



Protective Services Levy to appear on March 4th ballot- Help cannot wait!

How do you explain to an 8 year old that the sexual abuse she has suffered is not her fault? Or explain to a 70 year old that she cannot remain in her home because someone has stolen all of her money?

Fairfield County Protective Services received more than 4600 reports of abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and exploitation of CHILDREN and the ELDERLY in 2007.

For several years, local protective services officials have reported to our community alarming trends that present a very dangerous future for the most vulnerable children and elderly in Fairfield County. The number of reports has more than doubled since 2000, while local spending for protective services has been essentially frozen since 1999. What this means is that our child and elder abuse investigators are only able to investigate or respond to **40%** of the calls received. This is unacceptable as it leaves thousands of children and elderly at continued risk to be victims of abuse and neglect, and without hope that someone will answer their cry for help.

Therefore, it is time we call on our community to prioritize the needs of these innocent victims of abuse and neglect and those who care for them by requesting approval of a protective services levy. The levy is for the purpose of protective services for CHILDREN who are physically and sexually abused, neglected, or exploited and the ELDERLY of Fairfield County who are victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

A 1 -mil levy would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home **\$2.56 per month (or 59 cents per week)** to protect our community's children and elderly.



November 2007

Faith Partners Planning Meeting
FCJFS-Director's Conf.
Rm.
January 11, 2008
10:00 am

SLT Planning Retreat
Lancaster Community Church
January 14, 2008
Morning

Bridges out of Poverty
Crossroads Center
January 25, 2008





JFS Vision Statement

JFS, through state and local partnerships, will be Ohio's premier family support and workforce development system, contributing to skilled, safe, healthy Fairfield Countians, successful businesses and a strong community.

JFS Mission Statement

Through a spirit of community cooperation, the mission of Fairfield County Job and Family Services is to provide services that encourage productivity, develop competencies, ensure accountability, and promote self-reliance, family stability, and child safety.

JFS Strategic Goal

Areas:

1. FCJFS will responsibly obtain, maximize, and allocate financial resources according to agency priorities.
2. FCJFS will value and respect employees as our greatest asset.
3. FCJFS will provide exceptional public service to the community.
4. FCJFS will demonstrate, inspire, and empower leadership.
5. FCJFS will continue to improve and measure performance in all areas, utilizing technology and available resources.
6. FCJFS will initiate, promote, and enhance community and inter-governmental relationships to further our mission.

A committee of concerned citizens has been formed to advocate for passage of the protective services levy. *Citizens for the protection of children and the elderly from abuse and neglect* will be co-chaired by community leaders Dave and June Harcum, Helen Mayle, and Commissioner Mike Kiger. Milt Taylor Jr. will serve as campaign treasurer.

To learn more, a Protective Service Levy Fact sheet is available at the levy website located at www.votetoprotect.org.

If you are interested in donating your time and/or financial resources to this important cause, a LEVY VOLUNTEER form is also located at www.votetoprotect.org. Simply print the form, complete it, and return it to:

Citizens for the protection of children and the elderly from abuse and neglect, c/o 148 East Mulberry Street, Lancaster Ohio 43130.

If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact our levy hotline at 740 687-6815.

We desperately need your help and support.

Abused and neglected children and the elderly in Fairfield County are in danger. Help cannot wait. Let's assure that they do not suffer in silence any longer.

Holiday season brings out the best in our community

Fairfield County employees, residents, businesses, schools, clubs, and organizations once again opened their hearts in 2007 to make sure that each of our more than 200 foster children, and our neediest families had a visit from Santa Claus. This year your donations benefited 117 Families and 336 children. In total we received donations from 120 individuals, businesses, and organizations.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Plan Revised

The Ohio Revised Code requires each county department of job and family services to renew their PRC plan every two years. The PRC plan creates authority for counties to deliver benefits and services to families who have a child in the household and meet the income guidelines for that program area. Funding for PRC is through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). The plan must identify how eligibility requirements are addressed, services that will be provided, and describe how the services meet one of the TANF purposes. Examples of PRC services include: assistance with housing for court-ordered evictions, car repair for employed individuals, utility assistance, school clothes, or transportation assistance. Because this is short-term assistance, the county PRC plan identifies a total dollar amount available per family, per 12-month period. The PRC plan must be approved by the Family, Adult and Children First Council Executive Committee and the Board of Commissioners. The Executive Committee recently approved the plan and it will now be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners. A summary of the primary changes include the following:

- The total cap for PRC in a 12-month period will be reduced from \$2500 to \$1500. This includes all categories of PRC: Prevention, Retention, or Contingency.
- The contingency cap remains the same at \$1,000. Contingency assistance includes utilities and housing assistance.
- The customer co-pay will increase from 25% to 50% of the requested assistance.
- Funding emphasis on employment-related services such as car repair, work uniforms, car insurance, or short-term training.
- Assistance for rent is revised to only assist with the rental deposit; not the first month of rent. The 50% co-pay applies to the requested deposit amount. Family must:
 - Have court-ordered eviction
 - Be residing in homeless shelter
 - Be residing in domestic violence shelter
 - Be recently approved for Metropolitan Housing
- \$250.00 cap on utilities in a 12-month period— no exceptions

Implementation of a Diversion Program

PRC assistance and/or a direct cash payment to a participant may be issued as a diversion service so that qualifying households may avoid using their time limited OWF in situations where the adult head-of-household has a short term disability. For purposes of this program, a short term disability is defined as the following:

- A pregnant or postpartum woman with a doctor's statement verifying her due date and expected date of return to employment. Verification from the doctor must include a date the woman can return to work. Verification from the employer must state that the woman is going to return to work.
- A TANF eligible individual who has a doctor's statement verifying a temporary medical condition (30 days – 120 days) which prevents that individual from engaging in any type of work activity or training and for which the individual currently is receiving on-going treatment.

Implementation of a Subsidized Employment Program

The SEP program will assist both job-seekers and companies/businesses. Participants will enroll in the program using a "success ladder" approach, ensuring participants complete certain steps prior to being approved to participate in the SEP Program. Individuals approved for SEP will have completed the S.T.A.R.S. Program and at least one month of the Work Experience Program (WEP), unless otherwise approved by the FCJFS Community Services Director or other designee. The company must agree to hire the individual for 30 hours per week or more, at the State Minimum Wage, or higher. FCJFS will pay 50% of the monthly wages, up to a maximum of \$800 per participant for 6 months. An additional 6 months at 25% of monthly wages up to a maximum of \$400 per participant per month is available. Payments will be made directly to the employer, offsetting training costs of the individual.

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Modern Day Miracles

During the 2007 holiday season, residents of Fairfield County came together to make miracles happen for nearly 200 children in the custody of Child Protective Services and over 300 families who are currently receiving services. In response to the Adopt-A-Family for the Holidays and the Giving Tree projects, this Christmas season was one of the best. Parents and other caregivers sighed with relief to receive such generosity. Many businesses, organizations, churches, agencies and individuals stepped up to the plate to make sure every child was able to hold on to the spirit of Christmas.

Perhaps one of the most touching moments observed was when several Child Protective Services workers traveled to Diley Elementary School. The children and staff of Diley Elementary have made it a tradition to prioritize children and families working with our agency. This year they provided more than \$12,000 in gifts, including two dryers and a washing machine. There were bikes, sleds, toys, clothes and food that made their way to the tearful eyes of very appreciative families. While it may be easy to add up all the receipts accumulated, no one can put a price on how much hope was restored to those who wondered if anyone cared. In true form, the community of Fairfield County renewed faith in mankind. Thank you for making the 2007 holiday season a memorable one.

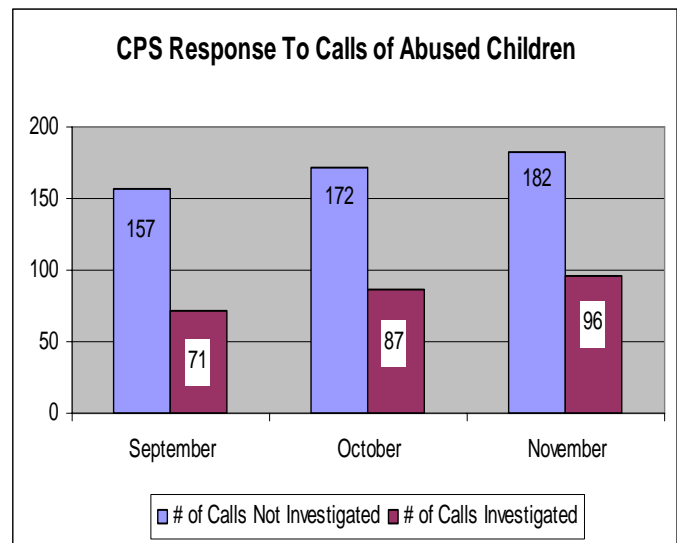
Responding To The Community's Demand For Protective Services

On a daily, weekly and monthly basis, the Child Protective Service Department monitors all reports of abuse, neglect and maltreatment of children as received by the agency. To no surprise, an alarming trend continues to grow in the same manner as reported throughout 2007. That alarming trend is that while more and more calls are being made to our office, current staffing levels provide us with the ability to respond to only 35% of calls received.

Even more concerning is that while the department is under intense pressure to get to the children who are the most severely hurt, the rate at which calls are pouring in are becoming increasingly difficult to open for investigation.

As the chart above indicates, the Child Protective Services Department is investigating more cases on a month to month basis. With sufficient funding for staffing remaining essentially the same since 1999, this trend means that investigators have less time to adequately assess, intervene and offer supportive services to assure children are out of harms way.

This statistic alone has become a main staple for the department as it serves as the precursor to the many challenges experienced by the department. When more calls are received, more investigations are necessary. When there are more investigations, more cases are identified as in need for ongoing supportive services. Therefore, the inability to adequately intervene early results in more damage to children, broken family systems and high risk caseloads.





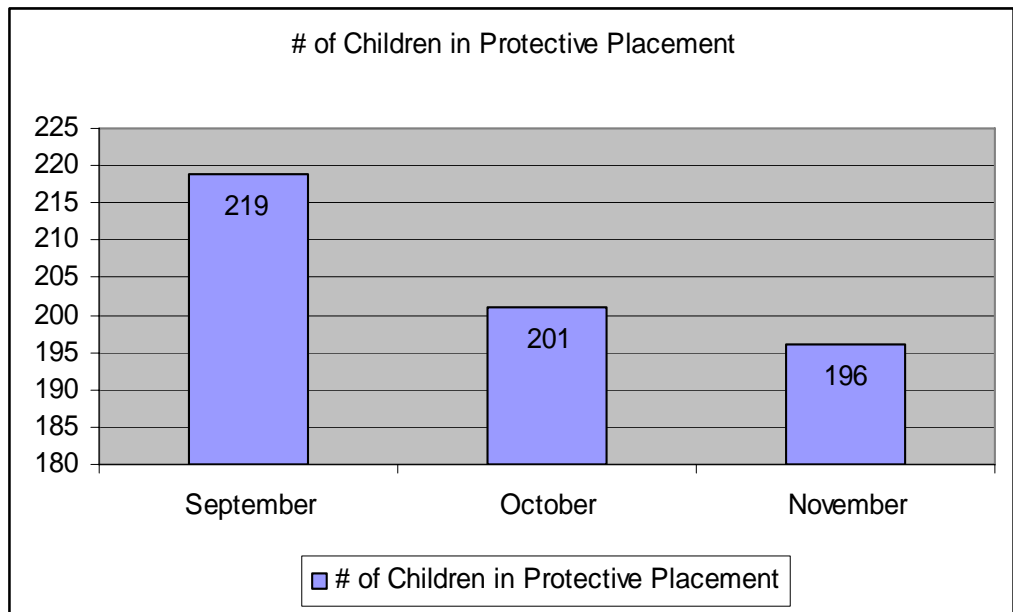
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Children Searching For A Safe Harbor

Another alarming trend identified in Fairfield County is the inability for the agency to support the number of children in the protective custody of the county. When increasing investigations result in a need for ongoing services, the result usually means children entering protective placement. However, sufficient funding to support this aspect of protection is severely lacking. With the inability to provide this needed level of protection, the Child Protective Services Department is forced to make very difficult decisions on a day by day basis. The decision becomes one of which child or children will be able to “survive” if left at home. This chart demonstrates the decreasing number of children remaining in agency custody.

The story the chart does not tell is the fact that many children are being returned home too soon and others who need this level of safety are not offered such a luxury. When children are returned home prior to the family being able to demonstrate that they can assure safety, these same children return to our care more traumatized and more damaged. Children who experience multiple episodes of maltreatment and removal from caregivers have significant behavioral and emotional difficulties. This makes the job to reunify or find permanency (adoption) ten times more difficult. Not only would adequate funding allow the agency to intervene earlier, it would provide families and children with the opportunity to reunify in a safe, healthy and long lasting manner.





November 2007



"Most Wanted" Obligor to Face Charges **UPDATE**

Raymond Romine, age 37, was extradited from Decatur, Alabama on November 15, 2007. Romine was indicted for one count of Criminal Non-Support, a felony of the fifth degree on February 9, 2007 in the Fairfield County Court of Common Pleas. A plea hearing was held Thursday, December 13, 2007, and Romine plead guilty to the Indictment. The Court sentenced Romine to nine months of incarceration in an appropriate penal institution, said sentence suspended, and he was placed on community control for 24 months.

In addition to the felony charge, Romine was also brought before the Judge Williams in the Fairfield County Juvenile Court on a bench warrant for failure to appear to Court on a misdemeanor Criminal Non-Support conviction on November 26, 2007. Romine was sentenced to 138 days of incarceration.

Raymond Romine is currently \$39,877.52 in arrears on his Fairfield County child support cases.

Status of Deficit Reduction Act

There is still hope that Congress will pass this bill however it is thought the President would then veto the bill as it now stands. While it would benefit the CSEA if it is repealed, the election year is soon upon us and this can affect decisions made over the next year. The Directors' Association (OCDA) is reminding everyone to contact their Congressional office or send an email to remind them of the importance of this piece of legislation. The OCDA believes that there is a 50% chance of passage before October 1, 2008

Job Opportunity Program Update

The *Job Opportunity* program is a collective effort to assist child support customers with obtaining and maintaining employment, and thus, increasing their ability to meet their child support obligation. This program is 100% funded through a state grant for TANF Demonstration projects. This program (and grant) will run through 12/31/07. Below are some of the current statistics for the program:

- o **362** customers have obtained employment
- o **128** customers have paid at least 3 straight months of child support payments
- o **386** customers have been referred to various community resources
- o **\$343,600** collected from *Job Opportunity* customers

Child Support Collections

	2005	2006	2007	\$ Diff	% Diff
January		1,720,232	1,736,549	16,317	0.95%
February	1,575,277	1,660,532	1,598,250	85,255	-3.75%
March	1,932,875	2,066,808	1,936,927	129,881	-6.28%
April	1,803,903	1,638,915	1,894,662	255,747	15.6%
May	1,836,895	1,938,947	1,979,043	40,096	2.07%
June	1,886,337	1,980,235	1,862,029	118,206	-5.97%
July	1,674,182	1,748,439	1,713,398	35,041	-2.00%
August	1,773,680	1,711,087	1,799,685	88,599	5.18%
September	1,669,438	1,711,172	1,608,788	102,384	-5.98%
October	1,735,554	1,746,150	1,842,090	95,940	5.49%
November	1,754,887	1,689,702	1,899,824	210,122	12.4%
December	1,801,702	1,773,269		-28,433	1.58%
Total	21,058,316	21,385,488		327,172	1.55%

APS TO JOIN CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR LEVY

Thanks to the foresight and support of Commissioners Shupe, Kiger, and Myers, on March 4th, Fairfield County voters will have the opportunity to provide crisis intervention to two systems that serve the most vulnerable of our county's population. During 2007, referrals to Adult Protective Services have tripled from the number received in 2002, and include far more serious allegations than every before.

In 2007, APS validated its first case of sexual abuse against an older woman who was unable to speak and confined to a wheelchair. **Financial exploitation** exploded, comprising approximately **17%** of all referrals. APS continues to work collaboratively with county and city law enforcement agencies and prosecutors to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of elder abuse and exploitation.

Neglect cases during 2007 were also some of the most serious. An elderly woman whose nephew, her designated Power of Attorney, failed to provide adequate care for her, was taken to the hospital after APS investigators found her in a soiled nightgown, with weeks of urine and feces caked on her frail body.

Self-neglect allegations and concerns continue to comprise the majority of referrals to APS at about 50%, and often involve elderly women and men who have no family or other support systems. Many of these involve older adults with dementia or infirmities that prevent them from taking adequate care of themselves. Neighbors, doctors, bank personnel, postal workers, home health care agencies, transportation drivers, pastors, hospital personnel, and others call APS when they encounter an older adult who appears to be suffering.

INDIGENT BURIAL PLAN IN PLACE

Adult Unit Supervisor Barb Abram assisted in the development of the Indigent Burial Plan, a collaboration among city officials, local funeral home directors, Job & Family Services, and spearheaded by Audra McMurray, coordinator of the Fairfield County Volunteer Guardian Program. As part of the plan, effective January 1 2008, the City of Lancaster will provide up to \$750 to the funeral home for the direct cremation of an indigent resident.

Financial resources of the deceased and their spouse (if applicable) will be assessed for eligibility by the Adult Unit staff of JFS. To be eligible for assistance, the deceased must be a resident of the City of Lancaster and be indigent with no family, or be indigent with a spouse who is also indigent.

As part of the outlined procedure, the agency with knowledge of the indigent resident's death initially notifies the funeral home of choice or River Valley Care & Crematory (Frank E. Smith Funeral Home). Completed paperwork will be forwarded from the funeral home to the City of Lancaster Safety and Service Director, who will contact JFS to verify eligibility.

For more detail regarding the basis of this plan, see **ORC 5101.521**.

HOLIDAYS FROM THE HEART BROUGHT TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

Since the very beginning of her role as Kinship Navigator, Jenny Ruff has been instrumental in making Christmas wishes come true for children being raised by their grandparents. Her annual *Holidays from the Heart* event, held Saturday, December 8th, delighted more than 51 children along with their Kinship providers.



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Once again, Santa was on hand and lots of photos were taken while children sat upon his lap to whisper their Christmas wishes. In addition to opening many gifts donated for the event, children participated in making mugs filled with baking ingredients to make a "mug cake" when baked. They also visited the "Secret Santa" room, where donated treasures were selected and wrapped to become Christmas gifts to their grandparents.

CHILD CARE UPDATE

Since 2006, the Child Care Division has experienced a 21% increase in applications for subsidized child care. As of November 30, **925** families have applied for child care, as compared to 731 during the same period in 2006.

Child Care expenditures for the month of November totaled \$447,372. The year-to-date total for Child Care expenditures is **\$3,608,472**.

Thanks to the availability of the FCJFS website, an anonymous report was made to Community Services and the Child Care Division that a child care recipient was purposefully defrauding JFS. First notified in 2006, Child Care staff, in collaboration with staff from Community Services, initiated investigation into the matter. They discovered that the recipient's income was much greater than reported and referred the case to the County Prosecutor's office.

On Monday, December 10, Judge Richard Berens accepted a guilty plea on one count of Falsification, a misdemeanor. Judge Berens ordered 2 years probation, 40 hours of community service, and full restitution. The Judge also suspended a 180-day jail sentence. Restitution to JFS will include the amount of \$12,218 (Child Care overpayment), and \$3,233 in Medicaid reimbursement.

RESULTS OF NOVEMBER'S CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

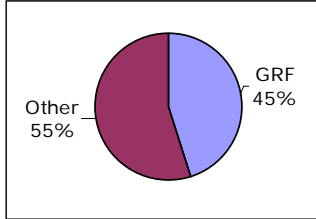
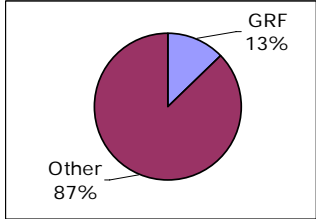
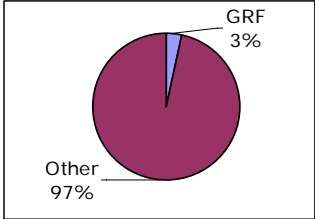
The Adult Unit of the Social Services Department determines eligibility for food stamps, Medicaid & Medicaid Waiver Programs, nursing home placement, and Medicaid for the Disabled. All Eligibility Referral Specialists provide each of their customers a "Customer Satisfaction" survey to complete and return.

For the month of November, 25 customers returned completed surveys. **97%** of all customers "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that: Their caseworker is courteous, returns phone calls within one business day, always greets them in a friendly manner, listens to their concerns, treats them with respect, makes them feel comfortable enough to ask questions, explains everything in a manner they can understand, provides information that is helpful to them, and goes out of the way to make certain that they receive all benefits for which they are eligible. 3% of the customers completing the survey marked "Not Applicable," and there were **no** responses indicating "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree."

NOVEMBER REFERRALS TO APS

41 referrals were made to Adult Protective Services during the month of November. 17% of these involved allegations of Exploitation; 22% were Neglect by Others; 11% were allegations of Abuse; and 50% involved Self-Neglect. The majority of the referrals involved older adults between the ages of 70 and 80.

Funding Sources Calendar Year-to-Date January 1, 2007 through November 30, 2007

	Child Protective Services	Child Support	Public Assistance
GRF	1,705,001.00	346,122.00	407,107.00
Other	2,093,476.70	2,385,006.94	11,862,963.91
			

Programs & Operations Highlights Calendar Year-to-Date Comparison

	1/1/2007 - 11/30/2007	1/1/2006 - 11/30/2006	Increase / Decrease
Direct Expenditures			
Adult Protective Services	45,031.94	32,794.67	12,237.27 +
Child Care	3,588,411.18	2,756,403.43	832,007.75 +
Non Emergency Transportation	440,172.17	282,635.22	157,536.95 +
Board and Care (Agency and Network)	1,215,631.43	1,122,974.12	92,657.31 +
Workforce Investment Act	532,108.16	731,037.12	198,928.96 -
IV-D Contract Expenditures	120,008.87	114,676.12	5,332.75 +
Prevention, Retention and Contingency	1,101,913.91	375,956.89	725,957.02 +

Random Moment Samples Critical to Agency Funding

The Random Moment Sample (RMS) is a time study used by county departments of Job & Family services to determine costs of administering State and Federal programs. Employees are selected at random to complete an observation form at randomly selected dates and times. Three RMS systems are used by Fairfield County Job & Family Services, with each system randomly selecting a minimum of 354 observations per quarter.

Because Random Moment Samples are critical to agency funding, they must be completed accurately and timely. One of the 2007 goals of the Finance Department involved mandatory training for all JFS employees in the accurate completion of RMS forms. Two of the training objectives included clarification of the importance of RMS and accurate, error-free completion of the observation forms. It is hoped that by the continued awareness of the importance of the RMS that JFS will see RMS completed timely with a low error rate.



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October 2007 Statistics**Visitation/Exchange Services**

Monitored Exchanges:	58
Supervised Visits:	117
Referrals received:	17
Number of adults served:	147
Number of noncustodial parents:	68
Number of children:	113

Parent Education Services

Parent Education Sessions (Hours):	28
Parent Education Related Events (Hours):	97
Parent Educators in Family Court (Hours):	4.75
Referrals Received:	1
Number of Adults Served:	67
Number of noncustodial parents:	22
Number of children:	50

In November the Center received 16 referrals for **Visitation and Exchange Services**. Currently there is no waiting list for Visitation/Exchange Services. We have one staff member on Family Leave, and we are fully staffed.

The **Parent Education Services** Team received 4 new referrals in November. There are 17 families who are either receiving ongoing services or who are involved in the referral process.

One of the Family Support and Visitation Center's 2008 goals is to offer Parent Education classes. A team has been established to create a curriculum consistent with evidence based best practices and data supported most frequently requested Parent Education topics such as child development, safety and bonding. A series of classes will be presented throughout the year, allowing parents the opportunity to receive parent education, even if they are waiting for one-on-one services.



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**Our Mission:**

The mission of the Family Support and Visitation Center is to support children and families who have been affected by divorce, separation, abuse, neglect or domestic violence. Through education and provision of a safe, comfortable environment, our focus is to promote family engagement and healthy, meaningful adult/child relationships.



November 2007



Welcome Nida Reid Williamson....Nida is our new WIA Supervisor. Nida graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Cincinnati with a Bachelors of Science Degree. Nida recently completed intensive training as a global Career Development Facilitator and Offender Workforce Development Specialist. Nida has over 5 years experience in work readiness and workforce services and has been an employee of JFS for over 6 years.

Area 20 WIB – Next meeting is Thursday, January 17, 3pm @ Ross County.

Events – Job Search Connections OUL, December 27th, speaker from I Force. 3 program participants secured employment.

Success stories....

from Nida Reid Williamson...3 dislocated workers from Lancaster Glass were approved for training through WIA.

from Tonya Tisdale...a 40 year worker dislocated from Lancaster Glass secured employment at the River Valley Mall. He came to WorkNet on a weekly basis to conduct job searching opportunities and was very determined to find employment.

WorkNet partners with employers to hold on site interviews and take applications

OSS Inc., Atrium Personnel Services, Spherion, I Force, , Volt Services, Fed Ex, Ambassador Home Health Services, are all companies that used WorkNet to hold interviews this month. WorkNet in partnership with various employers have been holding open interviews at WorkNet to help businesses with their hiring process.

WorkNet Customer Count

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
January	-	749	958	924	1580	1879
February	-	651	846	699	1419	1020
March	-	807	1004	1184	1895	1606
April	592	943	985	917	1305	1425
May	547	748	989	979	1411	1614
June	371	1100	1126	1165	1675	1493
July	447	1129	877	1180	1466	1674
August	492	992	1015	1752	1813	1695
September	566	906	1020	1334	1611	1376
October	683	895	689	1277	1471	1429
November	442	757	767	1172	1110	1360
December	452	712	811	1106	1085	1195

Unemployment Rates

Fairfield	5.2
Pickaway	5.7
Ross	6.8

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FCJFS Employees Give to United Way in Record Numbers

The United Way Campaign at Job and Family Services was very successful this year. One hundred and sixty (160) employees or 70% of the staff chose to give at or above the Fair Share Level (one hour's pay per month). Our total contribution to the United Way Campaign for 2007 is \$38,603.98.

This represents a 15% increase over the 2006 contribution level of \$33,203.26. FCJFS employees recognize that our community's needs are great and The United Way of Fairfield County works diligently to meet these needs. In addition to the financial support that the employees offer, a large number also volunteer their time and talent to support the efforts of United Way member organizations.

The County as a whole has set a goal of \$62,000 and JFS contributed 62% of this goal.

Mini Employee Satisfaction Survey

As part of the FCJFS Strategic Plan, the Senior Leadership has made a commitment to value agency employees as our greatest asset. In order to assess and receive feedback from employees, the agency conducts comprehensive and mini employee satisfaction surveys.

The October 2006 mini staff survey indicated that employees would like to see communication and interaction among departments and individuals improve. In an effort to address this request, we partnered with Ohio University-Lancaster to conduct an all staff survey that focused on communication and their various mediums of communication.

Professor Brian Hoyt and several of his students created the survey based upon our specific situation and then rolled it out staff via an internet survey instrument. This was the first time that staff have participated in an agency-wide electronic survey. Participation was purely voluntary and 67% of the staff chose to participate.

We are currently in the process of obtaining the survey results and findings. Once that information is obtained it will be included in an upcoming Commissioners' Report.

SUPER Meeting for FCJFS Supervisors and Managers

In an effort to address issues specific to supervisory and management staff, FCJFS conducts two SUPER Meetings annually.

The SUPER Meetings are a time for supervisors and managers to receive information on new and current agency initiatives.

At the October meeting, the following items were addressed:

- Continuing education on the FCJFS Performance Evaluation System
- Training on providing exceptional customer service
- Overview of the CORSA-U on-line risk management training program
- Conducted the CORSA-U management training regarding legal perils that supervisors encounter
- Update on State, County, and Agency budget