoods.

Revised by Richland County Children Services Board - February 2023

From the Director's Desk

Nikki Harless



**Nikki Harless, MSW LISW-S
RCCS Executive Director**

Grateful Beyond Measure

The vision of RCCS is really our vision of the Richland County community as a whole. We envision that the community invests in the future of its children by providing opportunities to develop their social, emotional, physical, cognitive and cultural skills; that every child has a permanent, emotionally and economically stable family; that the community values and supports the work of RCCS through its funding, provision of board leadership, and excellence in county governance; that we have a committed staff that is supported by the Board and the community; and that the community respects diversity and supports the racial, cultural and ethnic heritage of its families and neighborhoods.

We were grateful in 2023 to see positive change and progress toward all of the things that we envision in our ideal community. There were numerous events held which showed the value placed on diversity. We achieved permanency for 21 youth in need of a stable family. And the community showed that it values the Agency and our workers through overwhelming support for our renewal levy.

To say that we are grateful for all of these things is an understatement. We are grateful beyond measure for our staff, our Board, our kin/foster/adoptive parents, our community partners and our diversity. There is still work to be done, but every step forward is a step in the right direction. If you would like to join our team as a worker or foster/adopt parent, please reach out to us at (419) 774-4100.

**To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call (419) 774-4100
anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

~ OUR MISSION ~

**To lead our community in assuring the safety, well-being and permanency of
children at risk of abuse and neglect.**

Grateful for Our Staff & Board



RCCS staff (along with numerous members of the Richland County community) wore the color blue and/or 'No Excuse for Child Abuse' t-shirts for Wear Blue Day during Child Abuse Prevention Month.



RCCS Board member Nicole Blakley was a guest reader for the program in 2023.

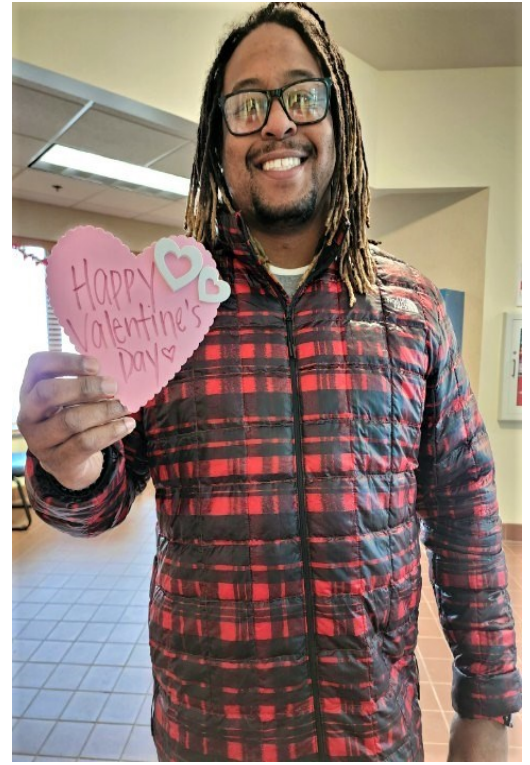
RCCS staff and board members volunteered at numerous community events throughout 2023, including a program co-founded by RCCS called "Being A Reader Makes You A Leader."

The City of Mansfield Parks and Recreation Department and RCCS are helping the children of Richland County become future leaders through the reading program.

Community members are invited to come and read a book to the kids during the parks Summer Fun program and talk about their careers.

The goal of the program is to inspire youths to read, help build their reading skills, and give them an opportunity to meet our local community leaders.

Grateful for Our Support



Community members banded together in 2023 to ensure that every foster/kin child involved with RCCS had a Valentine's Day to remember. More than 4,700 items (including Valentine's Day Cards, books, candy, and gift bags) were collected from businesses and individuals all over Richland County and beyond. This project was a collaboration between Richland County Children Services and the Lions Clubs of Richland County.



Numerous entities throughout Richland County (including Ontario City Council, pictured above) showed their support for RCCS and Child Abuse Awareness Month in April of 2023 by displaying blue ribbons, issuing proclamations, and wearing the color blue.

2023 Commu

In 2023, RCCS employees and their families participated in numerous events throughout the Richland County community. This volunteerism is just one way that the Agency shows its gratitude to Richland County residents for their continued support each and every day.

January through March

Valentine's Day Card Collection for Foster Youth
Annual Step into Spring Walk at Richland Mall
Gravity of Ohio Voices of the Future

April through June

Easter Drive-Thru Celebration South Park
Wear Blue Day – April 12, 2023
Murals – Through the Eyes of Child
24th Annual Minority Health Fair
National Foster Care Month Celebration
Reading Under the Lights Celebration at Arlin Field
Bike-A-Palooza
Community Baby Shower Crossroads Church
Ontario Kids Festival
Miss Ohio Parade
Juneteenth Celebration Festival/Parade
Mansfield Parks/RCCS Summer Fun Program
Family Fishing Day at North Lake Park



Community Involvement

July through September

Kingdom Racing Foundation Miles of Smiles Event
Ontario 4th of July Parade/Festival
Shelby Bicycle Days Parade
Oasis of Love 7th Annual Community Block Party
Kay Day Peace March Celebration in Mansfield square
Richland County Fair
9th Annual Mansfield PRIDE Festival/Parade
'Stay in The Game!' kick-off event
Third Street Family Health Services 3rd Annual Block Party
Jericho Wall dedication
Bellville Street Fair
Richland Public Health Bike Safety Helmet Giveaway
Stuff the Bus Event
3rd Annual Community United Concert in the Park
Community Resource Connection Day

October through December

North End Job Fair
Many Shades of Pink Breast Cancer Awareness
Great Pumpkin Glow at Kingwood Center Gardens
Mansfield Halloween Parade
Shelby YMCA Trunk-or-Treat
Texas Roadhouse Ontario Trunk-or-Treat
Startek Trunk-or-Treat
Meet the Characters of Christmas at Shady Lane Alpaca Farm
Winter Coat Giveaway at The New Store



Grateful for Our Community

Child Abuse Prevention Awareness



RCCS collaborated with Mankind Murals, Inc. and the Mansfield Arts & Culture sector to create the ‘Through the Eyes of a Child - Painting for Prevention and Adoption’ series in 2023. The purpose of the project (which consisted of a series of ten exterior artwork panels) was to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect, in addition to celebrating Richland County’s diverse community and symbolizing hope for a brighter future for our children.

Peace on My Block



In an effort to stop the rising gun violence deaths in the city of Mansfield and promote a culture of non-violence among youth, the initiative “Peace on My Block” was started in 2023 and is spearheaded by the entire Mansfield City School district, WeACT, and Richland County Children Services.

"Peace on My Block" banners were placed outside of Mansfield schools, Arlin Field, Richland County Children Services and in the city parks. The district has come up with a pledge for all of its students, that they will be powerful peace builders who will reject violence, bullying and discrimination. By committing to building peace in the school, that will lead to building peace in the community, the city and the world.

Grateful for Our Diversity

DEI Officer



**La'Shaun Reuer, BSW
RCCS DEI Officer**

RCCS promoted La'Shaun Reuer in March of 2023 to fill the newly-created internal DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) Officer position. La'Shaun celebrated 25 years of public service at RCCS in 2023 and held numerous positions over that timeframe, bringing with her a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her new role. She serves alongside other members of Agency management on the statewide Race, Equity and Inclusion Community of Practice group through the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO).

As DEI Officer, La'Shaun also serves as the Agency's Grievance Officer and hears both internal and external complaints pertaining to general DEI concerns and dispositional appeals. La'Shaun assisted in facilitating resolution for 28 of the 34 grievances filed in 2023.

To file a grievance, please contact La'Shaun at (419) 774-4160 or via email at lashaun.reuer@jfs.ohio.gov. Grievance paperwork can also be found on our Agency website: www.richlandcountychildrenservices.org.

Diversity Training

Richland County Children Services staff members participated in a series of DEI trainings throughout 2023 presented by the Joy Channel organization. Staff learned how to define cultural humility and cultural competency and were introduced to the concepts of diverse identities and intersectionality. RCCS will ensure that its employees continue to undergo DEI training on an annual basis moving forward.

The RCCS Board supports the Agency and the Richland County community in all its efforts to embrace diversity. In February of 2023, the RCCS Board affirmed its support of this by unanimously revising the Agency's Vision Statement to include the following bullet point: "The community respects diversity and supports the racial, cultural and ethnic heritage of its families and neighborhoods."



Financial Highlights

2023 Revenues and Expenses

2023 REVENUE

Revenue Sources (unaudited)

Federal Funds - \$5,423,114

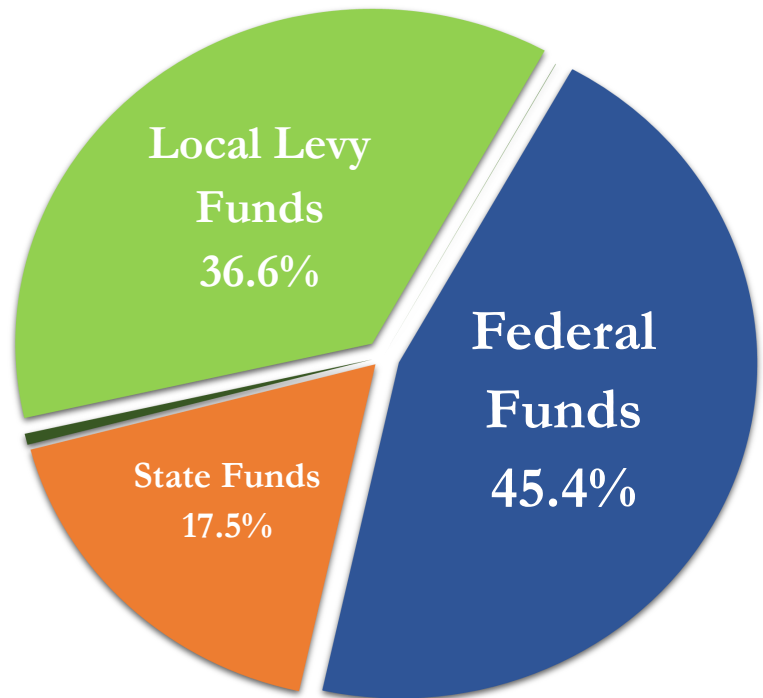
State Funds - \$2,086,007

Local Levy Funds - \$4,373,917

Parental Support - \$2,652

Other – \$64,195

Total - \$11,949,886



2023 EXPENSES

Expense Categories (unaudited)

Personnel - \$6,745,814

Placement Services - \$4,161,152

Adoption Services - \$187,293

Purchased Services - \$395,827

Operations / Overhead - \$414,862

Total – \$11,904,949

Our Impact

Richland County Children Services facilitated the disbursement of over \$1.9 million in 2023 for various programs to help support our clients, foster parents, adoptive parents, and kinship families in caring for the children in their homes. Two of these programs (PRC and Kinship Childcare) were funded through contracts with the local Job & Family Services agency (for a total amount of \$165,758). An outline of our local community support programs and their associated expenditures is below:



- **KPI (Kinship Permanency Incentive) - \$229,800 - Paid directly from the State to kin families to help with the costs associated with the child (ren) living with them**
- **PRC (Prevention, Retention & Contingency) - \$121,306 - Paid to kin families to help with the costs associated with the child(ren) living with them**
- **ESAA (Emergency Services Assistance Allocation) - \$137,822 - Paid to families for things such as rent, utilities and furniture in an effort to keep children in their own homes or return them to their homes**
- **Kinship Care - \$72,809 - Paid to kin families for things such as rent, utilities and furniture in an effort to help them care for the child(ren) in their home**
- **Foster Parent Training - \$12,547 - Stipends paid to foster/ adoptive parents and prospective foster/adoptive parents for attending training**
- **Adoption Subsidies - \$1,118,477 - Paid to parents who adopted children in Agency custody**
- **In addition, the Agency paid \$44,452 in childcare payments for children placed with kin and \$167,831 in childcare payments for children placed with foster parents who work outside the home.**

2023 RCCS Board Members



Patrick A. Heydinger
Chair



Nicole Blakley
Vice Chair



Jim Nicholson
Secretary



Jason Murray, Esq.
Treasurer



Mary Stentz



Bennie Allen



Bill Hope



Randy Pore



Judy Forney

Agency 2023 Leadership

Nikki Harless, MSW LISW-S, Executive Director

Nicole Foulks, MSW LSW, Assistant Director

Kevin Goshe, MBA, Finance/Building & Grounds
Director

Amy Hackedorn, MBA, Sup. of Administrative
Services

La'Shaun Reuer, BSW, DEI Officer

Sarah Soliday, MBA, Human Resource Manager

Angie Poth, MBA, MIS Manager

Tara Lautzenhiser, MSCJ, Program Manager

Don Newton, MBA, Interim Program Manager

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