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June 2004

CCDJFS

# E-Alert

A NEWSLETTER OF THE CLARK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

## *WORKPLUS and Local Chamber Form Partnership to Improve Business Services*

The WORKPLUS Center and the Springfield-Clark County Chamber of Commerce recently entered into an agreement under which the Chamber will provide key services to make the WORKPLUS Center a more appealing resource for area businesses.

Since the WORKPLUS Center opened a little over three years ago, it has experienced continued success in attracting and serving the community's job seekers. Success on the business side of the equation, however, has been slow. This agreement with the Chamber is expected to raise the awareness and market the services that are available at the Center to the business community. Once employers see the Center as a valuable tool in recruiting and retaining employees, job seekers will realize the full benefit of a one-stop employment center.

The Chamber will be involved in a variety of activities that will promote WORKPLUS and prepare it to better serve local businesses. It will conduct employer surveys to determine views on recruitment, training, hiring expectations and preferences of on-line job matching services. It will also work with WORKPLUS staff to enhance its website, internal communications plan, directory of services and other tools that will assist in marketing to the business community.

We at WORKPLUS look forward to this partnership with the Chamber and expect the outcome to be a stronger and more seamless system of employment services for the entire community. •

Clark County DJFS

## Vital Statistics

for the previous four quarters

**Children under our protection who remain  
in their own homes**

| June<br>2003 | September<br>2003 | December<br>2003 | March<br>2004 |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>349</b>   | <b>292</b>        | <b>225</b>       | <b>288</b>    |

**Children under our protection who are  
in our custody**

| June<br>2003 | September<br>2003 | December<br>2003 | March<br>2004 |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>201</b>   | <b>185</b>        | <b>182</b>       | <b>172</b>    |

**Children receiving a subsidy for child care**

| June<br>2003 | September<br>2003 | December<br>2003 | March<br>2004 |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>873</b>   | <b>782</b>        | <b>638</b>       | <b>710</b>    |

**Families receiving on-going cash assistance**

| June<br>2003 | September<br>2003 | December<br>2003 | March<br>2004 |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b>708</b>   | <b>734</b>        | <b>770</b>       | <b>710</b>    |

**MORE VITAL  
STATISTICS,  
ON PAGE 2**

# What is paternity?

Why is it important to establish paternity? Paternity means to establish fatherhood. If a mother is not married to the child's father at the time of the child's birth, paternity must be established.

## Importance of Paternity Establishment

Paternity gives the child a sense of identity and belonging. The father has the right to be aware he has a child. He has the right and responsibility to support the child emotionally and financially. Medical history will be available which may be important to the child's health. The child may be eligible for social security benefits or inheritance rights from the father if he becomes disabled, or dies.

# PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT

## Ways to Establish Paternity

Paternity can be established in two ways: Mother and father may (1) sign a notarized Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavit at the hospital, birth registrar's office or at the CSEA; (2) The mother, father or custodian may request the CSEA to conduct genetic testing. This involves using a buccal swab to collect DNA samples from inside the mouth. Results must be 99% or greater to determine paternity.

## Background

In 2002, the percentage of children born out of wedlock in Clark County was 44.6%. According to a vital statistics report in February 2002, the teen birth rate in Ohio was 45.6 per 1,000 females ages 15-19; the percentage of teen births (ages 12-19) in Clark County for 2003 was 17%. The numbers are not declining; therefore, in September 2003, the CSEA established a separate unit -- the Paternity and Support Establishment unit.

Since September 2003, the unit has established 1,494 paternities. Since January 2004, the CSEA has conducted 473 genetic tests.

On Wednesdays, testing is performed on site by a technician from the Long Beach lab. Two trained staff members are available to do the testing during agency business hours until 4:30 pm.

[SEE PATERNITY, PAGE 3]

Excellence, Once Again!

# County Achieves High Marks for Food Stamp Accuracy

The Ohio Department of Job & Family Services has recently released final payment accuracy rates in the Food Stamp Program for Federal Fiscal Year 2003. Clark County case managers improved their accuracy rate for the third consecutive year finishing at 96.96%. This was the fourth best rate among the fifteen largest counties in the State! This is even more impressive when we consider that Food Stamp caseloads grew 10.7% during the sample period of October, 2002 through September, 2003. Congratulations to everyone that contributed!

The County's rate over the past four years has been:

FFY 2000- 92.40%

FFY 2001- 93.92%

FFY 2002- 96.78%

FFY 2003- 96.96%

The Statewide rate also improved slightly to 93.68%. This was up 0.18% over the previous year and once again leaves Ohio just short of the 94% threshold that would qualify the State for enhanced Federal funding. •

Statistics

## Individuals receiving health insurance through Medicaid

| June 2003 | September 2003 | December 2003 | March 2004 |
|-----------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| 23,811    | 23,894         | 24,229        | 24,348     |

## Individuals receiving food stamps

| June 2003 | September 2003 | December 2003 | March 2004 |
|-----------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| 13,707    | 13,829         | 14,827        | 14,618     |

## Individuals receiving job training assistance

| June 2003 | September 2003 | December 2003 | March 2004 |
|-----------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| 472       | 447            | 521           | 609        |

## Individuals paying on child support orders

| June 2003 | September 2003 | December 2003 | March 2004 |
|-----------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| 8,341     | 8,062          | 7,876         | 7,987      |

# Annual Foster/Adoptive Parent Recognition; 22 Honored

Lark County Family & Children Services held its annual **Foster & Adoptive Parent Appreciation Banquet** held on May 12th at Casey's Restaurant. It was attended by foster and adoptive parents as well as social workers and administrative staff. Director Bob Suver was the guest speaker and presented the new Marriage Savers initiative and described how it could positively impact the lives of children and families in the community.

**Years of Service Awards** were presented to foster parents to acknowledge milestones in their fostering careers. Additionally, all families attending received flowers and every agency-licensed family was given an Ohio Foster Care Association membership. Special recognition was given to Michael and Janet Schaefer as they retired this year after 34 years of service. During their time as foster parents, they fostered more than 138 Clark County children. They plan on staying active in the community because they are parents of a teenage daughter! We wish them well in their future endeavors and thank them for all they have done for Clark County's children and families. Years of Services Awards were presented to:

## 1 Year of Service

Timothy & Angela Bishop  
Jack & Gisela Bowling  
Erin & Erica Thomas Cole  
Chris & Traci Dahmer  
Thomas & Angela Jordan  
Timothy & Lora Lykins  
Terri Merlau  
Grant & Wendy Petersen  
Ken & Mandee Sarrazine  
John & Darla Sander  
Joy Stephenson  
Fred & Sandy Williams

## 10 Years of Service

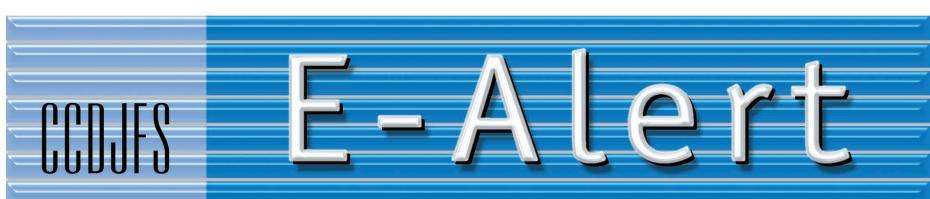
David & Connie Babcock  
David & Brenda Baker

## 15 Years of Service

Paul & Evelyn Watford

## 25 Years of Service

James & Janice Bartz



## 5 Years of Service

Christine Fasick  
Ron & Carol Howard  
Debra & Steve Johnson  
David & Mary Karkan  
Gaylena Powell  
Paul & Nicia Seibold

## Paternity Establishment

(CONTINUED)

Because of the increasing numbers of teen pregnancies, the Establishment unit is involved with community outreach programs. The unit acts as a liaison to the GRADS program. The GRADS program holds classes in high schools and JVS for students who are parents or who are expecting. They are taught parenting and relationship

skills. The CSEA worker explains the benefits of establishing paternity and outlines CSEA's services.

Except for education, Ohio's Child Support Program touches more children than any other program in Ohio. Paternity establishment is an intrinsic factor of the program. •

# Happily Ever-After

**W**hen people say, "I do", their expectation is to live happily ever after. They do not plan to divorce. However, nationally, over 50% of marriages end in divorce. The divorce rate in Clark County in 2003 was 80%.

No one wins in a divorce. Every family member is affected in a number of different ways. Divorcees are negatively affected emotionally, physically and financially.

The impact of divorce on children increases over time, throughout the first three decades of life, and in all developmental stages, even into adulthood.

Compared to children from intact families, children from broken homes are . . .

- \* 5 times more likely to live in poverty,
- \* 3 times more likely to be expelled from school,
- \* 12 times more likely to be jailed.

Children from fatherless homes are . . .

- \* 4 times more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol,
- \* 2-3 times more likely to experience physical and emotional health problems,

- \* 2 times more likely to drop out of school, and
- \* 5-10 times more likely to experience sexual activity and teen pregnancy.



The families and individuals who Clark County Job and Family Services (CCDJFS) serve often feel the impact of these statistics.

Using the concept, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," CCDJFS began to develop and launch a Strengthening Families Program and Healthy Marriage Initiative.

Considering that 70% to 80% percent of marriages take place in a religious institution, it makes sense to partner with faith-based organizations.

This year, the Nehemiah Foundation, a long-standing, faith-based community partner, and CCDJFS, join hands to expand the Healthy Marriage Initiative. Through this partnership, **Marriage Savers of Clark County (MSCC)** is being established. MSCC is modeled after the national Marriage Savers, started by Mike McManus in 1996. MSCC is charged with equipping the community, primarily through local congregations, to help men and women prepare for lifelong marriages, strengthen existing marriages, restore troubled marriages and support stepfamilies.

To begin this process, MSCC will bring together the churches of Clark County to develop and sign a Community Marriage Policy for Clark County. The public signing

of the policy will be on September 17. Cities that have implemented such policies have seen a significant drop in their divorce rates; Modesto, California's divorce rate dropped 57% since 1986; Austin, Texas and Salem, Oregon's divorce rate dropped 50%; and El Paso's divorce rate dropped 79%, all since 1996.

The Department of Job and Family Services and Marriage Savers of Clark County realize that these statistics will not be changed quickly or easily, but both are committed to making a difference couple by couple and family-by-family.

For more information, see [marriagesaverscc.org](http://marriagesaverscc.org). •



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