



# Richland County Children Services 2009 Annual Report

# 2,748

## Inside This Report

- Agency investigates record 2,748 child abuse allegations
- Director says RCCS answered the call
- State gives high marks during evaluation
- Federal grant helps grandparents raising children
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*Safe Children Today Build Strong Families Tomorrow*



Randy J. Parker, Executive Director

## Our Mission

*Protect children at risk of abuse, neglect or dependency;*

*Provide children the opportunity to live in a safe, nurturing, permanent family;*

*Strengthen and support families in meeting the needs of their children;*

*Join with the community to provide culturally sensitive services necessary to protect children; strengthen families; and promote well-being.*

### 2009 Board Members

- Nancy Joyce, Chair
- Carol Payton, Vice Chair
- Jon Bell, Secretary
- Joe Palmer, Treasurer
- Ivy L. Amos
- Jan Castor
- Connie Hoffman, MSW
- Colleen J. McKinney, M.D.
- Dean Wells

### 2009 Administrative Staff

- Randy J. Parker, Executive Director
- Nikki Harless, MSW, LSW, Director of Operations
- Marsha Coleman, MSW, LISW-S, Clinical Director
- Kevin Goshe, MBA, Director of Finance
- Tim Harless, MSW, Program Dir. External Affairs
- Elayna Rizor, JD, Human Resources Manager
- Katherine Schiraldi, MSCJ, Pgm. Supervisor Intake
- Scott Basilone, BS, Program Supervisor Ongoing
- Lori Feeney, MSW, Program Supervisor Placement
- Carl Hunnell, BS, Communications Supervisor
- Edith Gilliland, JD, Attorney
- Kristi Schultz, JD, Attorney

## 2009 busiest in agency's 126 years

2,748 is not a number taken lightly.

But the stark reality of that number is it represents the record number of child abuse/neglect investigations launched by Richland County Children Services in 2009.

That is a significant 29 percent increase over 2008 and a 26 percent increase over the previous yearly record of 2,182 investigations initiated in 2004. Our legal department filed 299 complaints in juvenile court throughout the year, a 43 percent increase over 2008.

We take no pride in that number. Nor do we salute the fact our agency received a record 7,274 total calls for assistance in 2009 from moms, dads, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, teachers, doctors, principals, other family members, friends and neighbors.

But as an agency that has helped protect children and serve families in Richland County for 126 years, we take great pride in the fact we always answered the call and took whatever steps were necessary to accomplish our mission.

This annual report documents the busiest year in the history of Richland County Children Services. In fact, our agency is one of the busiest in the state, regardless of population. Butler County in southwest Ohio, for example, had 2,852 investigations in 2008 in a county three times larger than Richland in terms of population.

This annual report will show we met every challenge while living within our budget and with a staff size smaller than in previous years. It's been said so much it's become a cliché - but we did find ways to do more with less in 2009.

One thing remained constant in 2009, even as the work level increased. Our mission remains the same - secure the safety of children who are in danger of abuse or neglect. We spent the year constantly trying to improve our services and outcomes so children and families can heal and grow toward a brighter, safer future together.

By every measurable element of child protective services, we succeeded in 2009. Our agency was evaluated by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services last year as it conducted its child protection oversight and evaluation of our work. ODJFS focuses on reviewing federal outcome measures and on reviewing the agency's case record compliance rates.

When the thorough review was complete, RCCS was one of the few county child protective agencies in Ohio not ordered to conduct a quality improvement plan.

The ODJFS report said, "The time and effort put forth in this process by your administration and staff are truly appreciated and we congratulate you for your exceptional performance in the review."

This annual report demonstrates important areas of that success. But we will not, we cannot, rest. This is a new year and with it come new challenges and opportunities to serve Richland County children and families.

This report looks back at 2009. But our work began anew with the first call for assistance on Jan. 1, 2010.

*Randy J. Parker*  
Executive Director, RCCS



# Richland County Kinship program receives federal grant

Richland County Children Services learned in 2009 it will receive a \$327,823 federal grant to operate and demonstrate the effectiveness of its program to place children with grandparents and other relatives.

The grant, covering three years through the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services will assist the county's Kinship Navigator program.

Richland is one of seven counties in "high need" areas receiving money. Others are Crawford, Ashtabula, Clark, Hardin, Portage and Lorain counties.

Grant awards differ by county and local matching dollars are required to obtain the federal money. Richland County Children Services must supply 25 percent matching dollars for the first two years and 50 percent for the third year.

Among the seven counties combined, the grant totals \$705,067 in the first year with the counties adding \$235,022.

Kinship Navigator programs guide grand-



**A delegation from the Public Children Services Association of Ohio and demonstration counties met at RCCS in November to discuss the grant.**

parents and other family members raising children in their extended families to services within the community. It provides information, referral and follow-up services to these relative caregivers to obtain the benefits and services that they or their children need.

The grant was obtained as part of implementing the Fostering Connections to Success Act and in partnership with Public Children Services Association of Ohio.

"We are excited about the opportunity to better serve our relative caregivers in the Kinship program," RCCS Executive Director Randy Parker said.

"This grant will also allow us to gauge outcomes of our efforts. With that kind of thorough evaluation, this grant will help us push our own local knowledge base forward."

Some of the seven counties utilize their own personnel while others sub-contract the work. Richland County Children Services operates its Kinship Navigator program through the Ocie Hill Neighborhood Center.

The grant will allow for sufficient staffing to perform case-level and system-level functions, including outreach. It will also provide improved access to needed services and support for Kinship families, including legal aid, support groups, respite care and financial assistance. It will also allow greater collaboration among agencies via advisory groups.

## You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent

We know many Richland County residents consider becoming foster and adoptive parents each year. We also know for many it's a thought process that leads to questions and concerns and ultimately a "no thanks" response.

Here are frequently asked questions regarding foster opportunities, as well as the answers that we hope will convince you to help make a difference in the lives of local children.

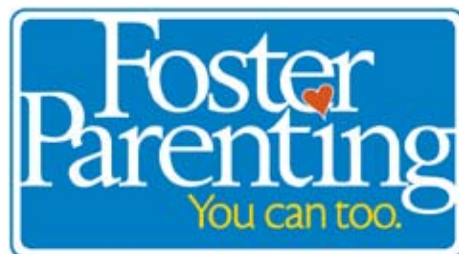
**Q:** I am not married, do not make a lot of money, and do not own my own house. Can I be a foster parent?

**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:** I work full time, so can I be a foster parent?

**A:** Many foster children attend daycare, which allows foster parents to work outside of the home.

**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 a rewarding experience.

**Q:** How can I make a difference when foster children have been abused so much?

**A:** Children are amazingly resilient. Foster parents can make the difference by providing a structured, nurturing environment. We need to remember that these children will grow up to be adults in our society. How we respond to their needs now will largely determine what kind of citizens they will be in the future. It is never too late to help a child.

**Q:** Do I get any help once I decide to take a foster child?

**A:** Children need stability, and RCCS offers foster parents plenty of support

to maintain an even keel. For starters, before you even take in your first child, the RCCS staff works with you to develop a profile of the type of child best suited to the experience and capabilities of your family. There is respite care for those times you need a break. And, in addition to the stipend you are paid for the care you provide, there are clothing vouchers available periodically throughout the year.

**Q:** How does the foster child receive medical insurance?

**A:** Foster parents do not pay any of a child's medical expenses, other than over-the-counter medicines and supplies. Understand as a foster parent, you are initially making a temporary commitment to helping a child. You will be involved in a plan to help reunify your foster child(ren) with the family of origin. Adoption can only occur if RCCS receives a permanent custody order from the Richland County Juvenile Court.

**Q:** How do we get started?

**A:** If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, please call 419-774-4100. You can make a difference in the life of a child.

[www.richlandcountychildrenservices.org](http://www.richlandcountychildrenservices.org)



## Our 2009 Commu

Richland County Children Services believes in community involvement, from community festivals and parades to ethnic 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 messages on child abuse and neglect prevention," said Carl Hunnell, communications supervisor for RCCS.

Chances are good you saw our agency at one or more community events during 2009, including:

### January

- Richland County Prevention Partnership Coalition meeting

### February

- Black History Month celebration at the Mansfield-Richland County Public Library
- Rally for the Kids tennis event in Lexington

### March

- Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

### April

- March for Babies Kick-off
- Minority Health Fair at the Ocie Hill Center
- Swim Bike Run for Child Abuse Prevention at the Mansfield Area Y
- Placed "Pinwheels for Prevention" at four locations

### May

- Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner at Life Celebration Reception Center

### June

- Future Stars Junior Golf Program





# Community Involvement

## July

- United Way Unemployment Resource Expo

## August

- Richland County Fair
- Gatorade Giveaway at Lexington Youth Soccer Camp
- Lexington Blueberry Festival
- St. Luke's Lutheran Church Community Fair
- First Day Celebration at Crestview Elementary School
- 5K Walk/Run

## September

- Bellville Street Fair
- Fore Our Kids Golf Classic fundraiser

## October

- Madison Parade & Community Festival
- Mansfield Halloween Parade
- Mansfield News Journal Family Fusion at Richland Mall
- Annual spaghetti dinner fundraiser

## November

- Downtown Mansfield Holiday Parade

## December

- Foster Parent Association annual holiday dinner



## In addition, we:

Staged a dozen mandatory reporter training sessions, participated in five Community Summit Meetings, and participated in several media events (including newspaper, radio and TV interviews).



# Our Vision

*Every child has a permanent family which provides a safe loving environment that is emotionally and economically stable;*

*All children develop their full potential by having all physical, emotional, educational, cultural, spiritual, developmental, and special needs met;*

*All families have the skills and resources to maintain their integrity, function to the best of their ability and be responsible to their family members;*

*A community that invests in the future of its children by providing services to empower families;*

*A community whose members respect diversity and support the strengths of the racial, cultural and ethnic heritage of families and neighborhoods.*



## Specialized teams, same goal: Child protection

Richland County has divided its social workers into teams, each with different responsibilities, but united in their common primary goals of protecting children and assisting families.

### Protective Services

Richland County Children Services Board offers Protective Services with our priority of helping families keep their children safe from abuse and neglect. Social workers coordinate and provide a variety of services such as: casework management, mental and behavioral health services, drug abuse treatment, parenting training, and coordination of family team meetings.

### Prevention Services

Richland County Children Services Board offers Prevention Services to work with young mothers, families of school-aged children and families of unruly and delinquent youth to prevent problems from developing into abuse or neglect.

### Foster Care & Adoption Services

Richland County Children Services Board provides foster care to children who are not safe in their home until reunification is possible. Every effort is made to place the child in a relative's home. The agency also recruits, screens, trains, and monitors foster parents. Foster parents actively participate in family team meetings.

Richland County Children Services Board believes that each child deserves a home. Adoption provides that permanent family. The agency screens, trains, and supports prospective adoptive parents while matching them with a child in need of a safe, nurturing home.

### Kinship Services

Richland County Children Services Board offers Kinship Services by assisting families in obtaining benefits and services at two locations: the Ocie Hill Neighborhood Center and The Rehabilitation Center of North Central Ohio. Items that the Kinship Care Navigator have assisted with include beds, dressers, groceries, connections to social services, monthly newsletters, and YMCA memberships. RCCS received a federal grant in 2009 to help expand and improve on this program (see related story elsewhere in this report.)

## State gives high marks during evaluation

In 2008, the agency was re-accredited for another five year-period by the Council on Accreditation, which did a comprehensive examination of RCCS administrative operations and its service delivery practices. The agency is one of just 22 public agencies in the State of Ohio accredited by the COA.

In 2009, Richland County Children Services was praised by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, which conducted its child protection oversight and evaluation of the agency's work. ODJFS focuses on reviewing federal outcome measures and on reviewing the agency's case record compliance rates.

When the thorough review was complete, RCCS was one of a few county child protective agencies in Ohio that was not ordered to conduct a quality improvement plan.

"This speaks to the high standards we have in place each day to serve children and families and to keep kids safe," said Marsha Coleman, the agency's clinical director.

The ODJFS report said, "The time and effort put forth in this process by your administration and staff are truly appreciated and we congratulate you for your exceptional performance in the review."

# 1883 to 2009: A century-plus of caring

Less than 20 years after the conclusion of the American Civil War, residents of Richland County, Ohio, recognized the need to better protect local children.

That's why in 1883, the same year the Brooklyn Bridge opened, the Richland County Child Welfare Board was formed. The board built a Children's Home (pictured) on the Hedges farm at the corner of Hedges and Clay (now Home) streets on the city's southeast side. When it opened on May 31, it welcomed 17 boys and eight girls.

Still, it was a different era for young people in need. Children who lived at the home were called "inmates" and they performed chores connected with the farm and dairy cows that the home maintained. Many were orphans and the children of indigent parents who could no longer care for them.

In the 1950s, a greater emphasis on child abuse and neglect and changes in Ohio law led to an increase in agency size and the beginning of "foster family care." The stage was set for a new emphasis on caring for children in the most home-like setting. On May 15, 1952, the county children's home was closed and the building was demolished in the mid-1960s to make way for Richland Newhope.

Yet, even as foster care expanded rapidly, the need for some residential care continued. As the Children's Home was demolished, Downs Residence Hall opened in Mansfield.



**This picture of the Children's Home was taken in the mid-60's prior to its demolition. The main entrance is in the center topped by a 100-foot tower. The center hall was flanked by the girls' dormitory to the left and the boys' dorm to the right.**

**The image of placing children in residential facilities has been replaced by children being maintained in their own home with the help of specialized services.**



**The Richland County Children's Home was located on the corners of Hedges and Clay (now Home) streets. Its closure on May 15, 1952 led to children being placed with foster families.**

For 30 years, the care of children evolved as the needs and problems of children intensified. In the 1970's, two local group homes opened to serve adolescent girls and boys.

Even as the increasingly severe problems of children and families produced a stronger mental health services orientation in local residential placement, a shift to more family-based treatment was also beginning.

In the late 1980s, Ohio law created the option of "Protective Supervision" orders by which courts could formally order a family to comply with the agency's case plan services. In addition, the notions of "Home-Based" services and "Family Preservation" began to influence child welfare practice.

Agency resources were shifted to working intensively with families to keep children in their own homes. The agency's team of Family Preservation social workers was established in 1990 and was based in the parsonage of the First Christian Church at Third and Bowman streets in Mansfield.

In the mid 1990s, growing uncertainties about the success rate of residential placements and concerns over the increasingly high cost of residential treatment led to a push for more creative uses of limited mental health care dollars.

Numerous foster homes became treat-

ment foster homes, completing special training in such skills as first aid, crisis management and behavioral management.

State and federal resources were made available to communities and agencies to find ways to provide help for children in their own homes, to get them home more quickly when they needed to go into temporary placements and to provide more and more treatment services in foster homes rather than in residential treatment facilities.

In 2000, at the request of the agency, more community mental health therapists began providing in-home counseling and behavioral therapies. In early 2003, several Richland County children and family serving agencies entered into a joint contract with a local mental health service provider to deliver very tightly controlled home-based therapies designed for the most severely troubled youth and families. The stage was set for a much more significant move to implement the spirit of the "least restrictive, most homelike" approach to caring for troubled children and agency-operated residences were closed.

As we prepare for the future, Richland County Children Services continues a tradition of constantly seeking the best solutions to the needs of abused, neglected, and dependent children and their families.

# 16 agency employees reach milestones

Richland County Children Services ended 2009 with 103 employees, four below its authorized staffing level of 107. The employees include 60 social workers involved in intake/investigations, ongoing services and placement.

Other employees are involved in administrative roles, including operations, legal, communications, human resources, finance, clinical and support.

Sixteen of these workers experienced career milestones with the agency in 2009. We also would like to recognize our quarterly H.E.R.O.E.S. (Honoring Employees by Recognizing Outstanding and Exemplary Service). Those workers are:

- Beth Burns, social worker 3, 20 years
- Shawn Strong, social worker 2, 20 years
- Scott Basilone, program supervisor 1, 15 years
- Vickie Graves, case aide 2, 15 years
- David Hackedorn, support 3, 15 years
- Carol Baxter, social worker 3, 10 years
- Dawn Butterman, social worker 3, 10 years
- Phillip Farley, social worker 3, 10 years
- Katherine Schiraldi, program supervisor 1, 10 years
- Nicole Foulks, supervisor 1, 5 years
- Kelly Thayer, social worker 2, 5 years
- Alison Hustack, social worker 3, 5 years
- Luann Payne, social worker 3, 5 years
- Heather Petty, social worker 1, 5 years
- Melissa Tucker, social worker 3, 5 years
- Kelley VanGilder, interim supervisor 1, 5 years
- Carla Wilkinson, social worker 3, 5 years

- 1st Quarter:**  
 Tara Lautzenhiser, social worker  
 Rhonda Massey, support staff  
 Heather Swanson, supervisor
- 2nd Quarter:**  
 Beth Burns, social worker  
 Shane Hedrick, support staff  
 Kevin Wharton, supervisor
- 3rd Quarter:**  
 Luann Payne, social worker  
 Sarah Bradley, support staff  
 Nicole Foulks, supervisor
- 4th Quarter:**  
 Amy Logan, social worker  
 Amanda Belford, support staff  
 Terrie Sgro, supervisor

# Stop child abuse: Here's how you can help

You can help heal the hurt: Here's how.

The emotional and physical scars of child abuse and neglect can last a lifetime. Fortunately, all members of our community can play an active and vital role in stopping these tragic events and in helping Richland County Children Services start the healing process.

Report abuse or neglect when you suspect it – even if you're not certain.

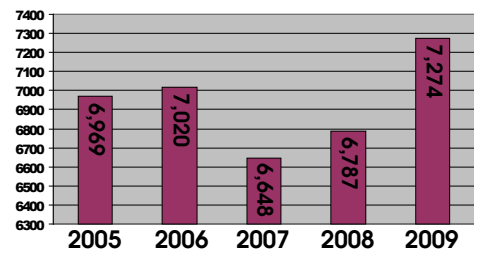
Be the eyes, ears and conscience of our community. If you see any of the following signs of abuse or neglect, call us 24/7 at 419-774-4100. There is no need to wait until the next day or until the weekend is over – we are always here for your call.

**Call us if a child:**

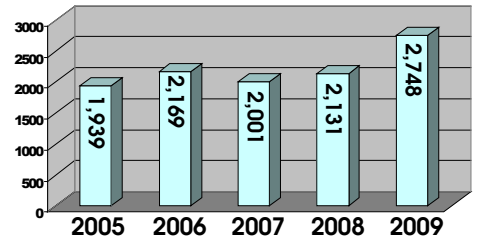
- Shows sudden changes in behavior or extremes in behavior.
- Has unexplained absences from school or a sudden change in school performance.
- Has unexplained physical injuries such as burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, black eyes, etc.
- Has frequent yeast or urinary infections.
- Has unusual and age-inappropriate interest in sex.
- Experiences nightmares and bedwetting.
- Is not receiving needed medical or dental care.
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor.
- Has height and weight significantly below age level.
- Lacks adult supervision appropriate for their age.

# 2009: By the numbers

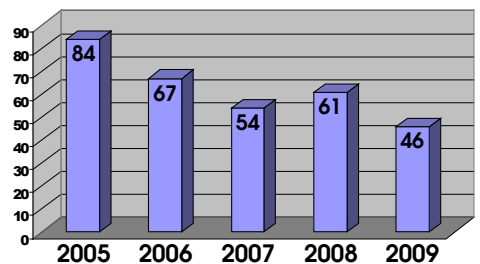
## Calls Answered



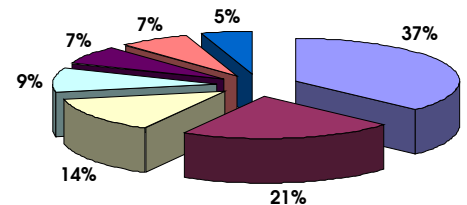
## Number of Investigations



## End-of-Year Placements



## Reasons for Placement



- Dependency
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Delinquency
- Emotional maltreatment
- Incarceration of parent

## Expenses

Personnel.....	\$5,803,011
Placement.....	\$1,101,278
Adoption.....	\$378,395
Purchased Services.....	\$571,851
Administration.....	\$611,102
<b>Total Expenses.....</b>	<b>\$8,465,637</b>

## Revenue

Federal.....	\$4,803,377
State.....	\$954,295
Income from Levies.....	\$3,192,422
Parental Support.....	\$7,881
Other Revenue.....	\$145,647
<b>Total Revenue.....</b>	<b>\$9,103,622</b>
<b>End-of-Year Balance.....</b>	<b>\$5,775,024</b>



**Richland County Children Services Board**  
 731 Scholl Road — Mansfield, Ohio 44907  
 24/7 Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline 419-774-4100  
 Fax: 419-774-4114  
[www.richlandcountychildrenservices.org](http://www.richlandcountychildrenservices.org)