

# Division of Children and Family Services Community Newsletter

February 2019, Issue 7

## News and Updates

### DCFS is In Your Neighborhood

On January 15 DCFS held the first In Your Neighborhood event at the Harvard Community Center. About 30 community members attended to learn more about DCFS and how we can work with the community to support families and children in their neighborhood.

DCFS Director, Cynthia Weiskittel talked about the goals of this new meeting series—getting to know our communities and giving them an opportunity to get to know us. “Keeping kids safe is our first priority, but we prefer to do that while keeping families together whenever possible,” said Weiskittel.

DCFS Senior Manager, David Gray then explained how the local neighborhood could work with DCFS to keep families safe, encouraging the audience to call 696-KIDS whenever they suspect child abuse or neglect, even if they aren’t 100 percent sure. “We would rather you guys err on the side of caution,” Gray said. “Our community members are our eyes and ears.”

DCFS Senior Manager, Kathleen Sullivan next spoke about the crucial role that families can play as kinship caregivers. “We know that children do best with their families,” she said. “They reunify with their parents faster, they have fewer behavioral problems when they’re with their families. They maintain their culture, their identity, and their neighborhoods.”

Finally, Senior Manager, Lisa Peterka discussed human trafficking. “Human trafficking happens everywhere,” she said. “It’s not something that just happens overseas. It happens in Ohio; it happens in this neighborhood.” Lisa explained how someone might become involved in human trafficking, and outlined the warning signs to look for, particularly in adolescents.

The speakers then opened the floor to questions and invited the audience to speak one-on-one with staff for specific case-related issues. Representatives from JFS also helped with questions about benefits.

Reporter Nick Castele summed up the event in a [story on Ideastream](#).

Next Event: **DCFS In Your Neighborhood**

Date: Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Time: 5:00pm – 7:00 pm

Location: East End Neighborhood House

2749 Woodhill  
Cleveland, OH 44104  
(216) 791-9378 or (216) 707-6000  
[www.eenh.org](http://www.eenh.org)

## **DCFS Advisory Board Members Approved by County Council HHS Committee.**

Ten nominees received approval from a County Council Health and Human Services Committee to serve on an advisory board to the county's Division of Children and Family Services. Cuyahoga County Council could approve the appointments as early as Feb. 12, and the group could start meeting as early as March 1.

DCFS Director Cynthia Weiskittel will work with the board. The group will gather information, offer advice on policies related to services for children and families, and coordinate between DCFS and community groups. The 10 nominees come from diverse backgrounds, and include representatives from public health, parenting and education groups, child welfare experts and those who have used or been involved with DCFS services. The nominees are:

**M. Gabriella Celeste**, policy director of the Schubert Center for Child Studies at Case Western Reserve University.

**Beverly R. Charles**, who has worked in the offices of the late U.S. Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones and current U.S. Rep. Marcia Fudge.

**David S. Crampton**, an associate professor at Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development at CWRU who has done research on issues related to children in foster care.

**Sonia M. Emerson**, a former youth in foster care who has worked on the Family First Initiative and works with LGBTQ youth in foster care.

**Christin C. Farmer**, president and CEO of Birthing Beautiful Communities, which focuses on infant mortality.

**Dr. Andrew S. Garner**, a pediatrician at University Hospitals.

**Angela M. Newman-White**, who works with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health coordinating and overseeing child and maternal health programs.

**Debra Rex**, recently retired CEO at Beech Brook, a behavioral health agency.

**Victor A. Ruiz**, executive director of Esperanza Inc. and a member of the editorial board for cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer.

**Lakecia Wild**, a former youth in foster care.

## **New Resources for Children in Kinship Care**

In 2018, out of the 1,735 children placed in foster care, 792 were placed with a certified approved relative. Unfortunately, many kinship caregivers have no way of providing the therapeutic support most

children need. These issues, if left unaddressed, can destabilize a home and disrupt placements. In 2018, 21.6 percent of kinship placements were disrupted, some permanently.

To help remedy this situation, we're working with the ADAMHS board to provide children in kinship care with a new level of service. Thanks to a new grant, we can now offer:

- Therapeutic services, beginning within 7 days of the completed referral.
- Access to a 24/7 crisis line for behavioral emergencies.
- Wraparound supports, including unconventional therapeutic or prosocial activities.

The program will focus primarily on new placements and is most suitable for older children and teenagers.

### **Featured Community Partner:**

#### **Open Table Transforms into Community of Hope: Year 3 in Cleveland**



In 2018, the Open Table initiative in Cleveland exploded after being featured throughout the year in Cleveland.com and the Plain Dealer. Open Table launched in 2017 as a Cuyahoga County initiative for youth who are aging out of the foster care system. As the program has grown and evolved, the County has continued to offer their support and collaboration.

Open Table now has over 300 registered volunteers. Of the youth who finished their first year, 93 percent are still in a relationship with their table members. Of the groups launched this year, 89 percent of them meet consistently. Remarkably, 100 percent of participating young adults are housed securely and 89 percent are working or enrolled in school. Open Table is seeing young people set goals and achieve them with the support of their community. [Read more](#)

For more information about Open Table, please go to [www.hopeCLE.org](http://www.hopeCLE.org) and follow them on Facebook for up to date posts on their work at <https://www.facebook.com/hopeCLE.org/>.

## **DCFS Facts and Figures**

### **Custody Data as of January 3, 2019**

Court Ordered Protective Supervision (COPS) Children	739
In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Children	2,766
<b>Custody Type</b>	
Emergency Custody/Ex-parte/Officer Acceptance/Agency Authority	747
Initial Voluntary Agreement for Custody	3
Permanent Custody/Surrender	567
Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA)	59
Temporary Custody 1st Extension	121
Temporary Custody 2nd Extension	41
Temporary Custody/Court Order	1,005
Total	2,543

[More details here.](#) \*This report is updated weekly every Monday.

[Read the DCFS Yearly Statistical Report here](#)

## Resources

[Online Resource Guide](#)

[Neighborhood Collaboratives](#)

[Mandated Reporting](#)

[Quality Parenting Initiative](#)

[Online Caregiver/Parenting Videos](#)

[Foster Parent Training Schedule](#)

[Adoptable Kids](#)