



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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Mahoning County Children Services Pursues Accreditation

By Julie Rudolph

As was recommended in the Mahoning County Children Services most recent strategic plan, the agency has begun gearing up for the pursuit of accreditation through The Council on Accreditation (COA), an accrediting body which was founded in 1977. COA is recognized, worldwide, as an independent accreditor of social service organizations. COA embraces and promotes the values of credibility, integrity and achievement.

The process of becoming accredited benefits Mahoning County Children Services and the families and community it serves. It requires Mahoning County Children Services to continue to strive towards facilitating positive outcomes for children and families by completing a thorough self examination to ensure that best practice standards are being implemented. A framework is defined to examine, revise and review policy and procedure. The effectiveness of identified outcomes is measured and tracked on an ongoing basis. There is an emphasis on agency responsiveness to the needs of the community and overall agency performance which allows for Mahoning County Children Services to identify strengths and to address any areas in which there is an opportunity for improvement.

Accreditation will require the expertise and contribution of all staff at Mahoning County Children Services. The agency will continue to utilize our internal resources and look towards community partners, as well as the families that we serve, for input and feedback through surveys and advisory groups as we embark on the journey through the accreditation process.

Accreditation will enhance the agency's ability to fulfill its mission and to continue "being the leader in protecting children while helping to preserve families."

Thank You
To everyone who fulfilled a child's
Wish List this Christmas!

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From The Director's Desk

By Denise Stewart

Agency Begins Accreditation Process

As we continue on the journey mapped out by our Strategic Plan, we are ready to begin the initial steps of the accreditation process. A work plan is being developed along with the formation of six staff committees which will review COA Standards and provide information regarding the agency's status in six management areas. The first committee met on Feb. 7, 2011 and is reviewing the standards for 1) Administration and Management and 2) Ethics. I will be serving on this committee along with Julie Rudolph, Continuous Quality Improvement Supervisor; Don Finzer, Continuous Quality Assurance Manager; David Macek, Personnel Officer; and Cathy Gagliardi, Family Services Program Administrator. We have already learned that we have many important policies and procedures in place and are looking forward to expanding and improving some of our existing policies. An important tool in this process will be our computer shared drive where information will be stored to enhance communication and provide a readily accessible resource for staff use. A seventh committee will be later be developed to address the standards relating to service delivery.

We look forward to your feedback and participation in this process !

Board Member Spotlight - Dr. Thomas M. Gemma D.O.



Dr. Thomas M. Gemma D.O.

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

I have had the honor to serve for three years on the Board of Mahoning County Children Services.

What committees or special projects have you served on?

Since my arrival I have been on the Finance Committee and for the last year been privileged to serve as its chair.

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

As a Board Member my greatest reward is my association with the MCCS and witnessing the positive impact the dedicated members of the agency provide the children of Mahoning County and their families. I am continuously amazed and impressed with the unselfishness and compassion the employees and Board Members demonstrate in their service to the children.

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

The community needs to understand the true compassion, dedication and loyalty of the employees of MCCS. People need to be aware of the special qualities required to serve the children and families of our area. The people of Children's Services do not look upon this as simply a job, but rather as a philosophy and a mission of life. These people are irreplaceable. True happiness comes to those who serve others. Thank you for this opportunity to be a part of the MCCS.

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Mahoning County Children Services Celebrates the Career of Louis Wainwright

By Radhika Cruz

Louis Wainwright began his career at Mahoning County Children Services in 1981 as a Youth Leader in the Boy's Childcare Center. It was at this home where he lived, laughed, loved and mentored boys who found themselves in foster care. During this time period, he took on the role of a cook, teacher, friend, brother and even a father figure to the many boys in the home. During his years as a youth leader, Louis enrolled at Youngstown State University and received his Bachelor's degree in Social Work in 1989.

Upon his college graduation, Louis became a Family Services Caseworker where he provided caseworker services to children and families and remained in this position for approximately 2 years. He then made a lateral transfer to become a Residential caseworker where he worked with children in residential placement settings. Three years later, he became a Coordinator for the Receiving Home, a group home that houses young children. Louis' exceptional leadership qualities did not go unnoticed as a Coordinator. In 1997, he was promoted to the position of Supervisor in the Abuse Unit. In this position, he managed caseworkers who worked with families experiencing crises related to physical and sexual abuse. While performing the duties of a Coordinator and Supervisor, Louis earned his Master's degree in Counseling/Education from Youngstown State University in 1998. His ability to manage a career and family while pursuing his educational goals is noteworthy.

Louis continued his climb up the administrative ladder and became the Chief Supervisor of the Residential Department in 2000. It was in this department that he managed the agency's residential placement contracts, three group homes, residential supervisors and caseworkers. Louis spent a decade of his career life as the Chief Supervisor of Residential Services which affirms his passion to work with children. Although this administrative position created relational distance from the children in the group homes, he labored to implement policies and practices that would benefit all children who found themselves at either the group home or in residential placement. Building relationships and understanding in the community became one of his top priorities as Chief Supervisor of the Residential Department. He loved to learn about other systems, therefore, strengthening relationships between Mahoning County Children Services and other agencies with similar clients.

In 2010, Louis was given the added responsibility of becoming the Chief Supervisor of the Resource Department which housed the Foster Care and Adoption Units. Overseeing the Residential and Resource Department was a huge challenge that Louis willingly accepted and executed enthusiastically.

Louis is also very involved in the community. In addition to his full-time job, he works part-time as a family therapist for the Family Service Agency. He is also involved with Warriors Inc. as a mentor to young males who are taught how to become healthy men who respect themselves, women, and their world. Louis is also involved with "A Call to Men", which is a group of men who take a stand against violence toward women. Louis is also a part of the advisory committee for the Mill Creek Community Center which targets at risk youth.

As Louis transitions into the retirement phase of his life, he looks forward to his daughter, Khalila attending college and plans to continue as a family therapist and maintain his involvement with the community. His advice to the community is to "take advantage of every opportunity and don't focus on what you don't have." He goes on to say "Find your passion and serve to meet that passion" for it is "in giving back to others" that you find satisfaction and personal fulfillment.

Thank you Louis for 29 years of commitment and dedication in serving the children of Mahoning County. Best wishes to you and your family as you begin a new journey in your life.



Louis Wainwright

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Operation Save Christmas By Radhika Cruz

Every December for the past 30 years, Mahoning County Children Services has been fortunate to organize an annual Christmas gift distribution to the children and families it serves. This past Christmas, over 700 gifts were donated from area businesses, churches and individuals in the form of toys, bikes, clothing, gift cards, food baskets and winter outerwear. Although the economic climate of our county has demonstrated a decline in charitable contributions, we are proud to announce that many local donors helped to fill the need of so many children in Mahoning County. Many of these families look forward to this annual gift distribution and would not be able to provide food and gifts to their children otherwise.

Mahoning County Children Services would not be able to facilitate this event without the support of generous and compassionate donors. Area donors include: St. Charles Church, Victory Christian Center Liberty Campus, Northeast Ohio Adoption Services, Bike Nashbar, Ryan Carpet, State Alarm, Taylor Kia, Platinum Services Construction Co., Mahoning County Child Support Enforcement Agency, Dobbins Elementary School, Choffin Career and Technical Institute, Sandi's Family Hair Care and other individual donors.

Mahoning County Children Services would like to say a great big **THANK YOU** to all the donors who helped to provide a merry Christmas for hundreds of families in Mahoning County. You have all demonstrated that it is truly better to give than it is to receive!

It Matters To Meghan

By Meghan Tarantino

Temple Grandin, a renowned animal scientist and one of the world's most accomplished people with Autism, will present at **7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 17 at Stambaugh Auditorium** in Youngstown.

The event, sponsored by Youngstown State University's Rich Center for the Study and Treatment of Autism, is free and open to the public. Tickets are required and can be

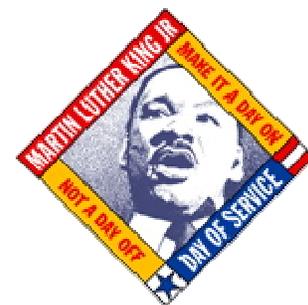
picked up at Kilcawley Center and the Rich Center, both on the YSU campus. Grandin, whose current bestseller is *The Way I See It: A Personal Look at Autism and Aspergers*, will also sign books at the event.



Temple Grandin

“United We Serve” In Honor of Black History Month By Radhika Cruz

January 17, 2011 marked the 25th anniversary of the federal holiday in which we celebrate and honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. One of his many thought provoking quotes was “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?” Each year many Americans across the country try to answer this question by uniting their efforts to serve others in their community through the MLK Day of Service. This initiative calls all Americans to join together in working toward solutions to our nation’s social problems.



Courtesy of mlkday.gov

One social problem that our agency seeks to solve is the problem of child maltreatment. It is our goal to strengthen, support and empower families **before** child abuse/neglect starts. Through our partnerships with the community and with the help and services of our foster/adoptive families, we strive to achieve this goal daily.

Would you consider this “call to serve” by becoming a foster or adoptive parent? Would you respond by becoming a mentor to a new parent or form a parent support group in your neighborhood? Any activity you can do that supports children, parents, caregivers and families in our community moves us closer toward Dr. King’s dream of uniting our world together by serving our fellow neighbor.

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Sentences that include *indefinite pronouns* are common but often erroneously constructed. The primary indefinite pronouns are *someone, somebody, anyone, anybody, everyone, and everybody*. The key to proper constructions with such words is remembering that indefinite pronouns are singular in number. Therefore, the corresponding pronoun that often follows an indefinite pronoun in a sentence must also be singular (NOT plural).

Incorrect usage example: *Everyone* on the football team wore *their* jersey to the pep rally.

Correct usage example: *Everyone* on the football team wore *his* jersey to the pep rally.

Incorrect usage example: Tim knew *someone* had spilled *their* drink on the sofa.

Correct usage example: Tim knew *someone* had spilled *his or her* drink on the sofa.

By the way, it's "I graduated from high school" NOT "I graduated high school." Many young people are fond of saying "I graduated high school," but it is incorrect. To say "I graduated high school" is like saying "I walked church" or "It's a fire risk to smoke bed." The transitive verbs *graduated, walked, and smoke* require the prepositions *from, to, and in*, respectively, to make the expressions grammatically correct.

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 if you have concerns and need to report child abuse or neglect regarding a child in our community.

That... in the 1500s those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach into the food, causing lead poisoning death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Floree Stubbs

That... Recycling one glass jar saves enough energy to power a TV for three hours!

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... An inch of snow falling evenly on 1 acre of ground is equivalent to about 2,715 gallons of water.

The Book of Useless Information

That... Scientists say that pigs, unlike all other domestic animals, arrive at solutions by thinking them through. Pigs can be – and have been – taught to accomplish almost any feat a dog can master, and usually in a shorter period of time!

Theresa Pancoe



pretty when it falls fresh), will provide water for our thirsty lawns and gardens, and will quench our thirst as well! And when we get that first gentle spring breeze, and we can smell spring coming, there's nothing like it! So take heart, the days are getting longer, which means, Spring is on the way! It's the silver lining in our gray cloud.

It seems like we have been into the winter months forever! And we still have more to go, oh no! Most of us have had our fill of gray skies and cold, windy, snowy days. We struggle to come from underneath our warm blankets to face the more than chilly mornings.

But just remember, if we didn't have the cold, gray days, we would not appreciate the warm, sunny days of spring and summer. The snow of winter, (which you have to admit, is really

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Safety Tidbit:

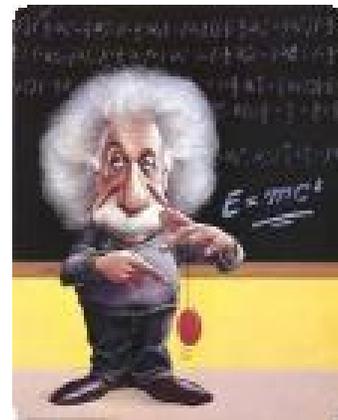
According to Pediatrics, 9,000 infants are brought into Emergency rooms each year due to injuries from not being strapped into car seats when they are removed from the car. Always be sure to have infant strapped in to their seat while driving **and** before removing from car.

Healthy Tidbit

Since cold weather and cold's go hand in hand take a minute to remind children to wash their hands with soap and water often, avoid touching their eyes and noses and cough or sneeze into tissues or sleeves. Since children on average tend to catch 6 to 10 colds annually, keep this fast and easy recipe for Chicken Noodle Soup on hand to help relieve symptoms.

3 ½ cups of chicken broth	1 medium carrot sliced
1 stalk of celery sliced	½ uncooked medium egg noodles (or Reames Egg noodles from freezer section)
1 cup cooked chicken (time saver hint-get whole fully cooked roasted chicken from the grocery store, you'll have enough for soup and some chicken salad!)	Pepper to taste

Mix broth, pepper, carrot and celery in sauce pan until boiling. Lower heat to medium and add noodles, cooking until vegetables are tender and noodles are done.



"Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them."
Albert Einstein

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. Don't complain."
Maya Angelou

"I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear."
Rosa Parks



Pinwheels for Prevention April 12, 2011 – Child Abuse Prevention Month



Pinwheels for Prevention is a nationwide public awareness campaign created by Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA) to encourage Americans in taking action to prevent abuse and neglect from ever occurring.

The Pinwheel not only serves as a symbol of a happy childhood, but it also represents "change" due to its constant movement. The prevention message has evolved or "changed" from an awareness message to providing solutions for effective prevention. The goal of the campaign is to stop child abuse before it ever occurs.

On April 12, 2011, Mahoning County Children Services, in collaboration with the Child Advocacy Center, will be having its 6th Annual Pinwheels for Prevention Event. The event will be held at the Akron Children's Hospital Beeghly Campus located at 6505 Market Street, Boardman, OH. If you are interested in attending, please contact Radhika Cruz at 330-941-8852 for more details. Please consider how you can participate in making a difference in the life of a child!

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