

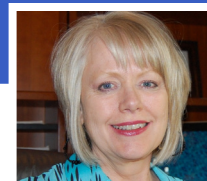
# 2013

## *Annual Report*



*Athens County  
Children Services*

## A Message from our Executive Director



Dear Athens Community,

Thank you –sincerely– for your consistent support of ACCS in serving the vulnerable children and families of Athens. We simply could not do this important work without the firm backing of the local Athens community. On behalf of our Board and dedicated staff, I am pleased to present our 2013 Annual Report to the Community.

Early in the year we held a series of community and stakeholder meetings to establish service priorities and focus our energy for our 2013-2015 Strategic Plan. Since that time, community partners, our board, volunteers, and staff have established a number of workgroups to help move the Agency ahead in providing innovative services and to respond to the pressing needs of the children and families we serve.

Our core services and innovative programs are highlighted in the pages of this report. You will see right away that the number of child abuse and neglect referrals in Athens increased significantly from the prior year. Referrals for child protective services and children entering custody are up across the state. We believe this has something to do with continuing socioeconomic pressure and the increasing challenges of addiction. While we had a record number of referrals in 2013, Athens did not experience an increase in children coming into care during the year; however, as of the publishing of this report in the spring of 2014, we are beginning to see an increase in the number of children entering Agency custody.

We aim to prevent abuse and neglect before it begins by intervening early with at risk youth and families. Our School Outreach program is the heart of our prevention efforts. Present in all five school districts for a second year, our school outreach caseworkers are serving an average of 196 families per month. Referrals from school staff and parents in the community tripled from the prior year.

Our growing volunteer and intern program is proving to be a tremendous resource for Agency and community events. In less than two years we have recruited 68 volunteers and in 2013 we hosted 25 student interns from Ohio University, Hocking College, and Tri-County Adult Career Center.

The families we work with struggle with enormous challenges such as poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, mental illness, and unrelenting addictions. It takes a whole community to respond to these challenges and we are indeed fortunate to work together with such a vibrant community in keeping children safe and making families stronger.

As we look back over 2013 we have so much to be grateful for -as we look forward, there is much work to do. Because of the supportive partnership we have with the Athens community we look forward to the challenges ahead with energy and enthusiasm to create the best possible outcomes for our children and families.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Hill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Catherine Hill, MSW, LSW  
Executive Director





Staff at Friendly Paws: Wear Blue Day, April 10, 2013.

## Referrals of Child Abuse

In 2013, 1640 referrals were made to our Intake unit. This was 146 more, a 9.8% increase from 2012 (1494). 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 2013, 458 new cases were opened, and of these, 26 cases involved 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. They are responsible for making referrals to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office on potential criminal matters.

At the core of our critical safety net services our Intake caseworkers handled 257 new cases in 2013.

**1640**  
referrals of abuse and neglect

## Alternative Response

Alternative Response (AR) is part of a larger reform effort within the field of child welfare. AR allows ACCS to provide a different approach for primarily low to moderate 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. It 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 help alleviate the stresses that often lead to abuse and neglect. This approach can help sustain families and prevent foster care placements. During 2013, the AR team worked with 43 families from the prior year and had 201 new AR referrals.

## Services for Families

Our Family Services unit provides ongoing services when a case needs more extensive intervention or a longer term to resolve family concerns. In 2013, this unit worked with approximately 113 families, 63% of which were impacted by substance abuse. 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.

Family Services Caseworkers help parents identify and link with services that can address family problems, establish frequent visitation so parents and children can stay connected and inform the court of progress or issues that remain unresolved. In 2013, 17 children were reunified with their parents and 18 were reunified with a non-parent relative.

## 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 or abandons a child or is unable to adequately address safety factors in the home.

Adoption work is challenging. We are proud of our Adoption Unit and are celebrating an increase in finalized adoptions from 9 in 2012 to 17 in 2013. This includes 3 sibling groups of 3 children. At the end of 2013 ACCS had 22 children in permanent custody and available for adoption. We are in constant need of foster and adoptive homes.



2013 marked the first full calendar year that we partnered with the Dave Thomas Foundation For Adoption on the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program. Starting in the summer of 2012, ACCS has been the recipient of a grant that allows for a fulltime recruiter to work exclusively finding forever homes for kids in Athens County as well as Gallia, Jackson, Meigs, Lawrence, Perry, and Washington counties. This full time resource works with kids 12 - 17 years old who often have disabilities or cognitive delays. The current grant period runs from July 2013 through July 2014. By the end of 2013, our Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter had matched 8 children with adoptive families and had 4 adoption finalizations.



17  
children adopted in 2013



*ACCS Foster Parents Debbie and Glenn Hatfield received the 2013 Foster Parents of the Year Award at the Foster Parent Banquet.*

## 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. At the close of 2013, there were 34 licensed foster care homes, including 3 newly licensed foster homes. The agency continuously recruits new foster parents needed for sibling groups, children and youth of all ages, and 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.

The agency is continuing to develop and expand kinship services and support for kin families. The Annie E. Casey Foundation indicates that more than 6 million children in the U.S. are being raised by grandparents or other kin. Placing children with someone known to them, whenever safely possible, helps to promote permanency and well-being, as well as healthy connections to family, friends, community, culture, and tradition. In 2013, ACCS had eighteen kinship homes providing care for 28 children.

## 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 2013, SEORTC held 113 workshops attended by 1143 child welfare worker participants for a total of 823 training hours. Additionally, the Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center held 161 workshops for 2675 foster parents, for a total of 656 training



*ACCS hosted games and activities at Kids Day at the Athens County Fair.*

## 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. The QA unit facilitated a total of 474 case reviews in 2013. The QA unit is also responsible for maintaining technology, data management and reporting.



# 1244

visits facilitated

## Family Support

Parent mentors worked with an average of 25 families per month, or 144 children during the year, providing them with parent education to reduce issues that led to the family's involvement with the agency.

Family support workers provide visitation and transportation services for families who are involved with ACCS and whose children are living in foster care or kinship care. These workers facilitated 1244 visits and doubled the number of transports to 1721 in 2013.

The Domestic Relations Clinic, in cooperation with the Athens County Domestic Relations Court, provided training to 91 adults, representing 137 children. These clinics address the challenges of divorce and separation on children.



*Instead of presents for herself, in 2013, 9 year old Riley McCune of Athens County asked her friends and family to donate new shoes to the Lace Up for Kids Project.*



2013 OU Homecoming Parade: Our Kids Are Our Future.

## In the Community

ACCS sponsored a number of community events in 2013 including Kidfest, Lace Up For Kids, and the Santa Tree Project. The Santa Tree provided Christmas gifts for over 1400 children in Athens County. ACCS staff and volunteers also participated in a number of community events, including My Sister's Place Family Fun Day, The Ohio University Homecoming Parade, Kids Day at the Athens County Fair, Wear Blue to Work Day and more.

Through the collection of money on Casual Fridays by our Employer-Employee Relations Committee (EERC), our employees donated over eighteen hundred dollars to over 20 different individuals and organizations in our community. The money went to deserving organizations and families in Athens County who were experiencing extraordinary circumstances of need. Additionally, ACCS employees donated \$2,397 to Athens United Appeal in 2013.

Some of our most experienced workers provided child abuse and neglect training to community members, classes at Hocking College and Ohio University, social groups as well as mandated training for daycare providers and educators.

Our growing volunteer program ended 2013 with almost 70 volunteers, assisting our staff with special events, child care, and tutoring. The agency hosted 25 interns from Ohio University, Hocking College, and the Tri-County Adult Career Center. These future professionals served in every unit of our agency and worked in prevention, casework, public relations and administration.

## School Outreach

Our School Outreach Team seeks to strengthen families and promote positive school relationships to enhance student school success. In 2013, the school outreach workers from all 5 school districts in Athens County, served an average of 196 families per month.

These workers saw an incredible increase in referrals in 2013, with 1336 coming from teachers, principals, and counselors. This tripled from 2012, which saw 408 referrals.

School Outreach facilitated Girl Power groups at Trimble and Federal Hocking School districts and the Hope Drive apartments. There were 152 Girl Power meetings throughout the year, with an average of 12 girls in attendance at each meeting. Additionally, in 2013 we introduced Guy Time at Hope Drive. A variety of Girl Power events were held over the year, including an etiquette formal, the annual Girl Power Lock-In, trips to COSI and other outings. Six young women also attended the Girl Power Equine Camp in July 2013.

The School Outreach team sponsored the 6th Annual Peanut Butter & Jelly Project to help keep children nourished through the summer months. In 2013, the PB&J Project served over 1000 children with weekly donations of bread and PB&J provided by the community. The project was funded largely by our community, who donated cash, peanut butter, and jelly to make this project possible.



The ACCS PB&J Project helped hundreds of kids stay nourished throughout the summer with the weekly food distribution days.

## 2013 Financial Summary

Beginning Balance	\$3,931,891
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### 2013 Revenues

Local Operating Levy	\$3,781,558
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Federal Funds	2,479,829
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State Funds	558,329
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Other Local Funds	98,175
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<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,917,892</b>
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### 2013 Expenditures

Employee Salaries	\$2,600,546
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Employee Healthcare and Benefits	1,104,384
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Placement Care	1,507,054
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Clothing, Food, and Transportation	174,656
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Health-Related Expenses for Children	170,355
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Building, Supplies, & Contracted Services	490,844
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Community Education & Staff Training	84,339
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Other Expenditures	1,037,236
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<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$7,169,415</b>
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Ending Balance	\$3,680,368
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#### Executive Director

Catherine Hill, MSW, LSW

#### Deputy Directors

Otis Crockron, MBA  
Finance and Operations

Sheila Shafer, MA, LSW  
Programs

#### 2013 Athens County Commissioners

Charlie Adkins  
Chris Chmiel  
Lenny Eliason

#### 2013 Board Members

Nancy Schell, Chair  
Jessie Barnhart  
Missy Bond  
Linda Main Clark  
Chris Innis  
Mary Mitchell  
Barry Oches  
Lacy Russell



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 2005 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.

## 2013 in Numbers

**1640** referrals of abuse and neglect

**417** children received AR services

**217** children worked with Family Services

**124** children in custody during 2013

**1336** referrals to School Outreach caseworkers

**28** children were in kinship care

**1450** local children received Santa Tree gifts

**152** Girl Power meetings held

**68** community volunteers

**40+** organizations set up at Kidfest

**474** case reviews



*Our Family Support Team brought COSI on Wheels to the ACCS campus for a fun afternoon of science and discovery.*

## 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  
[athenschilchildrenservices.com](http://athenschilchildrenservices.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 1.877.477.0772



*ACCS had the help of Rufus the Bobcat and some kid volunteers spreading the word about the Santa Tree Project at an Ohio University Football game.*