



We wear helmets.
They don't.
Never shake a child.



Richland County
Children Services



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Richland County Children Services 2013 Annual Report to the Community

It's who we are. It's what we do.



Patty Harrelson, MSSA, LISW-S
RCCS Executive Director

Board Members

Pam Siegenthaler,
Chair

David Leitenberger
Vice Chair

James Kulig
Secretary

Robert Kirkendall
Treasurer

Dr. Michelle Kowalski
Deanna West-Torrence
Jason Murray
Renee Bessick
Lynne Friebe

Administrative Staff

Patricia Harrelson, MSSA, LISW-S
Executive Director

Nikki Harless, MSW, LISW-S
Director of Operations

Marsha Coleman, MSW, LISW-S
Clinical Director

Kevin Goshe, MBA
Director of Finance

Tim Harless, MSW
*Dir. of Community Outreach
and Programming*

Kevin Wharton, MSCJ
Manager, Intake and Assessment Services

Scott Basilone, MSCJ
Manager, Ongoing Family Services

Lori Feeney, MSW
Manager, Placement and Kinship Services

Edith Gilliland, JD
Manager, Legal Services

J. Peter Stefaniuk, JD
Agency Attorney

Christopher Zuercher, JD
Agency Attorney

Carl Hunnell, BSJ
*Public Information and
Outreach Supervisor*

2013: Growth, Relationships and Forward Motion

By Patricia Harrelson, MSSW, LISW-S

2013 was a year of professional growth, relationship development and forward motion within an empowered and engagement-based leadership structure. We saw changes in our Board of Trustees with the departure of Board Chair Bob Konstam, who provided exceptional stability and leadership during a period of crisis for the agency in 2012. We also lost Board member Cheryl Carter, who provided honest insight into programming, and Dean Wells, a long-time Board member with excellent community relationships. We brought on three exceptional members: Renee Bessick, Jason Murray and Deanna West-Torrence. These folks are highlighted later in this report. I am proud of our staff and changes we made in 2013. We changed some processes, lost some folks along the way and brought in some new staff as is inevitable in any organization.

I am proud we passed a much-needed levy, and that our Board and many dedicated members of our team worked together (on their own time) to get this done. We will not see revenue from this levy until 2015, and do not yet know what the state of child welfare funding will be. Ohio remains 50th out of the 50 states in its share of funding for child protective services. This places a burden on local voters and governments struggling to manage, under already difficult conditions. I am grateful to the citizens of Richland County for their positive levy votes and continued support, especially when things are so hard for so many on a personal level. I continue to see myself as a steward of the public trust and make decisions from this place.

I have asked our team to do more with less and monitor spending, which is most felt in the area of staffing. I am confident in our current staffing levels, but child protection is a labor-intensive business that requires training, technology and, most critically, time to do well. In keeping with current budget restrictions, we were unable to provide raises to our team for the second consecutive year, and though difficult, they keep working hard to help make kids safe. I am very proud of them and their work ethic. In keeping with this theme, we lost a top manager in 2013 and elected to not replace this position in an effort to balance our budget without cutting line staff positions. In September, I absorbed the duties of the Director of Human Resources, which preserved funds for line workers. One of my favorite quotes is from Peter Drucker: "Rank does not confer privilege or give power. It imposes responsibility." I believe it is my responsibility to find ways to make the best out of our current constraints and create the best possible public agency. Given where we have come from over the past several years, I feel this is one of the most important thoughts to keep foremost in mind. I believe, having known Gerald Fuddy and Carol Brown, and known of Dave Kracker, we need to bring back some of our history, particularly a focus on our families and children.

We work in a high-risk and high-stress environment. Our people must be our best asset. We must never forget that. I am especially thankful to each and every member of our current and past Board for taking on this responsibility to help guide this agency forward. I am also grateful to our able County Commissioners (Ed Olsen, Gary Utt and Tim Wert) who selected them. Finally, I am thankful to Juvenile Court Judge Ron Spon, who was willing to begin again and work together to serve our citizens, most critically the children of this community. I celebrated my first 12 months here on Feb. 27, 2014, and it has been an honor to be a part of this county and to be a part of moving this agency forward. I look forward to 2014!

Children Services ends 2013 on solid financial ground

Richland County Children Services ended 2013 with a \$5,362,266 fund balance, as revenue exceeded expenses by \$752,481 during the year.

The agency also received voter approval in November of a 1-mill, 10-year replacement property tax levy, which will generate revenue for the agency beginning in 2015.

“Our board has made the tough financial decisions necessary to maintain our cash balance while earmarking more than

Richland County Children Services 2013 finances

Revenue

Federal	\$5,972,474
State	\$ 539,697
Income from Levies	\$3,019,574
Parental Support	\$ 2,811
Other Revenue	\$ 51,966
Total Revenue	\$9,586,522

Expenses

Personnel	\$6,747,345
Placement	\$1,213,377
Adoption	\$ 223,192
Purchased Services	\$ 276,767
Administration	\$ 373,360
Maintenance & Equip.	\$ 0
Total Expenses	\$8,834,041

\$2 million in capital expenses during the next two years,” said RCCS Executive Director Patricia Harrelson, MSSA, LISW-S.

“On paper, we have a fund balance. But we also recognize there are

some areas, especially child placement, that carry costs over which the agency has limited control,” Harrelson said.

“Auditors have told us the agency should maintain a fund balance equal to about 60 percent of our

annual budget,” she said. “If we get into tough financial shape, we can’t just go get a loan,” Harrelson said. “Thankfully, Richland County residents realize the value of our work and continue to support us.”

Board designates capital replacement funds

The Richland County Children Services board has budgeted to spend \$2,140,713 in capital replacements and improvements by the end of 2016.

The improvements are not “etched in stone,” but provide a plan to keep agency maintenance needs on the radar during annual budgeting efforts, according to Kevin Goshe, the agency’s finance director.

The board owns the Children Services building outright.

The comprehensive capital plan includes budgeted expenditures in areas of

electronics, HVAC, other building and grounds work and also for the agency’s vehicle fleet. For example, under electronics, there is a \$238,289 budgeted expenditure to replace the agency’s phone system.

There are also planned expenses in 2014 to upgrade the agency’s building card access system and the security alarm system.

Future expenses could include replacing or upgrading the agency’s video surveillance system, the fire alarm system and the audio/video equipment in the Fuddy Training

& Learning Center.

The total budgeted for electronics through 2016 is \$466,181. The agency’s work is heavily dependent on these items.

Air conditioning and furnace work is planned during the next few years as well, totaling \$98,774.

Work on the agency’s building and grounds from 2014 to 2016 is budgeted at \$1,097,455, including sprinkler system pipes, carpeting, office furniture, sprinkler system air compressor, improvements to the parking lot, roof repair,

sidewalks, elevator and the possible purchase of an emergency generator for the agency when the power goes out.

The agency budget calls for replacement of the agency’s fleet of vehicles, which now includes a 2005 Chevy Cobalt sedan, a 2005 Chevy Trailblazer SUV, a 2005 Pontiac Montana van, two 2008 Chevy Cobalt sedans and 20 2013 Ford Focus sedans.

Vehicles will be replaced between now and 2020 at an anticipated cost of \$478,304. The three oldest will be replaced this year.



Pamela Siegenthaler



David Leitenberger



Robert Kirkendall



James Kulig



Dr. Michelle Kowalski



Renee Bessick



Deanna West-Torrence



Jason Murray



Lynn Friebe



Robert Konstam

Board bids farewell to chairman, welcomes new members

Richland County Children Services closed 2013 by bidding farewell to outgoing chairman Robert Konstam and long-time member Dean Wells. It also thanked Cheryl Carter for her board service.

The agency began 2014 with a new Board chair and three new members.

It gained a fourth new member when commissioners appointed Lynn Friebe in February. She replaces Monica Cirata, whose resignation took effect Jan. 1.

Konstam served as the Board chairman during 2012 and 2013, helping stabilize the Board and the agency during a time

of transition. Wells, a member of the Board for a number of years, served as the interim board chair before Konstam was elected.

Wells remained the vice chair until his term ended in December 2013. Carter was instrumental for her input into the agency's policies and programs.

The Board elected Pamela Siegenthaler as its new chair. She assumed the leadership role in January.

James Kulig remains as the Board secretary. New Board officers during 2014 are David Leitenberger, vice chair, and Robert Kirkendall, treasurer.

Dr. Michelle Kowalski returns as a Board member this year. She served as the treasurer on the board's levy committee during 2013.

County commissioners selected three new Board members, all of whom started their terms in January 2014. New Board members are Renee Bessick, Deanna West-Torrence and Jason Murray.

Richland County Children Services Board meets in regular monthly session on the second Monday of each month at 4:30 p.m. in the board room, 731 Scholl Road.

The Board also has committees that meet on a regular basis, including

the executive committee, budget and finance, personnel, services and programs and a nominating committee.

The Board officers comprise the executive committee.

Members of the budget and finance committee are Kirkendall, Murray and Friebe. Personnel committee members are West-Torrence, Murray and Bessick. Services and program committee members are Kulig, Leitenberger and Kowalski.

Members of the board's nominating committee are Siegenthaler, Leitenberger, Kirkendall and Kulig.

Busy year for agency adoptions as 14 children find new ‘forever’ homes

Richland County Children Services helped 14 children find permanent homes in 2013, almost triple the number of adoptions the child welfare agency facilitated in 2012.

“We were fortunate to finalize adoptions for a number of sibling groups and we also had a number of appeal finalizations this year,” said Lori Feeney, manager of Placement and Kinship Services.

RCCS finalized five adoptions last year and nine in 2010.

The good news is so many local children found “forever homes” in 2013. The bad news is adoptions may open up the need for new foster homes. At the end of 2013, the agency has 57 state-licensed foster homes, including 11 new foster families added during 2013. The agency ended the year with 53 children in custody.

“As more children find permanency through adoption by their foster homes, it creates a need for new foster homes,” Feeney said. “There is always a need for new foster homes. We are looking for individuals and families willing to open their hearts and their homes to children in need here in Richland County.”

Any adult in Richland County interested in learning more about how to become a foster parent may contact the placement unit at 419-774-4100. To become a licensed



foster home, the parent must attend 36 hours of pre-service training provided at Richland County Children Services. The process to become a licensed foster home takes four to six months to complete.

Frequently asked foster and adoption questions:

Q. I am not married, do not make a lot of money, and do not own my own house. Can I be a foster parent?

A. You may be married or single, a homeowner or a renter. The only financial requirement is that you have enough income to support yourself and your family aside from the money that you are paid

to care for foster children.

Q. My children are grown and out of the house. Am I too old to be a foster parent?

A. There are no age requirements (other than being at least 21 years old). Many “empty nesters” find foster parenting to be rewarding.

Q. I do not have any children of my own; do I need parenting experience?

A. No, many of our foster parents are childless. They are, however, responsible people who have made a commitment to children and through the training provided by RCCS are very capable of caring for foster children.

Improved outcomes remain the goal for RCCS ‘Team Decision Making’

Troubled families who participate in their own case planning and decision making have a much greater chance at achieving long-term success. Those improved outcomes are the goals behind the Richland County Children Services “Team Decision Making” strategy.

TDM represents a substantial shift from traditional child welfare services and has the potential to change the culture of child welfare.

Specifically, TDM is a method for engaging family members and other people who can support the family for shared case planning and decision making.

That’s one of the reasons Team Decision Making is one of the key goals being measured as part of the overall Protect Ohio strategy, utilizing a federal waiver from traditional child welfare funding to explore and seek new and better ways of assisting the state’s families.

Different models of family team meetings such as Team Decision Making and Family Group Decision Making have been promoted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and American Humane Association, respectively, as “best practice,” and child welfare agencies throughout Ohio have experimented with various models of family team meetings.

Under the TDM model, meetings are conducted throughout the entire



period of ongoing agency services to the family, including within 30 days of the case opening to ongoing services; at all critical events in the case; and at least quarterly after the case plan is completed.

Trained facilitators, who do not have direct line responsibility for the case, help to run a TDM meeting.

These facilitators are RCCS employees who help arrange the meetings, help assure that participants attend and know what to expect; and then support the family in the meetings and in helping them prepare for them.

Participants may include the birth parents, primary caregivers and other family members, foster parents (if child goes to placement), support people and professionals. A TDM process includes at least these components: agenda, introduction, information sharing, planning and decision process.

Outcomes often sought during the TDM process include avoiding a child being removed from a home; shorter time in placement; reduced times that cases are kept open; more and quicker reunification of the family; and reduced child maltreatment.



The lawn outside of the Mansfield Area Y again hosted the agency's "Pinwheels for Prevention" display during April.

Myriad of public activities highlight annual child abuse prevention month

Pinwheels for Prevention. 24 hours of swimming, biking and running. "Wear Blue Day."

Those are just some of the public ways Richland County Children Services helped observe Child Abuse Prevention Month, the 30th anniversary of the national observation, during April 2013.

"Child Abuse Prevention Month is a wonderful opportunity to call everyone's attention to this vitally important effort," said Carl Hunnell, the agency's supervisor of public information.

"We are grateful that so much of the public activity we do during that month is done in conjunction with our community partners."

The month began with the plant-

ing of 2,860 pinwheels on the lawn outside the Mansfield Area Y along the highly traveled Lexington Avenue. Each pinwheel represented an investigation into alleged child abuse and neglect conducted by the agency during 2012. The agency dedicated the display and included proclamations from the Richland County Board of Commissioners and the City of Mansfield.

The YMCA also hosted the agency's ninth annual 24-hour Swim/Bike/Run event. "Our agency takes calls from the public 24 hours per day, seven days a week with reports of child abuse and neglect," Hunnell said. "For a 24-hour period, we pledge to have someone swimming, biking or running, utilizing a mix of our agency employees and board members, and volunteers from the community."

Children Services teamed with local schools, businesses and industries for the second-annual, state-wide "Wear Blue Day," one day set aside each year to call public attention to child abuse and neglect. Students, employees and others all wore blue to school and work that day. The agency took many photos at these sites and posted them on the agency Web site. Graham Auto Mall also staged a public "Wear Blue" rally at their West Fourth Street location.

The agency again participated with students from Mansfield St. Peter's High School. The students discussed child abuse and neglect in classes during the month and also staged a public rally of their own on the topic, joined by RCCS employees.



Our community involvement

Richland County Children Services believes in community involvement, from community festivals and parades to cultural and educational events.

"We think festivals, parades and other events are a great way to help out in the communities we serve and also a great opportunity for our agency to communicate our message on child abuse and neglect prevention," said Patty Harrelson, executive director of the agency.

Chances are good you saw our agency at one or more community events during 2013, including:

January through March:

Black History Month Celebration
Rally for the Kids tennis event
Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

April through June

Minority Health Fair
Mansfield Juneteenth Celebration
24-hour Swim/Bike/Run
Pinwheels for Prevention
Miss Ohio Parade
Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner
Fore Our Kids Golf Classic

July through September

Ontario July 4 Festival and parade
Shelby Bicycle Days and parade
Shiloh Ox Roast Parade
Richland County Fair
Lexington Blueberry Festival and parade
Bellville Street Fair

October through December

Mansfield Halloween Parade
Downtown Mansfield Inc. Holiday Parade
Staff Enrichment Pre-Game Pasta Dinner
Foster Parent Association Holiday Party



We wear helmets.
They don't.

Never shake a child.



Unique football billboard aimed to stop shaken babies

With the help of four local high school football players – and four willing children – Richland County Children Services in 2013 educated the public on the dangers of shaking children.

A billboard campaign, also used on banners at local high school football games, had the four players,

from Mansfield Senior, Madison, Ontario and Lexington high schools, each with a child on his lap. The text on the billboard was simple, but powerful. “We wear helmets. They don’t. Never shake a child.”

“Most Ohioans like high school football and everyone loves chil-

dren,” agency Executive Director Patty Harrelson said.

“Putting the two together attracts the public’s attention and allows us to share the single thought – never, ever shake a child. We thank schools and parents for allowing us to feature their players and children in this educational effort.”

Trained to serve

Richland County Children Services ended 2013 with 110 employees, including case-workers, and others involved in administrative roles, including operations, legal, human resources, communication, finance, clinical and support. The agency employees constitute one of the most well educated workforces in Richland County. There are 93 employees with bachelor’s degrees, 39 of whom also have master’s degrees. Eighteen employees have earned LSW or LISW status. Fifteen employees achieved milestone anniversaries with the agency during 2013:

- Deb Bowling, support services, 25 years
- Cindy Myers, support services, 20 years
- La’Shaun Reuer, caseworker, 15 years
- Kevin Goshe, finance director, 10 years
- Kevin Wharton, manager, intake and assessment services, 10 years
- Joycelynn Moree, caseworker, 10 years
- Dusty Ramirez, caseworker, 10 years
- Edith Gilliland, manager, legal services, 5 years
- Pete Stefaniuk, attorney, 5 years
- Tara Lautzenhiser, caseworker, 5 years
- Amy Logan, caseworker, 5 years
- Cate VanRiper, caseworker, 5 years
- Wanda Garrick, caseworker, 5 years
- Christy Jackson, caseworker, 5 years

2013: By the numbers

Calls Answered

2013 -- 8,047

Number of Investigations

2013 -- 2,391

End-of-Year Placements

2013 -- 53

Reasons for Placement

Dependency	60.0%
Neglect	15.0%
Delinquency	12.5%
Drug abuse (parent)	7.5%
Sexual abuse	5.0%



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