

Every Child's
Story: Our
Commitment
Their Future



Richland County Children Services
2025 Annual Report to the Community

About Our Organization

Mission

To lead our community in assuring the safety, well-being and permanency of children at risk of abuse and neglect.

Vision

In our Ideal community, we envision:

- The community invests in the future of its children by providing opportunities to develop their social, emotional, physical, cognitive and cultural skills;
- Every child has a permanent, emotionally and economically stable family;
- The community values and supports the work of Richland County Children Services through its funding, provision of board leadership, and excellence in county governance;
- A committed staff that is supported by the Board and the community.
- The community respects diversity and supports the racial, cultural and ethnic heritage of its families and neighborhoods.

Revised by the Richland County Children Services Board - February 2023



From the Director's Desk Tara A. Lautzenhiser

Every Child's Story: Our Commitment, Their Future



As the new Executive Director, I am honored to serve Richland County and to continue fostering a collaborative work environment that reflects the mission and vision of RCCS. This past year was a period of growth, learning, and relationship-building for both myself and RCCS.

I focused on creating a positive, collaborative culture where staff feel supported, valued, and comfortable engaging with leadership. While some initiatives required significant time and effort, such as revising the program manual and advancing the Child Advocacy Center (CAC), these efforts have strengthened the foundation of the Agency and positioned it well for continued progress in the coming years.

I implemented several initiatives focused on staff development, organizational growth, and community engagement.

- Increased staff engagement by encouraging active involvement in both agency and community events, including leading the creation of a new agency-hosted initiative, the Family Summer Dayz Celebration.
- Created 'Doughnuts with the Director,' to strengthen relationships between casework staff and leadership. This informal setting supports open communication, enhances transparency, and reinforces alignment with the agency's vision.
- Advanced the development of the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) by securing a medical partnership with Akron Children's Hospital initiating plans to relocate the CAC into our building, a significant first for the county.
- Developed and filled two new agency roles (Forensic Interview Coordinator and Public Relations Supervisor), built stronger governmental partnerships through quarterly meetings with the County Commissioner and Juvenile Court, introduced a leadership-driven staff book club, led a cross-departmental overhaul of the agency program manual, and fostered a more transparent and welcoming workplace through an open-door leadership approach.

I invite everyone who cares about the well-being of children and families in our community to join us in this work and help protect their future, whether by serving as a caseworker or by becoming a foster or adoptive parent. To learn more, please contact us at 419-774-4100.

2025 Report of Services

In 2025, Richland County Children Services provided services to 1,455 alleged child victims. On average, 272 cases were worked every month by RCCS caseworkers.

Screening/Assessment Investigations

Calls into the Agency Screening department: 7,334.
Screened-in and investigated a total of 975 allegations.
Of those, there were:

- 236 Neglect
- 355 Physical abuse
- 93 Sexual
- 41 Emotional maltreatment
- 23 Dependency
- 227 FINS (Family In Need of Assistance)

Protective Ongoing Services

Average ongoing cases per month: 275

Agency Visitation Center

Supervised visits at the agency: 72

Supervised visits at outside facilities: 3

Kinship Care

Children in kinship care per quarter: 191

Average kinship cases per quarter: 104

Foster Care/Institutional Care

Children in Agency custody: 160

Total days in care: 53,398

Total placement costs (residential, institutions, and foster care): \$5,252,758. At the end of 2025, the Agency had 53 licensed foster homes.

Adoption Services

Number of adoptions finalized: 19

FTM's/TDM's

Held 738 Team Decision-Making meetings and 748 Family Team meetings in 2025.

Independent Living Support

Children aging out of care in 2025: 1



1,455

Number of alleged child victims provided with Services

975

Number of child abuse/neglect allegations investigated

160

Average number of children in Agency custody each month

623

Number of children drug tested by RCCS

250

Number of children tested positive for at least one substance

Program Managers



Heather Swanson
Program Manager



Don Newton
Program Manager

Child welfare program managers serve as essential leaders in ensuring child safety, family stability, and high-quality practice across foster care, adoption, and protective services. Program Managers Heather Swanson and Don Newton provide essential guidance to staff as they navigate complex, often traumatic cases.

Heather oversees intake, screening, ongoing services, facilitation, and kinship navigator programs. She has investigated thousands of child abuse cases, including neglect, dependency, emotional maltreatment, physical and sexual abuse, and child fatalities. Heather also provides mandated reporter and Erin's Law training alongside Intake Supervisors and the Child Advocacy Center Coordinator. Mandated reporter training gives professionals an overview of agency operations and the information needed when making a report. Groups trained include Camp NuHop, St. Peter's School, Richland County Juvenile Court, Mansfield City Schools Transportation, CHAP, Roseland Neighborhood Watch, and Encora. Erin's Law, enacted in Ohio in April 2023, requires annual age-appropriate instruction on child sexual abuse prevention for grades K–6 and sexual violence prevention for grades 7–12. For the past two years, Heather and the Intake Supervisors have delivered the required 6th-grade program at Ontario Middle School with parental permission.

As Program Manager, Don oversees four ongoing teams along with the Agency's Family Support Services unit. He serves on the Richland County Domestic Violence Shelter Collaborative and spent the past year presenting RCCS operations to local agencies. He trained new CASA workers twice in 2025 and serves on the steering committee for Richland County Juvenile Court's Family Treatment Court project. Don administers Richland County's Ohio START program, which helps keep children safely with their families while parents receive treatment for substance use.



2025 Community Engagement

In 2025, RCCS employees and their families participated in numerous events throughout the Richland County community. With the support of our community, we shine a light of protection, hope, and healing for every child.



**3rd Annual Valentine's Day Card Collection
for Foster Youth**

OSU Mansfield Community Leaders Luncheon

GEAR UP Mansfield Stakeholders Meeting

Mansfield/Richland County Public Library

Black History Month Celebration

Richland Newhope Step Into Spring Walk

Child Abuse Prevention Month Kick-Off

Wear Blue Day Rally Waterford at Mansfield

Mansfield City Parks Easter Drive -Thru

Lexington HS Mental Health and Wellness Fair

Spring Meal Drive-Thru Giveaway

26th Annual Minority Health Fair

2nd Annual Resource Fair for Families

2nd Annual Peace on My Block Community Fair

Aging Out of the Foster Care System Forum

10th Annual Bike-A-Palooza

2nd Annual Picnic with Pop Day with Dads



2025 Community Engagement



Being A Reader Makes You A Leader
3rd Annual Ontario Kids Festival
Richland County Men's Empowerment Breakfast
Summer Sun Fest
5th Annual Kay Day Celebration
Richland Public Health Community Health Day
Together We Move 5K Sterkel Park
2nd Annual Community Preparedness Fair
175th Richland County Fair
MPD/RCCS Back to School Sock & Shoe Drive



175th Bellville Street Fair
Oasis of Love Community Block Party
Goal Digital Academy Car Show
2nd Annual RCCS/Madison Twp. Fire Dept.
Trunk-or-Treat
Many Shades of Pink—Pink Ribbon Warriors
POMB Pancakes for Peace
Richland County Community Baby Shower
Build a Better Village Resource Fair
Strides for Diabetes Walk
Thanksgiving Food Drive
Prospect Park Neighborhood Celebration
RCCS/RiCI Holiday Toy Drive



Foster Recruitment Highlights



At Richland County Children Services (RCCS), we believe that every child deserves a safe, nurturing, and permanent home.

Recognizing the urgent need for dedicated foster families in our community, RCCS hosted a premier family fun foster parent recruitment event for all ages on June 11, at the Agency.

This initiative aimed not only to increase the number of licensed foster homes but to educate the public on the realities of foster care and to connect with families interested in supporting youth, specifically targeting the increased need for teens, sibling groups, and children with special needs.

The event featured the permanency/placement team, licensing specialists, games, food and live entertainment from the Oolong Gurus.

The foster parent recruitment event not only attracted prospective caregivers but also built community awareness, trust, and supportive networks that benefit



Community Collaborations

RCCS extends our sincere appreciation for the invaluable partnerships and support demonstrated throughout 2025. Together, we have advanced meaningful progress for Richland County and made a significant impact on the children and families served by our agency.

Strong community partnerships help us uplift the families we serve. Together, we build brighter tomorrows. With deep gratitude, we are proud to highlight the following achievements:

RCCS, in collaboration with Richland County Youth and Family Council, hosted the forum **“Aging Out of the Foster Care System... What Now?”** at The Ohio State University at Mansfield. The event highlighted the significant challenges faced by youth transitioning out of foster care and examined how the community can better support their successful transition into adulthood. Through shared insights and collective dialogue, the forum underscored the vital role of coordinated community efforts in helping young people build stable, independent futures.

RCCS, together with the Richland Correctional Institution (RiCI), brought families together for a heartfelt Father’s Day celebration, **“Picnic with Pop – Day with Dads”** inside the facility. Families were able to spend meaningful time together, creating a memorable day for fathers and their children. For many families, these visits are more than a celebration; they’re a lifeline. For children in foster care because of parental incarceration, that connection becomes even more essential.



Aging Out of the Foster Care System ... What Now? panel discussion.



Picnic with Pop – Day with Dads at RiCI.



Financial Highlights

2025 Revenues and Expenses

2025 REVENUE

Revenue Sources (unaudited)

Federal Funds - \$4,621,936

State Funds - \$1,955,686

Local Levy Funds - \$4,340,350

Parental Support - \$15,186

Other – \$116,707

Total - \$11,049,865

2025 EXPENSES

Expense Categories (unaudited)

Personnel - \$6,555,264

Placement Services - \$2,782,456

Adoption Services - \$221,728

Purchased Services - \$361,001

Operations / Overhead - \$295,492

Maintenance & Equipment - \$27,712

Total – \$10,243,653

A Legacy of Fiscal Stewardship



Kevin Goshe
Finance Director

After 22 years of unwavering dedication, meticulous financial oversight, and exemplary leadership, RCCS esteemed Finance Director, Kevin Goshe, retired on December 30, 2025, after 33 years of public service.

Under Kevin's guidance, our financial operations were transformed. He was involved in significant activities such as the passage of 5 levies, overseeing the building renovation in 2006-2007 and ensuring that all audits passed without significant findings. His leadership was marked by a commitment to effective governance, which is reflected in the positive outcomes of his leadership style. Kevin leaves the Finance Department in excellent hands, that will serve RCCS for years to come.

Our Impact

Richland County Children Services facilitated the disbursement of over \$1.8 million in 2025 for various programs to help support our clients, foster parents, adoptive parents, and kinship families in caring for the children in their homes.



KPI (Kinship Permanency Incentive)

\$184,125 - Paid directly from the State to kin families to help with the costs associated with the child (ren) living with them

ESAA (Emergency Services Assistance Allocation)

\$67,426 - Paid to families for things such as rent, utilities and furniture in an effort to keep children in their own homes or return them to their homes

Kinship Care

\$51,011 - Paid to kin families for things such as rent, utilities and furniture in an effort to help them care for the child(ren) in their home

Foster Parent Training

\$11,738 - Stipends paid to foster/adoptive parents and prospective foster/adoptive parents for attending training

Adoption Subsidies

\$915,797 - Paid to parents who adopted children in Agency custody

In addition, the Agency paid **\$226,058** in childcare payments for children placed with kin and in childcare payments for children placed with foster parents who work outside the home.

2025 RCCS Board Members



Nicole Blakley

Chair

January – June 2025



Jerry Snay

Vice Chair



Mary Stentz

Secretary



Judy Forney



Pat A. Heydinger



Jim Nicholson

Chair



Bill Hope

Treasurer



Bennie Allen



Randy Pore



Fred Schuster

Agency 2025 Leadership

Team

Tara Lautzenhiser, MSCJ, Executive Director

Nicole Foulks, MSW LSW, Assistant Director

Kevin Goshe, MBA, Finance/Building & Grounds Director

Sarah Soliday, MBA, Human Resources Manager

Angie Poth, MBA, MIS/Program Support Services

La'Shaun Reuer, BSW, Grievance Officer / Civil Rights Coordinator

Heather Swanson, MSCJ, Program Manager

Don Newton, MBA, Program Manager

Amy Hackedorn, MBA, Sup. of Administrative Services

Brigitte Coles, Public Relations /Community Engagement Supervisor

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