

CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN



Richland County Children Services
2024 ANNUAL REPORT
to the Community

RCCS In 2024 - By The Numbers

Services in 2024

Provided services to 1,757 alleged child victims.

Screening/Assessment Investigations

Calls into the Agency Screening department: 7,640.

Screened-in and investigated a total of 1,120 allegations.

Of those, there were:

- 287 Neglect
- 358 Physical abuse
- 130 Sexual abuse
- 63 Emotional maltreatment
- 36 Dependency
- 246 FINS (Family In Need of Assistance)

Protective Ongoing Services

Average ongoing cases per month: 273

Kinship Care

Monthly average of children in kinship care: 164

Court-granted temporary custody to kin: 100 children total in 2024

Court-granted legal custody to kin: 81 children total in 2024

Foster Care/Institutional Care

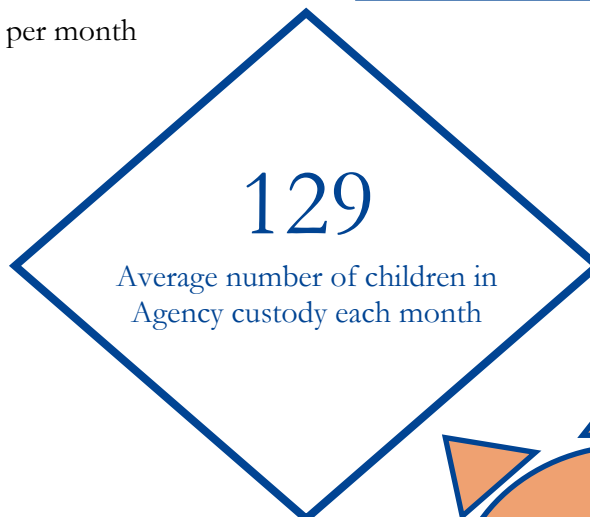
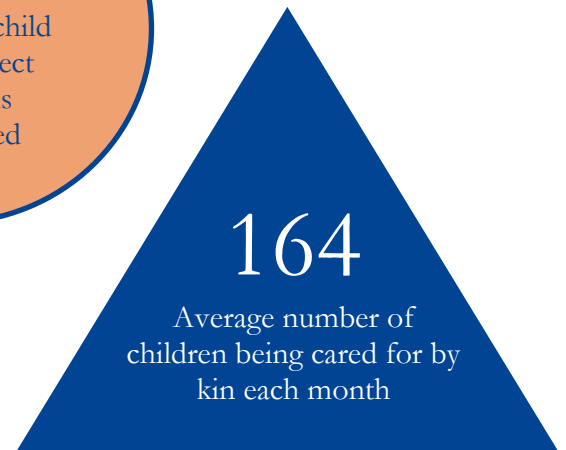
Children in Agency custody: 129 average per month

Adoption Services

Number of adoptions finalized: 31

Independent Living

Children aging out of care in 2024: 8



From the Director's Desk

Nikki Harless



Nikki Harless, MSW LISW-S
RCCS Executive Director

Champions for Children

A champion is someone who fights for the rights of others, and who protects and defends those who cannot speak for themselves. Richland County is filled with champions for our local youth, from individual citizens to law enforcement officers, CASA workers, mental health providers, medical professionals, school officials, and, of course, the employees of Richland County Children Services. We work together tirelessly with our community partners to ensure that the children of Richland County have everything they need to survive and thrive, whether that be a safe and loving home environment, proper access to healthcare, mental health services, or adequate food and clothing.

Since July of 2023, I have worked closely with several notable champions for children, including Director of the Ohio Network of Children's Advocacy Centers Danielle Vandegriff, Senator Mark Romanchuk, Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence Statewide Director of Forensic Nursing Tammy Robertson, Richland County Prosecutor Jodie Schumacher, Sheriff Steve Sheldon, Mansfield Police Chief Jason Bammann, DV Shelter Director Colleen Rice, and Director/CEO of Family Life Counseling Steve Burggraf, in order to develop a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) here in Richland County. This has been a lengthy, time-consuming process for everyone involved, but it will promote more efficient collaboration between all entities involved in child interviews. The ultimate goal of our CAC and every CAC throughout Ohio is to hopefully prevent further trauma to children since they will only need to talk about the initial allegations of their abuse/neglect one time. Without a CAC, a child may end up having to retell the details of the worst experience of their life over and over again, to doctors, police, lawyers, therapists, and others.

I have served as a champion for the children of Richland County for over 32 years and will retire in January 2025. I have seen heartbreaking situations, where families were at the lowest point in their lives. But I have also seen examples of forgiveness and redemption, with families healing themselves and learning how to be champions for each other. This is a difficult job but also a rewarding one, and I am proud of the work that RCCS has done in keeping the children of Richland County safe over the years. If you would like to be a champion for the children of Richland County (either as a caseworker or as a foster/adopt parent), please contact us at (419) 774-4100.

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call (419) 774-4100 anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

~ OUR MISSION ~

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

Champions for Children Child Advocacy Center



CAC Mission Statement:

The mission of the CAC shall be to provide a timely, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary response to allegations of child sexual abuse and severe physical child abuse or neglect in a safe, agency-neutral, child-focused setting. The CAC will facilitate investigations, medical and treatment referrals, and will assist with any consequent legal proceedings to protect and support the children it serves and their families. The CAC will also coordinate education and prevention services.



Champions for Children

CAC Founders



Special acknowledgment must be given to the team of dedicated individuals in Richland County who collaborated with one another for over a year in order to make the Richland County Champions for Children Child Advocacy Center a reality in 2024.



Richland County Sheriff's
Office - Sheriff Steve Sheldon



Mansfield Police Department -
Chief Jason Bammann



Family Life Counseling - Founder
& CEO Dr. Steven Burggraf



DV Shelter - Executive
Director Colleen Rice



Richland County Prosecutor's
Office - Prosecutor Jodie
Schumacher



Richland County Children
Services - Executive Director
Nikki Harless



OAESV - Statewide Director of
Forensic Nursing Tammy
Robertson



2024 Community



In 2024, RCCS employees and their families participated in numerous events throughout the Richland County community (some of which are highlighted below). This volunteerism is just one way that the Agency serves as a champion for the children and families of Richland County.

January through March

Volunteered with People Helping People Meal Service

MLK Day Community Breakfast

Valentine's Day Card Drive

National Wear Red for Heart Health Day

Pizza Party at St. Mary School in Shelby

Richland Newhope's 'Step into Spring' event

Black History Celebration - Mansfield/Richland County Public Library

NAACP's 36th Annual Banquet

Richland Area Chamber's 17th Annual Business Expo

City of Mansfield's Annual Drive Thru Easter Celebration

Shelby Lion's Club - Child Abuse Prevention Month Discussion



April through June

Wear Blue Day – April 10, 2024

24th Annual Minority Health Fair

Mansfield Police Department's Annual Bike-A-Palooza

Peace on My Block Community Fair at Arlin Field

Help Me Grow's Community Baby Shower at Crossroads Church

2nd Annual Ontario Kids Festival

Juneteenth Celebration Festival/Parade

10th Annual Mansfield PRIDE Festival/Parade

Picnic with Pop Fatherhood Celebration

OSU-Mansfield's "Stress Less Fest"

2nd Annual Black Mental Health & Wellness Symposium



y Involvement

July through September

Summer SunFest at Liberty Park in Mansfield
Mansfield Parks Department's Summer Reading Program
Ontario 4th of July Parade/Festival
Oasis of Love 8th Annual Community Block Party
Kay Day Peace March Celebration in Mansfield square
Richland County Fair
WIC 50th Anniversary Lunch & Learn Event
Spread the Light 2024
Third Street Family Health Services 3rd Annual Block Party
Bellville Street Fair
Mansfield City Schools' 'Back to School' Bash
Texas Roadhouse Summer Bash
Official Shake-Up Lemonade Stand 2024
'The Safe Conversation' Conference at OSU-Mansfield

October through December

Many Shades of Pink Breast Cancer Awareness Event
The Great Pumpkin Glow at Kingwood Center Gardens
Texas Roadhouse Ontario Trunk-or-Treat
Community Health Day at Richland Public Health
DV Awareness Month - 'Purple Thursday'
Winter Coat Giveaway at The New Store
NECIC Faith-Based Advisory Breakfast
Red Horse Squadron's Family Day
Sluss Realty's Halloween Treasure Hunt
Community Discussion at Marvin Memorial Library
Jingle & Mingle Christmas Party
NCSC Career Expo Job Fair
Roseland Neighborhood Christmas Party
Holiday Breakfast for Malabar Intermediate School students



Richland County Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)



The Ohio Network of Children's Advocacy Centers conducted a training (entitled **Crime Scene to Trial**) at Tiffin University from 7/16/24-7/18/24 that was focused on providing hands-on training to MDT entities (multi-disciplinary teams) in responding to child abuse/neglect cases. Eleven individuals from Richland County (representing RCCS, the Richland County Prosecutor's Office, Mansfield Police Department, the Richland County Sheriff's Office, and the Domestic Violence Shelter) worked together on two teams in order to learn methodology pertaining to processing child maltreatment crime scenes, interviewing witnesses, interrogating suspects, conducting forensic interviews, applying for search warrants, and making decisions regarding legal charges.



Legal Advocacy



RCCS Agency Attorneys Sarah Exten, JD and Jeffrey Kiggans, JD

RCCS attorneys Jeff Kiggans and Sarah Exten worked tirelessly throughout 2024 to ensure that Agency-involved youth had excellent legal advocacy in the court system.

Throughout 2024, the RCCS legal team filed 241 new complaints in court, filed for ex parte (emergency custody) 35 times, assisted in obtaining court approval for the residential treatment of 11 children, conducted 161 meetings with RCCS casework staff to review case information prior to filing, and averaged 8 court appearances per work day.



Medical Advocacy

Every child who comes into Agency care is assessed for issues related to medical neglect. Many of these children have never been to a dentist and have severe dental issues. Others have chronic health problems that have never been addressed by their parent(s). Our nurse (Renee Blankenship) ensures that all Agency-involved youth are connected with the medications and services necessary to treat their pre-existing conditions, whether those are physical, mental or emotional.



RCCS Agency Nurse Renee Blankenship, RN

Financial Highlights

2024 Revenues and Expenses

2024 REVENUE

Revenue Sources (unaudited)

Federal Funds - \$5,906,872

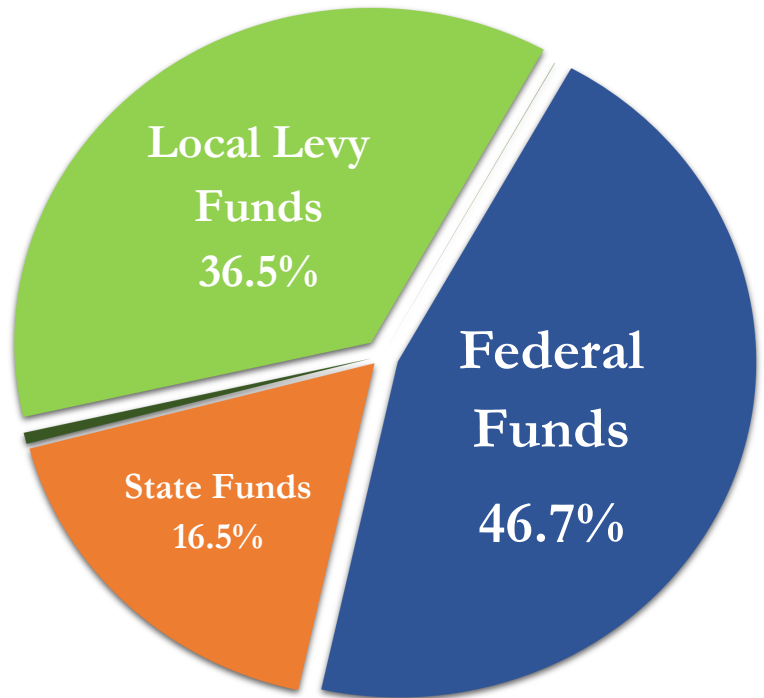
State Funds - \$2,083,090

Local Levy Funds - \$4,617,953

Parental Support - \$5,353

Other – \$36,794

Total - \$12,650,062



2024 EXPENSES

Expense Categories (unaudited)

Personnel - \$7,347,012

Placement Services - \$4,929,550

Adoption Services - \$210,832

Purchased Services - \$348,636

Operations / Overhead - \$677,420

Total – \$13,513,450

Our Impact

Richland County Children Services facilitated the disbursement of over \$1.8 million in 2024 for various programs to help support our clients, foster parents, adoptive parents, and kinship families in caring for the children in their homes. The PRC (Prevention, Retention & Contingency) program was funded through a contract with the local Job & Family Services agency for a total amount of \$79,320. An outline of our local community support programs and their associated expenditures is below:

- **KPI (Kinship Permanency Incentive) - \$205,800** - Paid directly from the State to kin families to help with the costs associated with the child (ren) living with them
- **PRC (Prevention, Retention & Contingency) - \$79,320** - Paid to kin families to help with the costs associated with the child(ren) living with them
- **ESAA (Emergency Services Assistance Allocation) - \$150,239** - 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 - \$67,681** - 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 - \$16,546** - Stipends paid to foster/adoptive parents and prospective foster/adoptive parents for attending training
- **Adoption Subsidies - \$1,151,245.50** - Paid to parents who adopted children in Agency custody
- **In addition, the Agency paid \$144,766 in childcare payments for children placed with foster parents who work outside the home.**

Our 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 RCCS through its funding, provision of board leadership, and excellence in county governance;
- ♦ A committed staff that is supported by the Board and the community; and
- ♦ The community respects diversity and supports the racial, cultural and ethnic heritage of its families and neighborhoods.

Revised by Richland County Children Services Board - February 2023

2024 RCCS Board Members



Nicole Blakley
Chair



Jim Nicholson
Vice Chair



Bill Hope
Treasurer



Mary Stentz
Secretary



Judy Forney



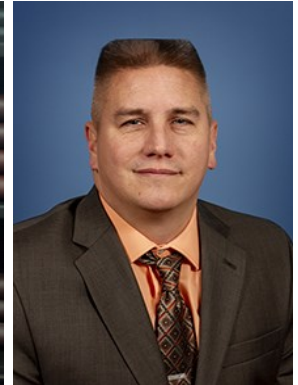
Randy Pore



Patrick A. Heydinger



Bennie Allen



Jerry Snay

Agency 2024 Leadership Team

Nikki Harless, MSW, LISW-S, Executive Director

Nicole Foulks, MSW, LSW, Assistant Director

Kevin Goshe, MBA, Finance/Building & Grounds Director

Drew Miller, MBA, Assistant Finance Director

Amy Hackedorn, MBA, Sup. of Administrative Services

Sarah Soliday, MBA, Human Resource Manager

Angie Poth, MBA, Records/Program Support Manager

La'Shaun Reuer, BSW, DEI Officer

Tara Lautzenhiser, MSCJ, Program Manager

Don Newton, MBA, Program Manager

Richland County Children Services

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