



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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Meet Dr. McPherson, Pediatric Physician and Child Advocate



Dr. McPherson, affectionately known by his patients as “Dr. Mac n Cheese”, is the pediatric physician at the Child Advocacy Center located in Youngstown, Ohio. He is married and has five sons ranging in age from fifteen to three.

Dr. McPherson has been a resident of Ohio for almost eight years and has lived in the Mahoning Valley for three years. A native Californian, Dr. McPherson began his college education at Brigham Young University in Utah majoring in Economics. He quickly realized his interest was in medicine and went to Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to complete his Pre-Med education. Dr. McPherson then went to Drexel University in Philadelphia where he earned his medical degree in 2002.

Dr. McPherson's initial exposure to the field of pediatric child abuse and neglect was in his first year of Residency at Akron Children's Hospital when he spent a week with Dr. Steiner, a national expert in the field of child abuse and neglect and the founder of the Child Advocacy Center. As he completed his three year residency, he stated he never found anything that interested him as much as pediatric child abuse and neglect. Dr. McPherson completed his education with a fellowship in pediatric child abuse and neglect at Columbus Children's Hospital. His training is in General Pediatrics and as a specialist in Child Abuse and Neglect.

Dr. McPherson's affiliation with the Child Advocacy Center began with a phone call from Dr. Steiner asking him if he would be interested in working for Akron Children's Hospital and becoming the physician for the Child Advocacy Center. He reported that he was excited about the possibility and began working at the Child Advocacy Center in July of 2007.

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Mahoning County Children Services would like to thank everyone in the community that fulfilled a Child's "Wish List" this Christmas!

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Meet Dr. McPherson, Pediatric Physician and Child Advocate Continued from Page 1

The Child Advocacy Center works in collaboration with Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana, Ashtabula and Mercer County Children Services. Dr. McPherson stated he loves collaborating with Children Services because the reasons for child abuse and neglect are multi-faceted and collaboration is essential for effective evaluation and treatment. He stated Children Services has the difficult job of going into the home and working with the families to address the issues related to a child's victimization from child abuse and neglect.

His message to the community regarding child abuse and neglect prevention is twofold: First, he stated child abuse and neglect happens more frequently than we realize and our being observant, caring, and willing to intervene can protect a child from further abuse; second, it is important to understand abuse affects not only the child but the entire family as well. He stated he respects the global view that Children Services takes in serving and protecting the child as well as maintaining the child with their family as the best outcome whenever it is possible.

Dr. McPherson is very excited about the high probability that the Child Advocacy Center will soon have funding for mental health professionals to begin providing therapy for children who have been abused or neglected. The specific type of therapy, Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy, has been shown to have both short term and long benefits for the child's psychological well-being. Our community is very fortunate to have "Dr. Mac n Cheese" caring for our children. We commend his dedication and personal investment in providing the best services for the treatment and prevention of child abuse and neglect in Northeastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania.

What is the Definition of GENEROSITY? The Answer: Mahoning County Community

By Theresa Pancoe, MSSA, LSW – Community Education Specialist

People celebrate Christmas in a variety of ways. For some, Christmas is a time to celebrate. They celebrate faith, families, and friends. For others, it is a time to give back to their community. For many families, Christmas can be a very stressful and difficult time of year.

Mahoning County has definitely felt the economic impact of the Recession our entire country is facing. Job losses, pay freezes, lay off notices and cut backs in community resources are reported in our media on a daily basis. Yet, this Christmas the members of our community were extremely generous in their donations to the families that Mahoning County Children Services' provides services.

St. Charles Catholic Church

St. Charles Catholic Church and their parishioners were our largest donor of gifts again this year. They fulfilled the "wish lists" of 400 children! Without their generous support, Mahoning County Children Services would not have been able to help all of the families that we serve.



Ryan Carpet's Donations

New Organizations that donated

We are always excited when organizations in the community that we have not collaborated with contact us with a desire to fulfill our children's "wish lists". This year we were fortunate to have two new organizations join our efforts to provide children with a wonderful Christmas. Ryan Carpets, located in Austintown on Victoria Road, amazed us with their variety and quality of gifts! The Staff at Express, Inc. located in the Southern Park Mall fulfilled "wish lists" for teenagers. Which is the age group that we have historically struggled to provide gifts. Thank you to both of these organizations for their amazing and generous contributions!

What would we do without YOU?

We would like to extend a heart felt Thank You to the following organizations that contribute every year to ensure that all the families that we work with wake up on Christmas morning with a gift under the tree, because "Yes Virginia, there really is a Santa Claus" and he lives right here in the Mahoning Valley.

Bike Nash Bar, Choffin Career and Technical Center, Dobbins Elementary School,
NOAS – Northeast Ohio Adoption Services, Sandy's Hair Care and State Alarm Systems

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From The Director's Desk

The New Year of 2010 has launched many opportunities for Mahoning County Children Services. With the approval of our new Strategic Plan by the Board in December 2009, committees have begun to meet to formulate creative recommendations in line with the goals established in our Plan. In addition, the announcement of the retirement of two of our senior administrators : Brad Price, Intake Chief Supervisor and Amy Chismar, Resource Department Chief Supervisor , has propelled the formulation of changes in agency structure into high gear .

We also welcome two new individuals to our Board: Mrs. Mary Kay Earnhart and Mr. Edwin Torres. Mrs. Earnhart is a retired teacher from the Youngstown City Schools. Mr. Torres is working on his MBA at Youngstown State University.

Although our traditional ways of "doing business " are undergoing many changes, our commitment to providing quality services to families and children remains constant. Under the category of an exciting and challenging year , I would say we are off to a great start!

Denise Stewart – Executive Director

Board Member Spotlight – Reverend Lewis Macklin



Reverend Macklin

How long have you been on the Mahoning County Children Services Board?

Initially, I was appointed by the County Commissioners to fulfill an unexpired term and then I was reappointed in 2008 to my own 4 year term.

What committees or special projects have you served on?

- Vice Chairman of the Board
- Chairman-Personnel Committee
- Chairman- One Church One Child Advisory Board
- Member-Strategic Planning Team

What do you find most rewarding about serving on the Board?

Exercising my desire to be a servant of the people has been among the most rewarding experience during my tenure on the board. The staff, administrators and board members all possess a cord which when braided together creates an enhancing quality of life for children and their families within the valley. Knowing that we are empowering our community to render care for our most precious but most vulnerable resource has been most affirming.

What would you like the community to know about Mahoning County Children Services?

Children Services is highly committed to meeting the diverse needs of the children and their families within our system. It is the overall intent to create a stable home environment and not simply separate children from their families.

A special thank you to Reverend Macklin for his dedication and years of service on the Mahoning County Children Services Board!

Mission Statement

Mahoning County Children Services in partnership with the community is committed to being the leader in protecting children and helping to preserve families.

Vision Statement

Mahoning County Children Services will be the best, most caring and respected child protective agency working cooperatively with the community to preserve quality family life.

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Department News *This month we are featuring Mahoning County Children Services Support Staff*

By Floree Stubbs, Office Manager

The Support Staff consist of nineteen individuals who fill several key roles within the agency: Information Technologic/Management Information Systems, Legal, and Clerical. Each role has an intricate function within the agency. As a member of the Support Staff, the Telephone Operator/Receptionist, handles agency calls and greets those visiting the agency. The Information Technologic/Management Information Systems primary function is to support daily operations of computer systems, prepare for future changes and adaptation of the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), provide in-house application training, and collect and process data in the preparation of statistical spreadsheets and reports. The primary responsibility of the Clerical/IV-E Coordinator to determine a child's eligibility for state and federal programs, maintain Foster Care Maintenance and Adoption Assistance case records, and document this information into SACWIS. Legal Secretaries prepare documentation for cases to be filed in court, such as typing complaints, journal entries, affidavits, motions, briefs, and temporary care agreements. They also research information on cases for agency attorneys and act as secretaries for agency's attorneys. The Clerical Unit Aides have a variety of duties, from typing of letters, forms and dictation. They create complex statistical spreadsheets and routine filing and maintaining of active unit case records. Tracking of agency administrative reviews, scheduling review meetings and recording reviews in SACWIS is the responsibility of the Clerical Compliance Monitor. It is the responsibility of the Central File Records – Clerical/File Clerk to function as custodian of agency closed and active case records. The Clerical/Mail Clerk handles the incoming and outgoing correspondence while ensures that the cost of postage is kept to a minimum. In addition to managing the Support Staff, the Office Manger supervises physical asset inventory, administers agency building security, and oversees building maintenance, as well as function as the liaison between the Agency and the State to ensure that the agency adheres to State guidelines regarding hardware and software applications are adhered to.

The Support Staff operates as a seamless behind the scenes team to maintain the day-to-day operations of the agency.

Mahoning County Children Services Foster Parent Association

By Peggy Messer



Jeanette Humbert

Jeanette Humbert was elected Mahoning County Children Services new Foster Parent Association's president in December 2009. Ms. Humbert will serve a term of two years beginning January 1, 2010 until December 31, 2011. Ms. Humbert has been a foster parent for five years and an active member of the Foster Parent Association for three years. She has been a supportive member of the agency's One Church, One Child program since it began in 2007.

Ms. Humbert has fostered approximately 11 children in her home and provides respite care for foster children. Mahoning County Children Services' respite program consists of licensed foster homes who are willing to care for children in foster care, when the foster parents they are living with are not able to care them.

Why did you become a foster parent?

"Because I love children. I have always had children in my life."

What is the Foster Parent Association?

"The Foster Parent Association is an organization where children and families can get together and have fun. I know that foster children feel different and because of the rules there are things that foster children are not allowed to do that other children are. I hope to give the children an opportunity to do some of those things and to realize that there are other children just like them. I would like to do different activities for different age groups. I realize that a big part of being able to do the fun things means having fundraisers."

What fundraisers do you have planned for this coming year?

"The Foster Parent Association would like to have a fundraiser at least once a month. We have planned a chicken dinner for Friday, February 26, 2010 at 12:00 p.m. at the Mahoning County Children Services' building located at 222 W. Federal Street. We will be having bake sales, the annual garage sale, Chinese auction and pie sale. We are also planning on having movie nights but what is really dear to my heart is to have a talent show."

What activities do you have planned for the children and the families this year?

"I am working on securing facilities to hold our annual summer picnic and our annual Christmas party. We are planning to have a dance for the teenagers in our care and movie nights with themes for the different age groups so the entire family can have a fun night out."

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People often misuse the verbs *lie* and *lay*. To take one's body and place it in a prostrate position on a bed, couch, etc. is to *lie* down. To take an object in hand and place it on a table, shelf, etc. is to *lay* the object.

Usage example: Fatigue forced Clint to *lie* (NOT *lay*) on the couch for an hour.

Usage example: For the party, Kelly plans to *lay* an area rug over the carpet stain.

The past tense forms of *lie* and *lay* also often confuse. The past tense of *lie* is *lay* NOT *laid*. However, the past tense of *lay* is *laid*.

Usage example: Feeling ill last night, Courteny *lay* (NOT *laid*) on the bed for three hours.

Usage example: Yesterday, Tim *laid* several planks over the sinkhole so no one would fall in.

By the way...it's *dragged* NOT *drug*. *Dragged* is the past tense of *drag*, NOT *drug*.

Usage example: Cleaning up debris after the windstorm, Nick *dragged* (NOT *drug*) the limb across the lawn.

This ain't a word: *irregardless*. The correct form is *regardless*. *Irregardless* is a non-standard form that should never be used.

E-mail me your English questions at pkm32mpf@aol.com and I'll give you my words.

Did You Know?

That... www.mahoningkids.com is a valuable source of information about Mahoning County Children Services and provides information on *How to become a Foster Parent* and the agency's *One Church One Child Program*!

That... in the 1500s, Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June.. However, since they were starting to smell . . . brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married! *Floree Stubbs*

That... Tommy Lee Jones and Al Gore were freshman roommates at Harvard! www.mundayweb.com

That... Kinship care represents the most desirable out-of-home placement option for children who cannot live with their parents. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that 86,000 children are being raised by their grandparents in Ohio. Regardless of the type of kinship care arrangement, the kinship caregivers voluntary commitment to devote their lives to the children in their care is a courageous, life-changing decision. *ODJFS*

That...a giraffe can last longer without water than a camel! *Theresa Pancoe*

Community Resources

• Akron Children's Hospital

Mahoning Valley
Child Advocacy Center

Offers Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training
"Stewards of Children"

To learn more about this **FREE** child sexual abuse training, please contact Andrea Mistovich at 330-743-2539 or AMistovich@chmca.org. For additional information about Stewards of Children, visit the Darkness to Light website at D2L.org.

• 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 330-740-2239

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Health Matters

By Melinda Lackner



Kids Lunch Hints

When preparing your kids lunches, try to use the following as a minimum guideline for a healthy and balanced lunch:

Complex Carbohydrate (1) – Such as whole grain bread

Protein (1-2) – Peanut butter counts too!

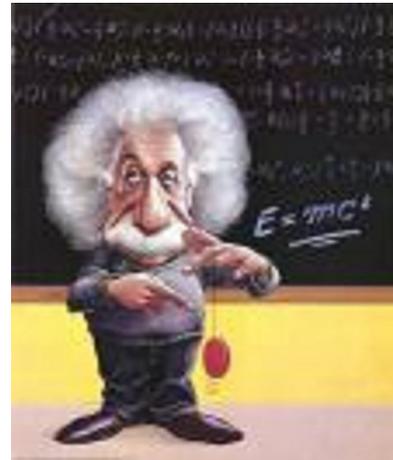
Vegetables and Fruit (1-3) – Low fat dips help!

Dairy-(1) – String cheese and yogurt are popular.

Have your kids make a list of their favorites from each category. Let them help you prepare their lunch, kids are more likely to eat when they have helped in the preparation.

Making their favorite dinner? Make a little extra so you can have leftovers to incorporate into their lunch. Extra chicken can be cut up for little chicken fingers and add a small contain of their favorite dip or make chicken salad with grapes and walnuts.

Send a note, photo, joke, riddle, comic strip, backward message or interesting word of the day to remind them you are thinking of them and to help brighten their day.



“Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.”

Albert Einstein

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

Thomas Edison

“Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.”

Henry Ford

Foster Parent Association Annual Christmas Party



The Foster Parent Association Annual Christmas Party was held on December 20, 2009 at the Elmtree in Struthers. It was a very festive party with thirty four (34) foster families in attendance. Due to our hard work throughout the year with fundraisers we were able to provide a center piece and gift for each family. These gifts included popcorn movie baskets, boom boxes, digital photo frames and portable DVD players. Santa Claus and his elves were available for pictures, which made a great memento of the event, and passed out big bags of candy for all the children. There were 12 bicycles and 6 digital cameras raffled off for the kids and every child went home with multiple gifts. There were also two door prize raffles which were Wii gaming systems.

The Foster Parent Association would like to thank
Mahoning County Children Services for their continued support and donations.

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.

Newsletter Committee:

Theresa Pancoe, Editor
Flore Stubbs, Supervisor
Philip Murphy, Abuse Supervisor
Melinda Lackner, Receptionist

Glenna Ress, Supervisor
Shawn King, Technical Support
Peggy Messer, Casework Specialist/Resource Department