

CHILDREN'S QUARTERLY

Fall 2009

Down Economy Challenges Families & Agencies



Through the first eight months of this year, referrals to Allen County Children Services are up nearly 10% compared to the same time as last year. It's no surprise that the majority of these referrals are economic-need based, with families struggling to pay rent, provide food and groceries, purchase prescription medication and meet other family needs while at the same time, they are faced with decreased working hours or a devastating job loss.

At the same time that the nation's economy is down, state level funding cuts have resulted in decreased resources for all partners of our community's safety net, including Allen County Children Services. With the late August action by a Franklin County Probate Court blocking the release of Ohio Tobacco Settlement dollars for social services programming, expected state funding cuts to the Allen County Children Services total more than \$600,000. However, in the Lima/Allen County community, there is a strong level of inter-agency and intra-agency collaboration that will weather this economic storm.

These cuts would have been much higher and deeper if it were not for the community's ongoing support of the Children Services levy. Your levy support combined with the strategic reduction of non-personnel expenses will enable Allen County Children Services to continue to provide high quality mandated and non-mandated services to the families and children of our community. However, our levy, originally approved in 1985, is scheduled to expire at the end of 2010. We are very appreciative of our community's support and the high value you place on services to children. This spring, we will be asking for your continued support of this very important levy.

Scott H. Ferris, MPA,LSW
ACCS Executive Director



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NOVEMBER IS ADOPTION MONTH

Sarah and Chock Norris thought about becoming foster parents for a long time. It was February of 2001 when they decided, "we can, so we should." They already had three biological children ages 7, 11, & 12.

They started with foster children younger than their own so their kids could help in a care taking role and not a competitive one. In the past 8 years, they have had 21 foster children. They have brought them home from the hospital just after birth and then for as little as a few weeks to more than a year. The Norris family has adopted two children. Johnny is 6 years old and was adopted when he was 4. Katie is 2 and they brought her home from the hospital after she was born.

"The fostering was a good learning experience for our biological children," said Sarah. They quickly realized its not all about them and that sacrifices have to be made. Your stuff is our stuff. And they learned a lot about babies and the effects of drugs and alcohol on them.

It is sometimes tough to say goodbye to the foster children once they are reunited with their family, especially the older ones said Sarah. She offers this advice to new foster parents: "Hang in there, take it one day at a time and don't sweat the small stuff. Pick your battles, give them all you can and don't worry about things that are out of your control."



Sarah & Chock Norris, with Katie and Allen County Juvenile Court Judge Glenn Derryberry.

CAMPAIGN GAINS MOMENTUM

An advertisement graphic with a black border. On the left is a close-up photo of a baby's face. To the right of the photo, the text reads: "Choose Your Partner Carefully..." in large, bold, black letters. Below this, in smaller italicized black font, is "...your child's life depends on it." Underneath that is the phone number "419-227-8590" in large, bold, brown letters. At the bottom, the website "www.allencsb.com" is written in green, followed by a small green house icon.

Since announcing the campaign in March, **67 local organizations** have joined with ACCS in promoting the message: "Choose Your Partner Carefully... Your Child's Life Depends On It". There have been far too many cases all over the state and across the nation of children who have been abused or even killed by their parent's partner. A parent has to consider many things before leaving their children in the care of another....

When you choose a partner for you, you are choosing for your child too. Your baby is counting on you to make the right decision. Never leave your child with someone you don't trust with your child's life. For more information on the campaign including a list of partnering agencies and organizations, go to our website, www.allencsb.com.

ADOPT-A-FAMILY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



For more than 21 years, Allen County Children Services has coordinated the Adopt – A-Family program. Through this project, our families are able to receive food, clothing, toys, books and other essentials at the holiday time that on their own they would not be able to provide. We are inviting you to join us this year in spreading holiday cheer to a family in need. You can help in many different ways:

- A financial contribution to the Adopt – A – Family program
- A financial contribution for a specific family
- Sponsoring a family and then purchasing, wrapping and/or delivering the gifts

Please consider making a contribution or becoming a sponsor. You can contact Missy Makley at (419) 227-8590 with any questions, to make a financial contribution or to sponsor a family. Your participation in Adopt –A – Family will make the holidays special for those less fortunate and will provide you with the gift of giving.

PARENT PROJECT



Kelly Smith
ACCS Family Aide

If you are the parent of a strong-willed or out-of-control child, help is available. “Parent Project” is a 10 to 16 week training program at Allen County Children Services designed specifically for parents of troubled youth. The curriculum teaches concrete identification, prevention, and intervention strategies for the most destructive of adolescent behaviors (poor school attendance and performance, alcohol and other drug use, gangs, runaways, and violent teens).

“Parents attend and learn in a classroom setting to manage teen behavioral problems at home”, said Kelly Smith, ACCS Family Aide and Parent Project Instructor. Parents meet one time each week, two to three hours per session at Children Services.

In addition to “Parent Project”, ACCS also offers other classes including ACT (Adults & Children Together Against Violence), PALS (Parents in Active Learning & Sharing), Budgeting and Personal Power. “Personal Power” is a class for women only to help build their self esteem, and includes instruction on the agency’s recently introduced “Choose Your Partner Carefully” campaign. The “Choose” campaign was designed to prevent the abuse of children at the hands of a parent’s partner. For more information or to register for any of the classes offered by ACCS, call Children Services at 419-227-8590.

ALLEN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

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Protecting Children...Strengthening Families!

We're on the Web!
www.allencsb.com

The mission of Allen County Children Services is to protect children by supporting and strengthening families in partnership with the community.



FOUR PARENTING RESOLUTIONS

- 1) Talk with your children, not at them.
- 2) Respect your children's differences from you and each other.
- 3) Avoid put-downs, even as jokes. Children take them seriously.
- 4) Recognize your children's good decisions and point them out with special compliments.

