



# Mahoning Matters

1. matter (n.) – material, topic, issue or subject
2. matter (v.) – to be of importance, to count, to make a difference

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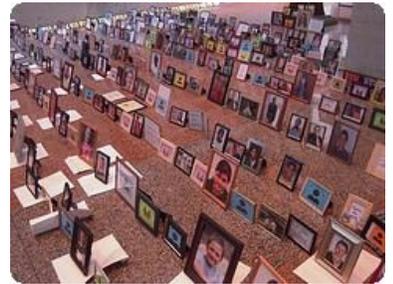
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## Celebrating National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Month, and each year the agency hosts a special event to celebrate adoptive families and increase community awareness about adoption. On November 20, 2010, the One Church One Child Recruitment Program of Mahoning County Children Services held a brunch at Tabernacle Baptist Church in observation of National Adoption Month. The event was attended by agency staff, foster and adoptive parents, young people, and clergy and members of their churches who have partnered with the agency in the One Church One Child Recruitment Program. The speaker for the event was Jason Whitehead. Mr. Whitehead spoke of the many obstacles he has overcome in his life to achieve his current position. The crowd of over one hundred people were both moved and inspired by his message.

On November 30, 2010, Adoption Specialists, Karen Tesyk and Theresa Pancoe attended Ohio Adoption Advocacy Day "Filling Family Portraits". The event's primary objective is to raise awareness about the adoption of children and in particular youth in foster care. There were over 1,000 picture frames with children in Ohio waiting for a family. Mahoning County Children Services contributed fourteen pictures of our waiting children. The event included remarks from State Senator Jon Husted, State Representative Linda Bolon and a youth performance from the Therapeutic Arts Program of Franklin County Children Services.



Photos of Waiting Children in Ohio

All of the pictures of waiting children were personally delivered to each State Legislator and included the message that all children in our state deserve their support in providing the resources for finding these children families and continued resources and support after the adoption has been finalized. All of the State Legislators were asked to keep the child's picture on their desks as a reminder of the importance of adoption in Ohio.



# Mahoning Matters

## From The Director's Desk

By Denise Stewart

In recent editions of our newsletter, we have requested help from the community to "help fulfill a child's wish list" for Christmas. Mahoning County Children Services works with over 900 children in their own homes every month and approximately 180 children who are in foster care, group home and residential placement. Many families are struggling with substance abuse issues, domestic violence and limited resources in their homes. Christmas adds one more stressor to the family, which often intensifies pre-existing problems. Fortunately, there are many community organizations who work closely with our agency to provide those very special gifts for children in need. Some of these organizations include St. Charles Church (who provides a "Giving Tree" in their parish) where names and "wish list" gift suggestions are provided for parishioners who want to provide a gift for a child at Christmas, State Alarm Systems, Ryan Carpets, Victory Christian Center, Mahoning County Child Support Agency, Bike Nash Bar, Choffin Vocational School, Dobbins Elementary School, Sandy's Hair Care, Northeast Ohio Adoption Services, First Free Methodist, and Taylor Kia.



On behalf of the Board and agency, I would like to express our appreciation to so many individuals who so generously provide a very Merry Christmas for "our" children at Christmas.

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## Mahoning County Children Services' Resource Department Becomes the Placement Services Department

by Meghan Tarantino

The agency has recently gone through an extensive restructuring as presented by our approved Strategic Plan. The idea behind the restructuring is for the agency as a whole to become more specialized and provide the community with the best services possible.

The Resource Department is now referred to as the Placement Services Department. We welcome Louis Wainwright as the chief supervisor of the department, which houses Adoption, Foster care, and Residential Services.

The Adoption Unit is supervised by Anna Marie Jones. Karen Tesyk and Theresa Pancoe are the Adoption caseworkers; Radhika Cruz is the training and community events coordinator; Beth Lenzi and Meghan Tarantino are now the Interstate Compact Placement Caseworkers. She also supervises the Transportation Aids, who are now housed in the Placement Services Department. They are Roz Stonework, Kathleen Crump, Marion Griffin and Robert Litch. Robert just began his employment with our agency in November! Welcome Robert!

The Foster Care Unit is supervised by Erin Davis. The Foster Care Caseworkers are Juanita Young, Valerie McGuire and John Jemison. Also in the unit is Cindy Holik who investigates out of town placements, and Peggy Messer is the Inquiry Specialist who will continue to be the Foster Parent Liaison and the editor of the Notable News.

Glenna Ress is the new supervisor in Residential services. She supervises the Residential caseworkers and the agency's three group homes.

The Family Services department has also been restructured to maximize the ability to provide services. Cathy Gagliardi is the chief supervisor in charge of family services and Intake departments. There are now two delinquency workers who are Pat Carlini and Katrina Simms. There will also be a new caseworker position added to one of the family services units.

Lead caseworkers have been interviewed and assigned to each unit to assist in the learning process of new and current staff.

# Mahoning Matters



Christmas. The season of giving. The season of love. Isn't it ironic that the season of love, the season that is supposed to bring out the best in us, often brings out the worst in us? We're out in the crowds, shopping for that perfect gift, and we're bumping into people left and right. People are stepping on your toes and practically snatching things out of your hands. They are rude and even the cashiers are short-tempered. How do you respond? Do you get angry and respond rudely and with

unkind words? My wise friend says, "A gentle answer calms anger, but harsh words stir up hostility," (The Clear Word). So, try to remember those words as you rush about this holiday season. Your gentle answer may or may not brighten another individual's day, but it will certainly brighten yours!

## *It Matters To Meghan* By Meghan Tarantino

November is national adoption month. What a celebration! Adoptive parents are such a gift! I have had the opportunity through my years here at MCCS to be involved in the union of so many families through adoption. It is a blessing when children and families are joined through love and are able to grow and blossom together. At Mahoning County Children Services, in 2008, we finalized 18 of our own children, but we also finalized 4 other children from other agencies. In 2009, we finalized 30 adoptions, and to date in 2010, we have finalized 19 children. We have a few more scheduled to take place before the end of the year.

So celebrate national adoption month and those that you know who are adoptive families!

**A**dmirable  
**D**uty  
**O**f  
**P**arents  
**T**o  
**I**ntersect lives  
**O**f  
**N**one other than a beautiful child



## Thank You

The Mahoning County Foster Parent Association would like to thank the community for their continued support with the Annual Pie Sale to raise funds for the Foster Parent Christmas Party! Over 200 pies were sold!

## Enjoy Your Pies

# Mahoning Matters



In American pop culture, crossword puzzles, bees, and games like *Scrabble* and *Wheel of Fortune* draw much attention to the act of spelling. While spelling well is an admirable, useful skill, having command of proper **word usage** is equally vital to writing high-quality, error-free text. Note the following examples:

**Example #1:** Mitch never intended to be a high school *dropout*, but his family's financial circumstances made leaving school a must.

In this example, *dropout* is a one-word noun describing a person who quits school of his or her own volition.

**Example #2:** Mitch wants to stay in school but realizes he will likely *drop out* next year.

In this sentence, *drop out* is a two-word verb conveying the act of quitting school voluntarily.

**Example #3:** The *drop-out* rate at Mitch's high school is the highest in the state.

Here, *drop-out* is a hyphenated, two-word adjective that modifies the word "rate".

These three different presentations of a singularly spelled word amplify the importance of firm command of **word usage** when crafting prose. Deficiency in this regard leads to error-filled, sometimes ambiguous text.

By the way, it's *consensual* NOT *consentual*! When two parties mutually agree without coercion or influence, it is a *consensual* accord. There is no such word as *consentual*.

E-mail me your English questions at [pkm32mpf@aol.com](mailto:pkm32mpf@aol.com) and I'll give you my words.

## Did You Know?

**That...** [www.mahoningkids.com](http://www.mahoningkids.com) is a valuable source of information for children awaiting adoption in our community.

**That...** in the 1500s, Houses had thatched roofs with thick straw-piled high and no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."  
*Floree Stubbs*

**That...** Peanuts are cholesterol-free and are one of the ingredients of dynamite!  
*The Book of Useless Information*

**That...** In 2009, Mahoning County Children Services' Placement Department finalized 30 adoptions and to date in 2010, there have been 19 adoptions finalized!  
*MCCSB*

**That...** During the chariot scene in *Ben-Hur*, a small red car can be seen in the distance."  
*The Book of Useless Information*

**That...** A duck's quack does not echo, and scientists have no idea why!  
*Theresa Pancoe*

**That...** A group of finches is called a charm, a group of kangaroos is called a mob, a group of crows is a murder and a group of owls is called a parliament!  
*Theresa Pancoe*

## Community Resources

### • Mahoning County Children Services

Offers FREE Informational Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Presentations throughout the community and to children in Mahoning County School Systems. For more information contact Radhika Cruz at 330-941-8888.

### • Akron Children's Hospital - Child Advocacy Center

Offers FREE Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training. To learn more please contact Andrea Mistovich at 330-743-2539.

### • Help Hotline

2 - 1 - 1

Providing Information and Referral Services. Get connected. Get answers.

### • CASA – A child's voice in court.

Mahoning County Court Appointed Special Advocate Program "Speak up for a child." CASA is a volunteer organization – for more information contact: Renee Battafarano, Executive Director at 330-740-2239.

# Mahoning Matters

## Health Matters

By Melinda Lackner

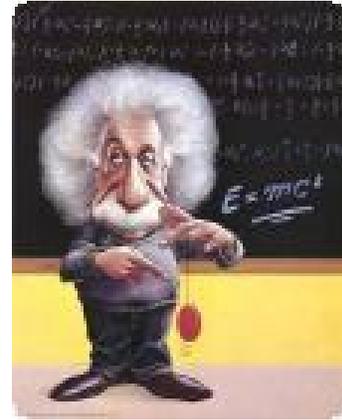


While everyone may love the holidays, they can bring additional stress into our lives. Making time for yourselves will help you cope with all the stresses of the holidays. Eat right and really pay attention to making sure you are getting **all** of your food groups, drink plenty of water, at least moderate exercise, daily sunshine whenever possible, and quality sleep.

### Tidbit

According to Alan Hirsch, M.D., the smell of apples has been proven to reduce anxiety by 13 percent. To help tame tension, try this "Bliss-inducing potpourri":

In a small bowl, mix slices of 1 whole dried apple, 3 pinecones, ¼ cup walnuts in the shell, 6 cinnamon sticks and 2 Tbs. whole cloves. Place in the room that tends to be stressful.



"It would be better if you begin to teach others only after you yourself have learned something."

Albert Einstein

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do."

Eleanor Roosevelt

"When angry, count to ten before you speak; when very angry, a hundred."

Thomas Jefferson

## Upcoming Community Events

Winter Celebration: Holiday Scent-sation  
December 4, 2010 – January 2, 2011  
Tuesdays – Sundays, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Visit Fellows Riverside Gardens for the holidays and be greeted by the scent of cedar, fir and cinnamon. The many decorated trees and seasonal florals throughout the Davis Center will display the "Holiday Scent-sation" theme. Make sure to see the Rainforest Room, stop by the Shop in the Gardens for unique holiday gift ideas, and treasure the view of Lake Glacier while dining in the Garden Café.



## Thank you for fulfilling a Child's "Wish List"!

Mahoning County Children Services would like to thank all the community organizations for the Christmas gifts for abused, neglected and dependent children in Mahoning County.

**We are looking for agency staff to be an active part in the Newsletter. Would YOU consider contributing to the Newsletter? If the answer is Yes, please contact a member of the Newsletter Committee.**

Theresa Pancoe, Editor  
Radhika Cruz, Co-Editor  
Shawn King, Technical Support  
Philip Murphy, Abuse Supervisor  
Melinda Lackner, File Clerk

Floree Stubbs, Supervisor  
Peggy Messer, Casework Specialist/Placement Department  
Meghan Tarantino, Casework Specialist/Placement Department  
Ruth Parker, Case Aide/Family Service Department