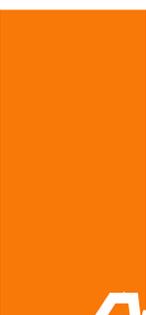


**2012**



**Annual Report**



**Athens County Children Services**

## A Message from our Executive Director



Dear Athens Community,

Thank you sincerely for the generous support you have consistently given to ACCS. Grounded in the belief that every child has a birth right to grow up free from abuse and neglect, our staff is inspired by the partnership our community provides in protecting the safety and well being of our children and families.

Our agency could not do this important work alone. Each of you—whether a volunteer, law enforcement officer, judge, foster parent, community service provider, public official, social worker, teacher, parent or concerned citizen—play a critical role in our mission to protect children, strengthen families, and secure futures.

A number of innovative services for children and families came to fruition in 2012. In the pages of this report you will read about our core services and innovative programs. While we have seen an increase in the number of children entering care and paid placements, we continue to emphasize strength-based intervention and family support services that intervene earlier and restore families sooner. In 2012 we strategically redeployed staff into an expanded School Outreach program serving at-risk children and families in all five school districts. Referrals to school outreach increased from 172 in 2011 to 408 in 2012.

The central focus of the ACCS visitation center is in restoring and reunifying children and families. At ACCS we utilize an aggressive visitation and parent mentoring model of intervention. Made possible through partnership with our foster parents, children in custody visited an average of 3 times per week with their birth parents.

Simultaneous with my joining the agency, we were presented with the opportunity to apply for funding from the Dave Thomas Foundation on Adoption. This innovative partnership allows us to work with agencies across county lines to find permanent families for children waiting for adoption in our region of the state.

As ACCS continues to address the unique needs of our most vulnerable children and families, we look forward to continued partnership with the community that surrounds us. As executive director I am dedicated to leading an agency that is focused on its mission; fiscally responsible and one that is 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

## Athens County Children Services Staff





Juvenile Court and CASA/GAL staff participate in the first annual Wear Blue to Work Day in April 2012.

## Referrals of Child Abuse

In 2012, 1494 referrals were made to our Intake unit. This was 119 more, or a 9% increase from 2011 (1375). 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 2012, 525 new cases were opened, and of these, 23 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 326 new cases in 2012.

**1494**  
referrals of abuse and neglect

## Alternative Response

ACCS continued refining and expanding our Alternative Response (AR) practice throughout 2012. 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 2012, the AR team worked with 71 families from the prior year and had 199 new AR referrals.

## Services for Families

When a case needs more extensive intervention or a longer term to resolve family concerns our Family Services unit provides ongoing services. In 2012, this unit worked with approximately 115 families, 58% 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. Family issues range from substance abuse and mental illness to homelessness and domestic violence. 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 2012, 24 children were reunified with their parents and 16 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 and our adoption caseworkers strive to find permanent families for our children. At the end of 2012, there were 27 children and youth in permanent custody and available for adoption. In 2012, a total of 9 children had adoptions finalized. This included a pair of teenage siblings and a sibling group of three.



In August 2012 we were presented with the opportunity to apply for funding with the Dave Thomas Foundation on Adoption. In partnership with Gallia, Jackson, Meigs, Lawrence, Perry, and Washington counties, we launched the Wendy's Wonderful Kids child-focused recruitment grant in fourth quarter. Funded by this grant, a recruiter based at ACCS works exclusively to find adoptive families for children in Southeast Ohio.



*ACCS case review coordinator Susan Ballard with 2012 Foster Parents of the Year, Lora and Alfred Clapp.*

## 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 2012, there were 41 licensed foster care homes, including 6 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 2012, ACCS had twenty kinship homes providing care for 25 children.

## Training

One of eight sites of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program sponsored by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center (SEORTC) provides high-quality, family-centered training to staff and caregivers of public child welfare agencies.

The SEORTC staff has been working hard on integrating E-Track, their new learning management system, into the state training program. In 2012, SEORTC held 110 workshops attended by 1022 child welfare worker participants for a total of 792 training hours. Additionally, the Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center held 166 workshops for 1888 foster parents, for a total of 571 training hours.



*Bounce house fun at Boogie on the Bricks!*

## 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 478 case reviews in 2012. The QA unit is also responsible for maintaining technology, data management and reporting. The agency began implementation of a new digital imaging system in 2012 enabling more efficient access to information. Casework staff from all units are utilizing mobile technology in providing services to children and families in the field.



## Family Support

Parent mentors worked with an average of 22 families per month, or 157 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 1303 visits and completed 835 transports in 2012. The addition of part-time transportation aide enabled to unit to increase its transports of families by 153%!

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



*Girl Power takes a trip to see the Ohio University Women's Basketball team in action. Photo by Sherri Oliver.*



*ACCS staff, interns, volunteers, and families at the 2012 OU Homecoming Parade!*

## School Outreach

In 2012 the School Outreach Team expanded to serve children and families at risk for abuse or neglect in all school districts in Athens County. For the first time ever, a school outreach worker was placed in Nelsonville-York Elementary and Alexander Elementary, bringing the total number of schools served by the School Outreach team to six and the total number of school districts served to five. The Athens City School Outreach position is made possible by a federal grant from Project LAUNCH.

Up from 172 in 2011, we received 408 referrals during the year from teachers, principals, and counselors.

School outreach facilitates Girl Power groups at Trimble and Federal Hocking School districts and the Hope Drive apartments. There were 156 Girl Power meetings throughout the year, with an average of 15 girls in attendance at each meeting. A variety of Girl Power events were held over the year, including an etiquette formal, the annual Girl Power Lock-In, and trips to COSI and King's Island. Six young women also attended the Girl Power Equine Camp in July 2012.

The School Outreach team sponsors the Peanut Butter & Jelly project to help feed hungry children through the summer months. In 2012 the PB&J project served over 1000 children with donations of bread and PB&J provided by the community.

## In the community

ACCS sponsored a number of community events in 2012 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 Boogie on the Bricks, 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 \$2300 to charitable causes in 2012. The money went to deserving organizations and families in Athens County who were experiencing extraordinary circumstances of need. ACCS employees also donated \$729 to Athens United Appeal in 2012.

Members of the Intake unit provide child abuse and neglect training to community members, social groups as well as mandated training for daycare providers and educators.

2012 saw the expansion of the ACCS Volunteer Program, with addition of a Volunteer and Intern Coordinator in July. This new position enabled 26 volunteers to be registered and trained in the last five months of the year. These community volunteers assisted with special events, sibling visits at our visitation center, and with a variety of tasks as caseworkers needed.



*The Girl Power Etiquette Formal. Photo by Meg Vogel.*

# 2012 Financial Summary

Beginning Balance	\$5,244,165
-------------------	-------------

## 2012 Revenues

Local Operating Levy	\$3,052,948
----------------------	-------------

Federal Funds	2,673,040
---------------	-----------

State Funds	408,787
-------------	---------

Other Local Funds	94,686
-------------------	--------

<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$6,229,462</b>
----------------------	--------------------

## 2012 Expenditures

Employee Salaries	\$2,531,502
-------------------	-------------

Employee Healthcare and Benefits	1,092,683
----------------------------------	-----------

Placement Care	1,288,545
----------------	-----------

Clothing, Food, and Transportation	385,082
------------------------------------	---------

Health-Related Expenses for Children	249,370
--------------------------------------	---------

Building, Supplies, & Contracted Services	1,284,239
---	-----------

Community Education & Staff Training	106,063
--------------------------------------	---------

Other Expenditures	604,251
--------------------	---------

<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$7,541,736</b>
---------------------------	--------------------

Ending Balance	\$3,931,891
----------------	-------------

### Executive Director

Catherine Hill, MSW, LSW

### Deputy Directors

Otis Crockron, MBA  
Finance and Operations

Sheila Shafer, MA, LSW  
Programs

### 2012 Athens County Commissioners

Larry Payne  
Lenny Eliason  
Mark Sullivan

### 2012 Board Members

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



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.

## 2012 in Numbers

**1494** referrals of abuse and neglect

**112** children received AR services

**218** children worked with Family Services

**127** children in custody during 2012

**408** referrals to School Outreach caseworkers

**25** children were in kinship care

**1400** local children received Santa Tree gifts

**156** Girl Power meetings held

**26** community volunteers

**60+** organizations set up at Kidfest

**478** case reviews



*Lace Up For Kids ensures that children between the ages of 5 and 14 can go back to school with brand new sneakers. Photo by Sherri Oliver.*

## Protecting Children, Strengthening Families, Securing Futures

Athens County Children Services  
18 Stoneybrook Drive  
P.O. Box 1046  
Athens, OH 45701  
Phone: 740.592.3061  
Fax: 740.593.3880  
[athenschildrenservices.com](http://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



*The Plains Outreach Caseworker Diane Stock loads Thanksgiving food boxes donated by the Rotary Club for families. Photo by Sherri Oliver.*