

# Athens County Children Services

## ***A Message from the Interim Executive Director***

The year 2004 continued to be a very challenging year for this agency. The number of children in agency care increased significantly. Many of these children exhibited serious mental, behavioral and/or physical impairments. These children required therapeutic placements to treat these issues. Therapeutic placements are costly and resulted in a large increase in expenditures of agency resources.

As we examined the reasons families were not able to care for their children, we found the overwhelming factor was substance abuse, which included alcohol and prescription drugs, by parents. In addition, many parents suffered from serious mental health disorders. Our agency has been working closely with local service providers to increase mental health and substance abuse treatment for families.

Our mission continues to be the safety and permanence of children. We provide an array of services including parent education, transportation, case management and support services to families. Our greatest success is if children can remain safely or can return safely to their home. For those children who cannot return to their family, we work to locate another type of permanent family. In 2004, 12 children were adopted.

In 2004, the agency initiated an aggressive foster and adoptive home recruitment campaign. During the year, 18 new families were licensed as foster parents after completing all the training and home study requirements.

The Athens County Children Services Board and staff endorse the development of prevention services to support families. Since June 2000, Athens County Children Services has operated a resource center, the Nelsonville Family Center, in the community which is open to all families. Activities at the site include parent support groups, pre-school play groups, as well as groups for girls and boys. The center also provides family activities, free clothing and meals. This site has several hundred visitors per month participating in activities.

The Help Me Grow program which is operated out of the agency provides services to families with children aged birth to three years as well as pregnant women. The program provides child development education, home visits, information and referral, diagnostic screenings and support to interested families. The goal was to provide services to support families and prevent the abuse and neglect of children. The agency continues to work toward building strong relationships with local communities, agencies and schools. We know that it takes all of us working together to protect children and strengthen families.

On behalf of myself and the Athens County Children Services Board, I would like to thank our staff and agency foster parents for their dedication to the children of this community. And thank you to the Athens County community which has been unwavering in their support for this agency.

Andrea Reik, M.Ed., LSW  
Interim Executive Director

# Annual Report 2004

**2004  
Athens  
County  
Children  
Services  
Board  
Members**

- Ted Foster-Chairperson
- Dr. Karen Carlson-Vice-Chair
- Judy Moffitt-Secretary
- Calista Strickmaker
- Gloria Devol
- Marnie Frey
- Charles Culp
- Bonnie Lackey
- Bob Young

# Family Information Center

The Family Information Center is located in Nelsonville. It is a resource center for families and programming includes family support groups, a clothing bank, soup meals, playgroups, Girl Power!, and Guy Time. For more information on the Family Information Center, call Rhonda Bentley, Center Manager, (740) 592-3061.

Girl Power! & Guy Time

Girl Power! provides support and fun activities for young girls ages 12-15 while also reinforcing positive, healthy values. There were approximately 42 Girl Power meetings held in 2004. Guy Time provides support and activities for young men.

Parent Support Groups

This group provides a way to find information on family issues and to seek the support of other families. There were approximately 25 groups held during 2004.

Playgroups

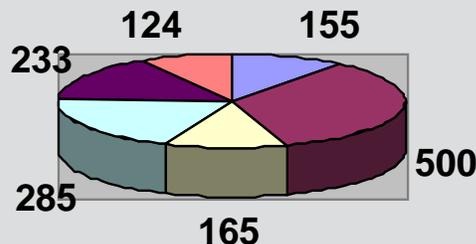
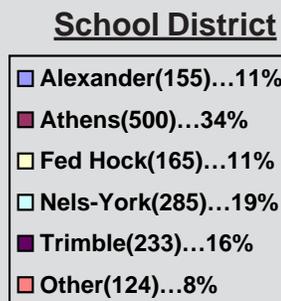
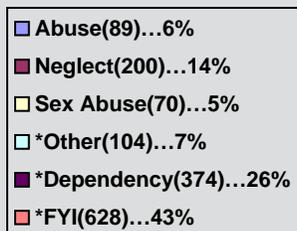
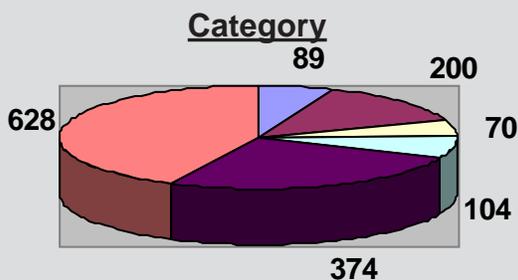
Playgroups provide an opportunity for young mothers and their children up to the age of 4 to interact and meet other mothers in their communities to discuss child care issues. There were 37 Playgroups held in 2004.

Clothing Bank and Soup Meal

The Soup Meal originally started as a community service project for Girl Power. The clothing bank provides people with clothes to meet their basic needs. These clothes are donated by many groups and are available to any family in need.

## Referrals

A *referral* is an allegation of maltreatment of a child and can be made verbally or in writing. It includes, but is not limited to, allegations involving individuals, families, and out-of-home care settings. There was a total of 1462 referrals during 2004 with an average of 122 referrals per month received in 2004. The total number assigned for investigation/assessment was 833 (57%).



## Help Me Grow

In July 2001, Children Services became the fiscal and administrative agent for Help Me Grow, which is a child development program serving families with children aged birth to 3 years and pregnant women.

Service coordinators work with families by providing child development information, home visits, service referrals, and support. They help families develop goals that will enhance their abilities to become parents. Help Me Grow received 208 referrals during 2004.

There were 203 visits made through the newborn nurse program.

### Service coordinator cases per month

<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>
204	210	210	202	205	196

<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>
202	203	191	194	189	193

## Car Show Success

Athens County Children Services and the Us Guys Car Club held the 5th annual Adoptive Benefit Car Show on June 10, 2004, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Wal-Mart on East State Street in Athens, Ohio.



“Athens County Children Services is always pleased to co-sponsor the Car Show,” said Andrea Reik, Interim Executive Director for Athens County Children Services. “Not only is the show a wonderful event, but it also helps increase awareness of the critical need for foster and adoptive parents.”

Proceeds from this event benefited the Athens County Children Services Adoption Calendar which highlights the many deserving children waiting for a family of their own.

## Financial Report

### EXPENSES

Operating Expenses	\$453,071
Children and Family Costs	\$2,487,078
Personnel	<u>\$3,191,541</u>
Total	\$6,131,690

### REVENUES

Local (45%)	\$2,314,432
State (9%)	\$442,049
Federal (46%)	<u>\$2,345,449</u>
Total	\$5,101,930

## Family Support Unit

The Family Support Unit provides parents with the intensive services to eliminate and reduce the issues that have led to a family's involvement with the agency. These services include parenting services, home/health management skills and transportation. All services can be provided in a family's home. Visitation services are available for those families who are involved with the agency and whose children are living in either kinship care or foster care. The Family Support Unit provided 976 supervised or monitored visits in 2004.

## POSITRACT

The POSITRACT Diversion Program (Positive Treatment Alternatives for County Teens) is a cooperative program between the Athens County Juvenile Court and Athens County Children Services. POSITRACT is a crisis intervention and diversion program which seeks to provide solutions to behavior problems by working with the youth, family, and school. The caseworker worked with an average of 11 cases per month in 2004.

## Adoption

A child may be placed in the permanent custody of the agency if a parent willingly surrenders the child, the child is abandoned, or has spent the past 12 out of 22 months in agency custody with the court awarding Permanent Custody.

Children Services was awarded Permanent Custody (PC) of 26 children in 2004 for a total of 60 children in PC during 2004.

Of the 45 children remaining in Permanent Custody at the end of the year, 10 (22%) were in an adoptive placement.

The post-adoption caseworker worked with approx. 84 post-adoptive families during the year. An average of 1 adoption search request was open per month during the year.

Contact Information:

**Athens County  
Children Services**  
18 Stonybrook Drive  
Athens, OH 45701  
[www.athenschildrenservices.com](http://www.athenschildrenservices.com)

Phone: (740) 592-3061  
Fax: (740) 593-3880

# Santa Tree Christmas Project

Athens County Children Services and the University Mall sponsor the Annual Santa Tree Christmas Project providing gifts to over 700 children in Athens County.

“For hundreds of children, the gifts they receive from this project could be the only gifts they receive.” said Andrea Reik, Interim Director, Athens County Children Services. Adding, “For some parents, paying the bills and putting food on the table is all they can do. That’s where the Santa Tree Project comes in.”

The Santa Tree, whose ornaments display the name of a child, their age, and several gift requests, are on display each holiday season at the University Mall, 1002 East State Street. This project relies solely on the generosity of the public, and everyone is invited to select a name from the tree to give a child the opportunity to have a cheerful holiday season. In past years of the project, the dedication and contributions from many community individuals,



groups, and organizations gave over 8500 deserving children the opportunity to experience a wonderful Christmas morning.

The board and staff of Athens County Children Services would like to express a sincere thank you to the entire Athens Community for their continued support during this holiday season.

The dedication and contributions of many community groups, organizations and individuals made Christmas morning a delight for many deserving children in Athens County.

Students from Federal Hocking and Athens High School, members of the Nelsonville FOE Auxiliary #391, and employees of McBees, O’Blenness Hospital, OU Credit Union and many Ohio University departments donated gifts to children. We received gifts from a multitude of individuals. Many personal and group donations made this the best holiday season ever.

For more information on how to be a part of the Santa Tree Christmas Project, please call Athens County Children Services at (740) 592-3061.

## Child Abuse Prevention Events

Kidfest, hosted annually by Athens County Children Services, is held each year on the last Saturday in April to commemorate April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Thousands of children attended the day full of interactive fun and educational play at Ohio University’s Convocation Center. Kidfest is the culminating event for Children Services’ festivities during April, Child Abuse Prevention Month,



Other 2004 highlights for April were the Kids and Community Breakfast, with “KUDO” and “It Takes A Community” Awards presented, the displaying of the children’s memorial flag designed to remember those children lost to child abuse and the County Commissioner’s Proclamation.

## Custody Termination

Custody is terminated when determined by the Juvenile Judge that keeping the child in a substitute care placement is no longer in his/her best interests. There were **69** child custody terminations during the year.

## Regional Training Center

Athens County Children Services is the agency for the Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center which is one site of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Center funded by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services.

The Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center provides high quality, competency-based workshops and other skill building initiatives to the child welfare staff, caregivers, and adoptive parents in our thirteen county agencies in a friendly, comfortable learning environment.

In 2004, the training center provided 127 workshops for child welfare staff and 212 foster parent training workshops. These workshops were comprised of 1675 training hours and were attended by 3978 participants.