



Cuyahoga County
Together We Thrive

Cuyahoga Job and Family Services

Division of Children and Family Services Community Newsletter

September 2018, Issue 2

News and Updates

DCFS Working to Implement Independent Panel Recommendations

Cuyahoga County released a limited version of the DCFS independent panel report and recommendations. Some details of the report have been redacted by the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office due to the pending criminal case against the mother of Aniya Day Garrett and her boyfriend. ([Read the report](#)) The report led to the changes announced by County Executive Budish last month. The budget and administrative process for implementing of those changes have begun. Some measures such as allocating funding, additional staff positions, and a community advisory committee require County Council approval. Other recommendations already being implemented include:

- A Deputy Sheriff has been assigned to DCFS and is now located inside the building to assist with investigation as needed.
- An additional hiring class is being added in order to increase staffing levels. Job postings for Child Protection Specialists are currently [online until September 21, 2018](#). A [Realistic Job Preview](#) is also available online for potential applicants.
- DCFS met with police departments and law enforcement officials to implement a new Memorandum of Understanding which outlines how law enforcement and DCFS will cooperate and coordinate with each other on child abuse and neglect cases.
- DCFS staff have conducted mandated reporter training for many local school districts and child care providers leading up to the start of the school year. The trainings cover state law, what is required of mandated reporters, how they can report suspected cases of abuse and neglect, and how they can assist the agency in investigations. Additional training sessions for schools, child care providers, and other public/community groups are available by request. [You can submit an online request here](#). The training department will also begin to develop a new six-hour training for child care providers in order to help them meet state licensing requirements.
- Shadowbox training is being conducted for senior managers, supervisors and workers to help improve decision-making, consistency, and critical thinking skills. Shadowbox is a training method initially developed for first responders, that has been adapted to meet the needs of children services professionals. This is not a typical classroom training. Shadowbox uses

realistic scenarios of decision points and desired outcomes. Participants are asked to make the best decision possible based on the information presented to them.

The Collaboratives- Partners in the Promise to Children!

by Zulma Zabala

CEO, East End Neighborhood House

Chair, The Council of Neighborhood Leaders

Children are perhaps the most vulnerable members of our community. Children therefore, depend on the promise that adults would always exercise the charge of keeping them safe and clearing the path for their success. In the eve of the terrible loss of a child's life, human behavior could make us question our commitment to this promise. Over 20 years ago DCFS, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, community leaders and organizations came together to develop the safety network necessary to sustain the promise.

It was born as the Family to Family Initiative. First the goal was to build networks of public service providers, social services organizations, schools, faith-based leaders, neighbors, and families to form what is now known as the Collaboratives. These Collaboratives still today share updates on the needs and challenges faced by families and children involved or at risk of involvement with the child welfare system. Critical to this network is the organic sharing of resources and tools to help families and children. It creates an on-going method for updating on those resources that are viable, and an entry point for families to access such services.

Each Collaborative is led and generated from neighborhood-based organizations that also provide trained, educated and committed staff that offer direct services to these families. The same staff sits side by side with DCFS staff to service as a community voice, advocate and resource on behalf of children's well-being. While we all wish that children could thrive in their neighborhoods and with their families, we know sometimes a child's best scenario involves a kinship care provider, a foster or adoptive parent; the Collaborative's staff works with DCFS and other relevant providers to identify best options.

Today there are nine organizations leading twelve Collaboratives county-wide. They continue to evolve within their neighborhoods to identify and implement best services to serve children and their families. Each organization leading Collaboratives offer a myriad of services: access to basic needs; early childhood/youth services; substance abuse services; parenting classes; counseling; referral sourcing; housing; employment assistance; education; health and wellness and many other like services. Collectively they share the distribution of responsibility to represent various neighborhoods in the county, including inner ring suburbs. Together they also developed and lead the Council of Neighborhood Leaders as a way to offer one voice for the collective and effectively streamline their services in collaboration with the county.

The Safety-Net they represent is continuously updated, enhanced and strengthened; adjusting to the ever-evolving needs of children, today during a time when the families that care for them face an insurmountable amount of challenges. Hence, this collective work, while powerful is extremely delicate. Still we all show up as our best selves to meet the promise.

The Nine Organizations leading Collaboratives are:

- Catholic Charities: Fatima Family Center and Saint Martin de Porres Community Center
- City of Lakewood
- Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority
- East End Neighborhood House, Inc.
- Murtis Taylor Human Services System
- West Side Community House
- University Settlement
- Parma City Schools
- The Centers for Families & Children

Back to School at Family Fun Day

The first annual Cuyahoga County Family Fun Day was held on Public Square Tuesday, August 7. A number of County Departments participated in the event hosting tents and tables where staff were on hand to greet residents, distribute information and discuss County programs and services. Hundreds of individuals and families showed up and made their way through Public Square stopping to learn more about particular services that interested them.

The Department of Health and Human Service was well represented with staff from the Division of Children and Family Services, Child Support Services, Job and Family Services, Senior and Adult Services, Invest in Children Office of Early Childhood, Family and Children First Council, Office of Reentry, and Fatherhood Initiative all there to showcase our services to residents. Other County departments participating included Consumer Affairs, the Sheriff's Department and the Board of Elections.

DCFS also used the opportunity kick-off our annual backpack/school supply giveaway to families currently working with the agency. DCFS distributed 250 backpacks to families in their caseload at the event and followed up after the event to provide school supplies to an additional 1,000 families through their caseworkers.

This year more than two dozen organizations and individuals helped make sure this valuable assistance to our families was possible:

Be Well Solutions
Calvary Congregational
Children Reunited



Christ Church
Church of Christ at Forest Hills
Cleveland Clinic- Genomic Medical Institute
Cleveland Foundation
Cuyahoga County Administration Building
Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities
Cuyahoga County Board of Elections
Cuyahoga County Juvenile Justice Center
Cuyahoga County Prosecutors
Double Tree Hotel- Beachwood
Double Tree Hotel- Downtown
Fairview Park Early Childhood PTA
Findaway
First Interstate Properties, LTD.
Furniture Concepts
Hyatt Regency Cleveland at the Arcade
Lakewood Early Childhood PTA
Lewis Little Folks
Majestic Steel
National General Insurance
Nikki Decore
Soul Stretch Yoga
StreamLink Software
Vitamix



DCFS would also like to thank the 9th grade students and teachers from Campus International who came and sorted school supplies and to the staff from Walter Haverfield who came and stuffed backpacks!

Class of 2018 – Constructing Roads to Success

Every year we gather to celebrate the brave and resilient young people in DCFS custody who graduate from high school. The class of 2018 presented 66 graduates, from high schools throughout Ohio. This number represents 75% of the 88 youth, in DCFS custody, who entered their senior year for the 2017-18 school term. This year's graduation program was hosted at the Jerry & Sue Thornton Center, on the Cuyahoga Community College Metro Campus.



The Graduation, themed “Constructing Roads to Success”, opened with Cynthia Wieskittel delivering a warm welcome to the graduates and their guests. Maryann Dowdell, an aged out youth and member of the first Sullivan-Deckard Scholars cohort in 2015, gave powerful words of inspiration to the graduates. Maryann, a senior at Cleveland State University, very candidly let the graduates know that in spite of the reasons they came into foster care they have the ability to build the future of their choice. This year's keynote address was given by, LaToya Logan. LaToya used the theme to give a riveting and moving speech that encouraged the youth to embrace this construction phase and build bridges that move out of the past and forgive those who wronged them. Each youth received a laptop, printer and \$500 stipend. Additionally, thanks to a gift from Ohio Jobs & Family Services, each graduate was able to receive 2 new luggage pieces and Bluetooth earbuds.



Finally, this year the fourth cohort of Sullivan-Deckard Opportunity Scholars started their college journey. These inspiring students receive full tuition, room, board, and fees for enrollment at Cleveland State University. The program offers year-round support specifically for students who age out of foster care. Of this year's cohort, five youth were from Cuyahoga County. Each of the five new Scholars also received Amazon Kindles, in addition to their other graduation gifts.

DCFS salutes the Class of 2018!

DCFS Facts and Figures

Custody Data as of August 27, 2018

Court Ordered Protective Supervision (COPS) Children	735
In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Children	2,903
Custody Type	
Emergency Custody/Ex-parte/Officer Acceptance/Agency Authority	764
Initial Voluntary Agreement for Custody	2
Permanent Custody/Surrender	525
Planned Perm. Living Arrangement (PPLA)	49
Temp. Custody 1st Extension	97
Temp. Custody 2nd Extension	45
Temporary Custody/Court Order	965
Total	2,441

[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](#)