

Athens County



Services

2016 Annual Report



Athens County
Children Services

A Message from our Executive Director



Dear Athens Community,

Our children are our future. Our staff is inspired by the continued support and partnership we share with the Athens community in providing services to protect the safety and well-being of the children of Athens. We simply could not do this important work without the firm backing of the local Athens community that surrounds us here on Stonybrook Drive.

ACCS' core services and innovative programs are highlighted in the pages of this report, where you will find some of the trends we experienced throughout the year.

Early in the year we held a series of community and stakeholder meetings to establish service priorities and focus our energy for our 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. Since that time community partners, Board, volunteers, and staff have established a series of workgroups aimed at moving the agency ahead in providing innovative services and to respond to the pressing needs of the children and families we serve.

A growing challenge in recent years, addictions of young parents in our community continue to dominate our protective caseload and put increasing pressure on the safety and well-being of our children and families in Athens County. These trends are consistent with what is happening across the state of Ohio, and, quite frankly, in many communities across the nation.

As you will read in the following pages, we are seeing an increasing number of children coming into care at younger ages and staying in care longer. We are working hard to lessen the trauma and impact on the children entrusted to our care while their parents receive the necessary treatment and support from our community providers.

We are so fortunate to have a strong foster parent network that provides excellent care for our children. Very positive trends are occurring in that an increasing number of our children have been able to be safely reunited with their parents, or permanently cared for by relatives.

The challenges continue and the work is hard, but with the partnership of the Athens community we look to the future with energy and enthusiasm.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Hill". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Catherine Hill, MSW, LSW
Executive Director



Intake & Assessment

A referral is an allegation of child abuse or neglect and can be made by phone or in person. All referrals are documented and evaluated for services, referrals or investigation by our Intake staff.

In 2016 ACCS had

- ***1832 referrals of abuse or neglect***
 - ***563 were screened in for assessment***
 - ***includes 1069 children***
- ***34 referrals involving drug-impacted infants***

ACCS is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. On weekends, holidays and after hours, we utilize a beeper service with a caseworker as the first responder and a supervisor as back-up. A Family Violence Investigator is contracted through the Sheriff's Office, housed in the Intake unit and is also assigned to sexual abuse cases and severe physical abuse cases. The investigator is responsible for making referrals to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office on potential criminal matters.

Alternative Response

Alternative Response (AR) allows ACCS to provide a different approach for lower risk cases. AR acknowledges that families are the best expert for their own situation. Families are involved in the decision-making process from the beginning, including the initial determination of whether AR is right for them. AR connects families to community organizations and service providers to address and resolve concerns as they arise. Identifying concerns early on and working with families as equal partners can alleviate the stresses that often lead to abuse and neglect. This approach helps sustain families and prevent foster care placements.

In 2016 the AR team

- ***Worked with 37 families from the prior year***
- ***245 new families***



April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. ACCS partnered with SEPTA to have hand-painted pinwheels crafted from recycled soda cans. The pinwheel display represented the referrals of abuse and neglect we received in 2016.

Family Services

Our Family Services unit provides ongoing services when a case needs more extensive intervention or a longer term to resolve family concerns. The families served by this unit have complex needs and are often involved with Juvenile Court, either through an order that requires the family to work with the agency while their children remain in their home, or the court has determined it is unsafe for the children to remain home and have placed the children in the temporary custody of the agency. Reuniting and restoring families is the team's primary goal.

In 2016 Family Services

- ***Worked with 127 families from the prior year***
 - ***244 children***
- ***Worked with 46 new families***
 - ***87 children***



Family Services Supervisor, Laura Somers, and Intake Supervisor, Laura Bobo, at the Foster Parent Banquet.

Family Support

The Family Support Unit consists of parent mentors, family support caseworkers, and transportation workers. The unit provides visitation and transportation services to families whose children are living in kinship or foster care.

In 2016 Family Support

- ***Worked with an average of 29 families a month***
 - ***Worked with a total of 147 children***
- ***Monitored 1992 visits between children and their birth families***
 - ***Up 11% from 2015***
- ***Provided 1597 transports to the families and children working with the agency***

Permanent Families

Permanency is a sense of stability, support and connection most of us take for granted. It is a vital component for lifelong well being. Our primary goal is to restore and reunify children with their birth families whenever possible. A child may be placed in the permanent custody of ACCS by the juvenile court if a parent willingly surrenders, abandons a child, or is unable to adequately address safety factors in the home.

In 2016 ACCS

- Was awarded permanent custody of 19 children
- Finalized the adoptions for 15 children
- Ended the year with 29 children available for adoption

ACCS has a unique caseworker position that provides post adoption services to families in Athens County that have finalized adoptions (public, private, kinship, or international). This is a voluntary program in which the worker can provide support in areas such as crisis management, behavioral management, and referral to services. This position also has quarterly activities for adoptive families. In 2016 there were 349 contacts with adoptive families made by this worker. Contact ACCS for questions or more information.



November is National Adoption Month. Our Adoption Staff gathered at the Athens County Courthouse to celebrate National Adoption Day.



signature program
DAVE THOMAS
FOUNDATION FOR ADOPTION.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK), funded by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, is a grant-funded regional partnership that allows for a dedicated, full-time recruiter to do evidence based, child focused recruitment for adoptive families for children in permanent custody.

In 2016 ACCS' Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter

- Matched 14 children
- Finalized 9 adoptions



ACCS Foster Parents, Roberta and Steve Pullins, were the 2016 Foster Parents of the Year Award winners. Here they are with caseworker, Joey Scott.

Foster Care and Beyond

The ACCS Placement unit manages all child placement related services. This includes recruiting, training, licensing, and maintaining a dedicated group of foster homes to care for children in agency custody. The agency continuously recruits new foster parents needed for sibling groups, children and youth of all ages in all Athens County school districts. Our Academic and Life Skills Caseworker is assigned to all school age foster youth to assure the best possible educational and independent living outcomes for all children and youth.

In 2016 ACCS

- Had custody of 179 children
 - Up 23% from 2015
- 84 children came into custody throughout the year
- Had 36 licensed foster homes
 - Licensed 4 new homes
- Had 36 kinship homes providing care for 54 children
- Completed 32 kinship homestudies

Placement days



In addition to having more children in foster care in 2016, the number of days they stayed in care increased as well. The cost for children in care can range from \$24 to \$420 per child, per day, depending on the child's specific needs.

Training

The Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center (SEORTC) is hosted by ACCS and is one of eight sites of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program sponsored by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The SEORTC provides high-quality, family-centered, competency based training to staff and caregivers of public child welfare agencies in 13 surrounding counties.

In 2016 SEORTC

- Hosted 130 workshops
 - Attended by 1083 child welfare professionals
 - 855 total training hours
- Hosted 206 Foster Parent Trainings
 - Attended by 2482 foster parents
 - 744 total training hours



ACCS Leadership and members of our Board smile while attending the National Adoption Day adoption finalizations at the Athens County Courthouse.

Quality Services

In order to assure the best possible outcomes for children and families the Quality Assurance (QA) unit is responsible for training staff and monitoring compliance with administrative rules. The QA unit facilitates important case review meetings for ACCS, parents, and partner agencies to measure progress and plan services.

In 2016 Quality Assurance

- Facilitated 641 case reviews



A cuddly visitor. Volunteer and Intern Manager, Katherine Marshall, takes a turn holding a baby kangaroo during a visit from the Columbus Zoo, hosted by our Visitation Center, for our kids in care.

The Nation-wide Opiate Epidemic Impacts Children In Our Community

Ohio Leads the nation in opiate addiction issues.

Among the 100,000 cases entering Ohio's child Protection system annually, families dealing with opiate and/or cocaine abuse consume the most resources.

Athens County

In 2016 Athens County had 84 NEW Custody Cases

- 36 (43%) cases were drug-impacted
- 5 (14%) involved drug-impacted infants

In addition to the increase in number of children in our care, the number of days those children stayed in our care went up as well.

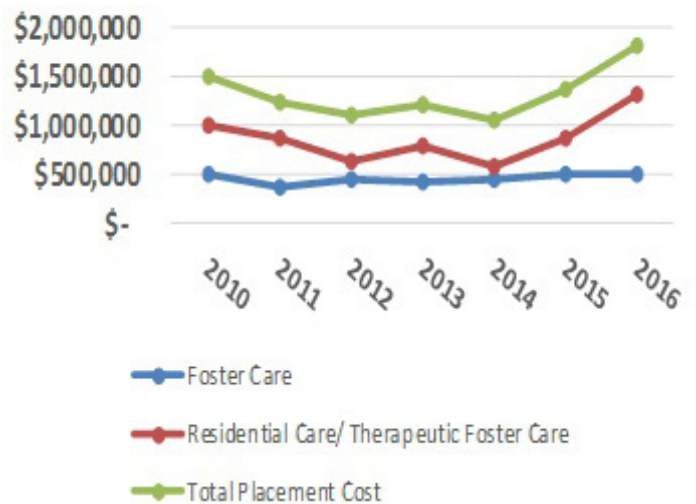
179 children spent a cumulative total of 44,659 placement days in our custody.

The costs for children in care in Athens County range from \$24 per day to \$420 per day.

Athens County spent \$1,803,268 in placement costs in 2016.

Up 33% from 2015

Placement Costs



Ohio's child protective services system has received no new fiscal resources to address this epidemic and the surge in cases.

During the same period when custody numbers were increasing by 19% (since 2009), Ohio experienced a 17% reduction in state resources specific to child protective services.



Children and families from all over Athens County gathered at the Walter Fieldhouse for the 29th annual Kidfest, held every year in April as part of child abuse prevention month.

In the Community

ACCS sponsored a number of community events in 2016 including Kidfest, Lace Up For Kids, and the Santa Tree Project. ACCS staff and volunteers also participated in a number of community events, including the first annual Athens Area Stand Down, The Ohio University Homecoming Parade, The Paw Paw Festival, Kids Day at the Athens County Fair, Wear Blue to Work Day and more.

In 2016 ACCS

- **Provided Santa Tree gifts to over 1350 children**
- **Sent over 300 children back to school with new shoes through the Lace Up for Kids project**

ACCS's Volunteer & Intern program continued to grow in 2016. These future professionals served in every unit of our agency and worked in prevention, casework, public relations and administration.

In 2016 the Volunteer & Intern Program

- **Ended the year with 112 volunteers**
 - **Our volunteers gave 624 volunteer hours, valued at an estimated *\$15,063, to the community**
- **Supervised 20 interns**
 - **From 7 different majors**

***www.volunteeringinamerica.gov**

School Outreach

Our School Outreach Team seeks to strengthen families and promote positive school relationships to enhance student school success.

In 2016 the School Outreach team

- **Received 5356 referrals for services from parents and school staff**
- **Worked in all 5 Athens County School Districts and provided 12,152 direct units of services**
- **Hosted 195 group support sessions**
- **Hosted the 9th annual Peanut Butter and Jelly Project**
 - **Distributed PB&J and bread to 3,690 children**
- **Referred 1,941 children for additional services**

Community Food Initiatives (CFI) donated 2,814 pounds of fresh produce for our School Outreach team to distribute during the Peanut Butter & Jelly Project.



Rotary at Work. Every year the Athens Noon Rotary Club provides Thanksgiving "baskets", complete with turkey and all the trimmings for 50 of our local families.



COMCorps member, Samantha Jones, sits with over 20,000 cans of food raised by OU Greek Life's canned food drive. Our School Outreach team distributed this food to children and families during the PB&J Project.

2016 Financial Summary

Executive Director

Catherine Hill, MSW, LSW

Deputy Directors

Otis Crockron, MBA
Finance and Operations

Sheila Shafer, MA, LSW
Programs

2016 Athens County Commissioners

Charlie Adkins
Chris Chmiel
Lenny Eliason

2016 Board Members

Nancy Schell, Chair
Missy Bond
Linda Main Clark
Chris Innis
Barry Oches
Shelley Lieberman
Dave Diggle
John Sole

Beginning Balance	\$1,721,019
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2016 Revenues

Local Operating Levy	\$3,936,347
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Federal Funds	\$2,953,536
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State Funds	\$698,624
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Other Local Funds	\$164,497
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Total Revenue	\$7,753,005
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2016 Expenditures

Employee Salaries	\$2,956,046
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Employee Healthcare and Benefits	\$1,552,802
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Placement Care	\$2,249,114
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Clothing, Food, and Transportation	\$185,352
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Health-Related Expenses for Children	\$156,939
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Building, Supplies, & Contracted Services	\$395,709
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Community Education & Staff Training	\$99,971
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Other Expenditures	\$669,775
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Total Expenditures	\$8,265,708
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Ending Balance	\$1,208,316
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Athens County Children Services staff and board greatly appreciate the continued support of the Athens community. The primary funding source for Athens County Children Services is a 3 mill ten-year property tax levy approved by the voters in 2015 and a 2 mill ten-year property tax levy approved by the voters in 2010. These operating funds allow ACCS to be responsive to the ever-changing needs of the children and families of Athens County. Fortunately, the agency carryover balance serves as a contingency funding source when expenses exceed revenue.

2016 in Numbers

- 1832** referrals of abuse and neglect
- 244** children worked with Family Services
- 179** children in custody during 2016
- 5356** referrals to School Outreach caseworkers
- 15** adoptions finalized
- 39** licensed foster homes
- 3690** children were given PB&J, bread and canned goods as part of the Peanut Butter & Jelly Project
- 54** children were in kinship care
- 1350+** local children received Santa Tree gifts
- 1992** visits with families in our visitation center
- 112** community volunteers
- 50+** organizations set up at Kidfest
- 641** case reviews
- 300 +** children received new tennis shoes at Lace Up For Kids



The Athens Professionals for Philanthropy once again hosted their annual PB&J 5K/10K to benefit the Peanut Butter & Jelly Project. ACCS joined in on the fun! The APP donated almost \$4,000 to the PB&J Project in 2016.



On WEAR BLUE Day, ACCS partnered with the Child Advocacy Center and the Athens County CASA Program to host the 3rd Annual Champions for Children Breakfast. Sue Meeks, Mary Lou Bernard and Nancy Schell were honored as the 2016 Outstanding Champions for Children.

Protecting Children, Strengthening Families, Securing Futures

Athens County Children Services
18 Stonybrook Drive
P.O. Box 1046
Athens, OH 45701
Phone: 740.592.3061
Fax: 740.593.3880
athenschildrenservices.com

To report child abuse or neglect:
M-F, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm
Please call 740.592.3061

After-hours or emergencies:
Please call 1.866.863.7373



All Roads Lead Home was the theme of the 2016 Ohio University Homecoming Weekend. ACCS staff and volunteers love participating in the parade, and constructed a float that represents our belief that all children deserve a safe and loving home.

