

Portage JFS Open Lines

Portage County Department of Job & Family Services, Anita D. Herington, Ph.D., Director

Kevin Gowan planning projects as new CSEA Administrator

Kevin J. Gowan was recently appointed Administrator of our Child Support Enforcement agency (CSEA) and immediately got involved with important projects.

Digital Imaging of cases will now be an ongoing task which will enable information in case files to be more secure and for the staff to have easier access to them, he said. Multiple workers will be able to look at a case, there would be no lost files such as with "paper" files, and the system will be backed up daily to a disc at a separate location. Digital Imaging is also a great help in safeguarding federal tax information that is in case files, which is required by law, he explained.

"Planning is also underway for a legal seminar on December 7 which will include presentations from Domestic Relations Court, Juvenile Court, the Prosecutor and CSEA staff," Kevin said. Continuing legal education credits for attorneys are pending with the Ohio Supreme Court.

Kevin comes to Portage County CSEA with experience as the Support Enforcement Manager of the Cuyahoga County CSEA where he also served in other administrative and training positions over the past eleven years.

"We are very excited to have Kevin on our management team at JFS, bringing extensive experience in training staff, evaluating programs and directing an agency's performance," Anita Herington, Director of JFS said. "One of the important aspects of his experience is his work regarding the agency's performance on key state and federal indicators including mandatory federal incentives, and devising plans to meet performance goals."

In Cleveland, he also worked on a special project to improve agency effi-



Kevin Gowan, CSEA Administrator

ciency and customer service.

Kevin has a bachelor of arts degree from Marquette University and is certified in the ELITE Leadership program from Cleveland State University.

The staff of CSEA provides direct services to families including locating non-residential parents, establishing paternity, and establishing, modifying and enforcing child support and medical support orders.

There are 36 staff members in the department including attorneys, administrative hearing officers, supervisors, case managers, account clerks and support staff. In 2006, CSEA distributed a total of \$23,152,007 in support payments for both current cases and those in arrearages. They had 10,527 open cases last year.

Thank you to all who donated to United Way—More than double the amount of JFS staff members donated to United Way this year! You will help support 17 local agencies and 39 programs that help our community and also assist us in our jobs. And great thanks to the HEROS Committee for organizing the pizza sale with proceeds going to United Way!

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Oct. 29 pizza sales to benefit foster children's holiday party

A holiday party for Portage County foster children will benefit from a special event at Cici's Pizza in Streetsboro Monday, Oct. 29. Ten percent of the net sales between 4:00-8:00 p.m. will be donated to the annual holiday party planned by Children Services for the children in foster care and foster parents in the county.

Children Services staff will also be holding a raffle at the pizza buffet restaurant including Cleveland Cavs and Indians autographed items, a movie basket donated by the HEROS committee, gift cards and Cici's pizza pack. Special celebrity appearances will be announced soon.

"We thought a Monday would be a great time because more people might be buying pizza for Monday night football," Cathi Rufener, Supervisor in Children Services said.

"The event was also held in September, which raised a nice amount for the party but we are hoping for an even bigger turnout Oct. 29. We appreciate Cici's participation," she said. In addition to treats for the party, holiday gifts for over 100 children are purchased with the funds raised each year.



Selling tickets for prizes at the last pizza fundraiser are (from left): Alexis Blanton, PCSA Assessment Supervisor Cathi Rufener, Social Services Worker Teresa Adkins, Social Services Worker Shannel Blanton and Alicia Blanton.

Workforce Connection aids businesses and job seekers during job losses

To aid workers who have lost their jobs because of companies closing or downsizing, Portage Workforce Connection has funding for dislocated workers who need retraining. Those who have been laid off or lost a job can receive free services that will help them to fill jobs that are in demand in the area. An "On the Job Training" program is also available for employers interested in hiring and training employees. The Portage Workforce Connection can assist with the wages of these employees up to 50% of their wages during their training period, according to Becky Porcase, Manager of the Workforce Connection. Orientations for the On the Job Training program are held every Monday.

Career planning, access to training and education programs, job listings from local employers, resume assistance and access to office equipment is provided, in addition to job search instruction classes and staff-assisted or self-directed internet job search, interviewing skill development, labor market and wage information, skills and needs assessments, job readiness training, and information about other county resources. Businesses can also take advantage of access to economic development tools and resources such as business incentive programs.

CSEA staff recognized during Child Support Awareness Month



At the celebration luncheon for CSEA during Child Support Awareness Month are (from left): Case Managers Judy Scott, Donna Hall, Lisa Walker, Detra Tabor, Account Clerk Supervisor Paula Barholt and Account Clerk Margie Bryte.



Assistant Director-Administration Brian Boykin receives a resolution from County Commissioner Maureen Frederick in honor of Child Support Awareness Month, along with CSEA Juvenile Court Attorney Roxana Lyle and Supervisor Jeff Mitiga at the CSEA staff meeting.

Child Health Clinic sees increase in children, expands hours

Due to the increase in the number of children seen at the Portage County Child Health Clinic in Ravenna, the hours that children can be seen by the nursing staff have been increased.

"We feel the need to increase clinical hours at our clinic in Ravenna to accommodate the needs of the community," Heather Pavlich, Administrator of Child Health Services said.

The clinic nurses see children at the well child clinic, acute (sick) clinic and specialty clinics within the hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

"With the increased bus service by PARTA in more areas of the county, as well as transportation by the Medicaid Managed Care providers, we can now service more children from outlying areas at the Child Health Clinic in Ravenna," Heather said.

For those reasons, the Windham Child Health Clinic, where the Child Health Services staff also provided services two Fridays a month, has closed, with the last clinic held on September 21.

PARTA has new service routes to Windham and Garrettsville that stop at the Clinic at the county administration building, as well as routes that come into the administration building from many areas of Kent and Ravenna. PARTA charges \$1.00 per ride and \$.50 for children, seniors and the disabled. They also make door-to-door trips to all other areas of the county by appointment, which is \$4.00 per ride or \$2.00 for children, seniors or the disabled. This is scheduled by calling 1-800-673-1287 or 330-678-1287.

Transportation availability for children and parents to get to the clinic has also been increased with free transportation provided by the three Medicaid Managed Care providers that serve Portage County -

CareSource, Buckeye Health and Unison. Clients of each of those providers can call them to get transportation to and from their medical appointments, including the Clinic.

Buckeye provides transportation to all medical and dental appointments, Unison and CareSource provide transportation for medical appointments as well as Medicaid re-determination for 30-one way trips or 15 round trips per year.

Well child care services include physical exams, routine immunizations and blood tests for anemia and lead poisoning. Other services of Child Health Services include sick

child care, vision and hearing clinics, health education programs, safety programs with bike helmets, and car seats with proper installation training. Portage County children between the ages of birth to 21 years old are provided services. It is located across the waiting room from the WIC office.

In addition to Medicaid clients, the Child Health Clinic also serves Portage County residents with private insurance and those who are self-pay, based on a sliding fee scale depending on household income. Clinic visits are by appointment by calling 330-297-KIDS.

Child Health Services staff is comprised of Virginia Fehrmann,

Help Me Grow hosts summer kick off picnic for families



Virginia Fehrmann, Help Me Grow Project Director, plays with children at the Annual Help Me Grow Picnic which kicks off the parenting meeting programs. Families enjoyed games, clowns, a picnic lunch and family fun at City Park. Help Me Grow is a program of Child Health Services, for pregnant women, new mothers and children to age three who have a developmental delay or are at risk for developmental delays. Services provided include: nurse home visits, service coordination, developmental screening, parenting support and education, and resource linkage. Services are free to eligible families.

Project Director of Help Me Grow; Jill Smith, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner; Sharon Waesch, Registered Nurse; Connie Weber, Public Health Nurse; Sue Cimino, Service Coordinator-Help Me Grow; Angela Currey, Service Coordinator -Help Me Grow; Becky Walters, Service Coordinator; Julie Nelson, Service Coordinator; Julie Smith, Service Coordinator; Kari Sansone, Service Coordinator; Judy Harper, Central Intake-Help Me Grow; Kathy Lennon, Newborn Nurse-Visit-Help Me Grow; Cheri Michael, Family Support Specialist for Help Me Grow; Mahasin Askia - Certified Medical Assistant Receptionist; Jennifer Biltz, Administrative Assistant; and Dawn Skrapics, Clerk Technician.



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Social Services Worker Teresa Adkins and son Aidan chat with PCSA Manager Penny Ray at the Fall Fest held at Rufener Hilltop Farms by PCSA. Foster families enjoyed hay rides, a corn maze, a shelled corn slide, a giant pumpkin playhouse, hot dogs, cider and treats.

Moving In, Moving Up

New Hires:

Mahasin Askia - Certified Medical Assistant/Receptionist - Child Health Services

Karrie McComb - Income Maintenance Worker 3 - Adult Unit Public Assistance

Promotions:

Denise Crouse from Income Maintenance Aide 2 - Reception to Clerical Specialist 4 - One Stop

Jodie Strausser from Income Maintenance Worker 2 - PRC to Income Maintenance Worker 3 - Daycare

Transfers:

Pam Rohrbach from Income Maintenance Worker 3 Adult/Family Unit - to Income Maintenance Worker 3 Intake Unit



A retirement party was held for Kathy Ehasz, Income Maintenance Aide 2 in Public Assistance, when she retired recently. The County Commissioners presented Kathy with a proclamation thanking her for all her service to the county during her 32 years in various divisions of JFS including Public Assistance and Child Support Enforcement. Pictured from left: Income Maintenance Supervisor Terri Brunswick, Kathy Ehasz, and Public Assistance Direct Services Manager Linda Seeman.



Lori Kainrad (third from left) was honored upon her retirement with 30 years service with JFS. Lori retired as an Income Maintenance Worker 3 in Public Assistance. The County Commissioners presented Lori with a proclamation thanking her for her dedicated service to the citizens of the county. Pictured with Lori are Rebecca Abbott, IM Supervisor; Terri Brunswick, IM Supervisor and Linda Seeman, Public Assistance Direct Services Manager.