



Athens County Children Services



Protecting Children Strengthening Families Securing Futures



2014

annual **report**
to the community

A Message from our Executive Director



Dear Athens Community,

It takes a Community to Protect a Child. Thank you Athens — sincerely — for your continuing support of Athens County Children Services. We simply could not do this important work alone.

Each of you, whether a volunteer, foster parent, community service provider, law enforcement, judge, public official, social worker, parent, teacher, or concerned citizen — play a critical role in our mission to protect children strengthen families and secure futures.

On behalf of our ACCS Board and dedicated staff, it is my pleasure to present this Annual Report to the Community. Our mandated protective services and innovative prevention programs are detailed in the pages of this report. All of the families we work with face enormous challenges such as poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, mental illness, and addictions.

In 2014 ACCS received a record 1849 referrals of child abuse and neglect. We also saw an increase in children entering custody. Up from 30 the prior year, we had 50 new custody entries, with a total of 137 children in care at some point during the year. The age of children coming into care is trending younger, infants and children under 5 years made up 54% of our children in care in 2014.

Parental addiction continues to dominate our protective caseload and put increasing pressure on the safety and well-being of our children and families in Athens County. The number of cases with drug impacted infants increased from 26 in 2013 to 43 in 2014. Welcome news came at the end of the year when ACCS was awarded an efficiency & innovation grant to build service capacity in the community to help create better outcomes for our families struggling with addiction.

Fortunately, through the support of local levy funding we are able to intervene early with at risk youth and families to prevent abuse and neglect before it begins. Our School Outreach program is at the heart of our prevention efforts. Present in all five school districts, our school outreach caseworkers are reaching an average of 470 families per month.

Our volunteer and intern program continues to grow and is not only a tremendous resource for our agency, it is truly an asset for our community. In less than three years we have recruited and trained 103 volunteers and in 2014 we supervised 24 student interns from Ohio University, Hocking College, and Tri-County Adult Career Center.

As we look back over 2014 there is much to be thankful for. As we look ahead there is much work to do. With your continued partnership we are able to face the future with optimism, dedicated to our mission, committed to fiscal responsibility, and driven to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and families.

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

Catherine Hill, MSW, LSW
Executive Director



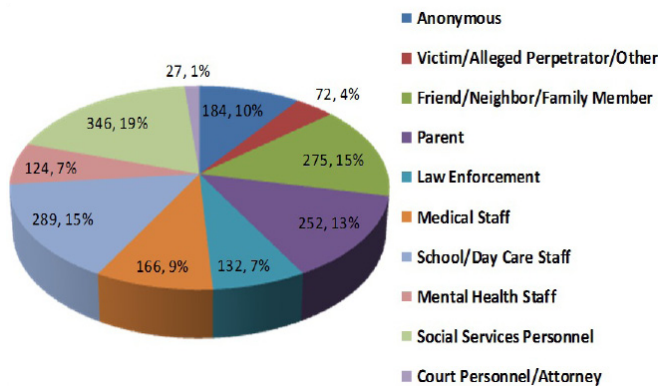
Referrals of Child Abuse

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 2014 ACCS had

- ◆ **1849 referrals of abuse or neglect**
 - ◆ up 13% from 2013
 - ◆ 488 were screened in
 - ◆ includes 899 children
- ◆ **43 referrals involving drug-impacted infants**
 - ◆ up 65% from 2013

ACCS receives referrals from a wide spectrum of community stakeholders:



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.



Pictured above: April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, ACCS staff and volunteers planted pinwheels to symbolize the referrals of neglect and abuse the agency.

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. 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 alleviate the stresses that often lead to abuse and neglect. This approach helps sustain families and prevent foster care placements.

In 2014 the AR team

- ◆ **Worked with 37 families from the prior year**
- ◆ **197 new families**

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. 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 2014 Family Services

- ◆ **Worked with 119 families**
 - ◆ 237 children
- ◆ **Worked with 50 families transferred from the Intake Unit**
 - ◆ 29 families (58%) were impacted by substance abuse
 - ◆ 2 families involved drug-exposed newborns

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.

In 2014 ACCS

- ◆ **Was awarded permanent custody of 20 children**
 - ◆ up 43% from 2013
- ◆ **Finalized the adoptions for 18 children**
- ◆ **Ended the year with 22 children available 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 2014 ACCS's Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter

- ◆ **Matched 17 children**
 - ◆ Goal was 6
- ◆ **Finalized 3 adoptions**



ACCS WWK Recruiter, Brooke Schroeder, accepted a national award from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.



ACCS Foster Parents Paula and Danny Lantz received the 2014 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. 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.

In 2014 ACCS

- ◆ **Had custody of 137 children**
 - ◆ up 10% from 2013
- ◆ **70 children came into custody throughout the year**
 - ◆ up 40% from 2013
- ◆ **35 licensed foster homes**
 - ◆ licensed 5 new homes
- ◆ **Had 14 kinship homes providing care for 24 children**
- ◆ **Completed 51 kinship homestudies**

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 2014 SEORTC

- ◆ **Hosted 147 workshops**
 - ◆ **Attended by 1664 child welfare professionals**
 - ◆ **Total 934 training hours**
- ◆ **Hosted 169 Foster Parent Trainings**
 - ◆ **Attended by 1980 foster parents**
- ◆ **Total 609 training hours**



Owen and his mom, Molly, joined hundreds of people from Athens County on Wear Blue Day to help spread awareness of child abuse prevention.

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 2014 Quality Assurance

- ◆ **Facilitated 523 case reviews**



Parent Mentor, Karyn Armstrong, plays with kids at Kids Day at the Athens County Fair.

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 2014 Family Support

- ◆ **Worked with an average of 29 families a month**
 - ◆ **worked with a total of 154 children**
- ◆ **Monitored 1520 visits between children and their birth families**
 - ◆ **up 22% from 2013**
- ◆ **Provided 1721 transports to that families and children working with the agency**



9 year old Jonelle donated pb&j for the PB&J Project and new shoes for the Lace Up for Kids Project.



Medical and administrative staff at OhioHealth O'Bleness Hospital donated hundreds of toys and coats to the Santa Tree Project in 2014.

School Outreach

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

In 2014 the School Outreach team

- ◆ **Received 1882 referrals for services from parents and school staff**
- ◆ **Worked in all 5 Athens County School Districts with an average of 470 families per month**
- ◆ **Hosted Girl Power and other group meetings**
 - ◆ **144 meetings were held in 2014**
 - ◆ **an average of 19 youth attended**
- ◆ **Hosted the 7th Annual Peanut Butter and Jelly Project**

In the Community

ACCS sponsored a number of community events in 2014 including Kidfest, Lace Up For Kids, and the Santa Tree Project. 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, Boogie on the Bricks, Kids Day at the Athens County Fair, Wear Blue to Work Day and more.

In 2014 ACCS

- ◆ **Provided Santa Tree gifts to over 1450 children**
- ◆ **Sent over 500 children back to school with new shoes through the Lace up for Kids project**

ACCS' Volunteer & Intern program continued to grow in 2014. These future professionals served in every unit of our agency and worked in prevention, casework, public relations and administration.

In 2014 the Volunteer & Interns Program

- ◆ **Ended the year with 103 volunteers**
 - ◆ **up 23% from 2013**
 - ◆ **our volunteers gave 788 volunteer hours, valued at an**
 - ◆ ***estimated \$17,533, to the community**
- ◆ **Supervised 24 interns**
 - ◆ **from 9 different majors**
 - ◆ **representing 4 different colleges**

* www.volunteeringinamerica.gov



School Outreach Caseworker, Angela Myers, and Coolville Elementary Principal and ACCS Board Member, Mary Mitchell, hand out PB&J on the first day of the PB&J project at the Coolville Public Library.

Through the collection of money on Casual Fridays by our Employer-Employee Relations Committee (EERC), our employees donated over \$2,000 to 20 different organizations as well as individuals in our community who were experiencing extraordinary circumstances of need. Additional ACCS employees gave \$1,026 to Athens United Appeal in 2014.

2014 Financial Summary

Executive Director

Catherine Hill, MSW, LSW

Deputy Directors

Otis Crockron, MBA
Finance and Operations

Sheila Shafer, MA, LSW
Programs

2014 Athens County Commissioners

Charlie Adkins
Chris Chmiel
Lenny Eliason

2014 Board Members

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

Beginning Balance	\$3,680,368
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2014 Revenues

Local Operating Levy	\$3,486,292
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Federal Funds	2,439,852
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State Funds	667,287
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Other Local Funds	77,955
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Total Revenue	\$6,671,387
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2014 Expenditures

Employee Salaries	\$2,871,729
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Employee Healthcare and Benefits	1,216,520
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Placement Care	1,413,206
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Clothing, Food, and Transportation	162,272
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Health-Related Expenses for Children	196,421
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Building, Supplies, & Contracted Services	417,849
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Community Education & Staff Training	73,420
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Other Expenditures	1,852,937
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Total Expenditures	\$8,204,354
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Ending Balance	\$2,147,401
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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 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.

2014 in Numbers

1849 referrals of abuse and neglect

458 children received AR services

237 children worked with Family Services

137 children in custody during 2014

1882 referrals to School Outreach caseworkers

24 children were in kinship care

1450 local children received Santa Tree gifts

97 Girl Power meetings held

103 community volunteers

40+ organizations set up at Kidfest

523 case reviews



The ACCS float came in third place for the Ohio University Homecoming Parade. Volunteers from area elementary schools and OU helped "hand-paint" 1640 hands to represent the referrals of abuse and neglect ACCS received in 2013.

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 1.877.477.0772



In 2014 the Athens County Children Services School Outreach team served 3,476 children with the Peanut Butter & Jelly Project.

They gave away bread, peanut butter, and jelly to 1,352 families, at 7 distribution sites, covering all 5 Athens County school districts.