



Hello, Hamilton County

E-News for Hamilton County Residents and Staff

July 16, 2004

“We will serve the residents of Hamilton County by providing the best and most responsive county government in America.”
— Hamilton County Vision

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Celebration of Dreams



Commissioner Todd Portune (seated) and Antwan Oden.

Antwan Oden's family background set him up for failure, however, as he stood before the crowd at an event honoring county youth in foster care, Antwan's story drew a standing ovation. "The reason graduating [from high school] is a dream come true for me is because out of my foster and biological immediate families, I am the first to graduate," Antwan said. Antwan is one of 45 young men and women from the county's foster care system who received honors at the event.

Celebration of Dreams honors youth in county custody who have graduated from high school or completed a GED. Job and Family Services (JFS) sponsors the event which is planned and coordinated by JFS and Lighthouse Youth Services. Due to the hardships many foster children endure, some are unable to graduate on time or they drop out. This event honors those who beat the odds.

The 2004 graduates received duffel bags stuffed with household and personal care items and school supplies. Funds and items for the bags were donated from private donors, including Lighthouse Youth Services, Neediest Kids of All, Toyota Motors and the KnowledgeWorks Foundation. JFS donated \$1,700 and items for the bags. Thirteen graduates also received \$7,700 in awards from

the Foster Child Scholarship Fund. This fund, supported entirely by private donations, helps buy books and supplies for those going on to college.

Antwan, a graduate of Scarlet Oaks, overcame a childhood marked by poverty, his mother's drug abuse and his father's incarceration. Antwan plans to major in business management at Cincinnati State. A 2002 graduate, Lindsay Streaker, now at Miami University, spoke about accomplishing things she doubted ever doing.

Congratulations to Antwan and the honorees.

JFS Annual Report 2003

Services at a Glance . . .

Revenue/Expenditures: \$1.161 billion

Costliest program: Medicaid accounts for 70 cents out of every dollar JFS spends annually

Welfare recipients: Monthly average of 20,284 — a 60 percent decline since 1996

Number of children receiving subsidized child care: 27,707

Child Support collections: \$153.8 million

Number of investigations of adult/child abuse and neglect: 784 — adults; 5,496 — children

Number of calls to main telephone number (946.1000): 43,000 per month — approximately one-third are child support related.

According to JFS Director, Suzanne Burke, one of the most important initiatives was an audit to verify the location of every child in the agency's custody. Staff visited more than 1,000 children in foster and kinship homes, verified demographic information and took photographs of the children. Ms. Burke stated the agency is grateful to "our community partners, who support our successes, help us in struggles, and challenge us to do better."

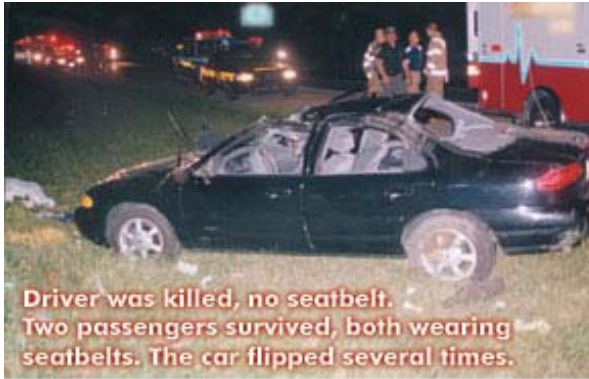
Last call for Yoga . . .

The next 6-week session of Yoga will begin July 26. Only 7 spaces are available in the 11:30 a.m. class and 2 in the 12:30 class.

If you are interested, contact Susan Lyons, 946.4427, before 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 22.

The cost of the 6-week session is \$14, payable at class on July 26.

What's Holding You Back?



Driver was killed, no seatbelt. Two passengers survived, both wearing seatbelts. The car flipped several times.

Hamilton County Safe Communities has several programs and initiatives designed to increase awareness about the importance of wearing your seat belt and the proper use of child safety seats. This information is distributed to the public through news releases, signs and banners that are posted throughout communities, display boards that are featured at area schools and libraries, and special events such as Safety Fest and the Shaping Safer Communities Injury Prevention Symposium.

For more information on the *What's Holding You Back?* Campaign, contact the General Health District at 946.7802.

Figures from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration show 41,730 people were killed in highway crashes in the United States during 2001, and 60 percent of those killed were not wearing seat belts. In Ohio, two-thirds of the people killed in traffic crashes each year are not buckled up.

The county's health commissioner, Tim Ingram, says buckling up is an easy way to save lives, "It only takes a few seconds to put on your seat belt, but it can make all the difference if you are involved in a traffic crash. You should buckle up every single time you get in a vehicle, it not only makes sense, but it's the law."



16 year old driver who was wearing seatbelt walked away from this wreck.

Commissioners' Summer Schedule

The Commissioners 2004 summer schedule meetings will be held:

- Monday, August 2
 - Wednesday, August 4
 - Monday, August 16
 - Wednesday, August 18
 - Monday, August 30
 - Wednesday, September 1
 - Wednesday, September 8
- regular weekly schedule resumes

Meeting are held at 9:30 a.m., in Room 603 County Administration Building.

If you have questions related to the commissioners' summer schedule, contact Jacqueline Panioto, Clerk of the Board, at 946.4414.



Thursday's Child For Information Call 513.632.6366

Trayvonne and Tramaine

Birthdates: April 1994 and February 1996



Trayvonne and Tramaine are charming boys. They are respectful, intelligent and courteous to others. Trayvonne and Tramaine enjoy reading fantasy and *Yugo* books. They enjoy playing football and basketball on local community teams. When it comes to drawing, they like to draw *Yugo*, *Pokemon*, cars and monsters.

Trayvonne likes to play the offense position for the football team. Both enjoy fishing, tag and playing with remote control cars. They agree that their favorite food is pizza. Trayvonne and Tramaine like to watch the television show, *Yugo*. They also enjoy listening to Rap and rhythm and blues music. Trayvonne and Tramaine are educationally on target. Tramaine enjoys attending school.

These two siblings are close and enjoy each other's company. They like to play together. They will need to attend ongoing therapy sessions due to separation issues. These two boys need a loving, caring family to help them realize their fullest potential and achieve their goals.

College Education Fair

Have you thought about going to college, but you just don't have the time to gather the information. Have you thought about returning to finish your degree? We know you are busy working, commuting to and from various places, taking care of family, cooking and cleaning, without too many minutes to spare.

That's exactly why the county's Regional Alliance of Adult Higher Education (RAAHE) Education Fair is being held. We want to assist in your effort to go back to college and earn your degree. So, we're bringing the finest regionally accredited schools in the tri-state to you.

You'll not only save time, but you'll have the unique opportunity to talk with representatives from local colleges and universities about the educational degree programs they offer that interest you. You'll have easy access to continuing education information.

The Personnel Department, in conjunction with RAAHE will present the Education Fair on Thursday, August 5, 11:00 a.m. until

2:00 p.m., in the lobby of the County Administration Building, 138 E. Court Street.

The RAAHE Schools invited to the Education Fair event are:

- Chatfield College
- Cincinnati State and Technical College
- Miami University, Hamilton
- College of Mount St. Joseph
- Northern Kentucky University
- Thomas More College
- University of Cincinnati College of Nursing
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Phoenix Cincinnati
- University of Phoenix Online
- Union Institute and University
- Wilmington College
- Xavier University

You can also learn about the county's tuition reimbursement program.

For more information, contact Kim Pennekamp, 946.4705.

August Is Child Support

Job and Family Services (JFS), in August, will join agencies across the state to promote awareness and education about the child support program. This year's theme is *Making a Difference in a Child's Life*.

Among activities planned for this month are a booth at the County Fair, August 4 through 8, an event for sanctioned child support clients on August 14, distribution of posters and fact sheets to community partners, media relations, newsletter articles, and website links.

Child support provides children with the opportunity for a better life. The child support program helps children receive the financial and medical support that has been ordered for them and that they deserve. The program helps families work toward becoming and remaining self-sufficient.

In 2004, 247 employees in JFS' Child Support Services collected \$153.8 million. They had a total of 93,243 cases. Child Support Services takes advantage of tools, such as license suspensions, a partnership with WCPO-TV and bank account seizures to collect support.

We encourage parents to take responsibility and make a difference in the lives of their children by establishing paternity and paying their child support.

"Got News?"

Send an email to sharon.booker@hamilton-co.org

Deadline for next issue:
July 26.



Please remember to print and post *Hello, Hamilton County* in your areas so that everyone can see what's going on!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue.

Hello, Hamilton County is published twice monthly on the County's web page. It is intended to inform both Hamilton County residents and staff. If you have questions or suggestions for future editions, please contact Sharon Booker (946.4428), Peter Hames (946.4432), or Cheryl Willis (946.4324). To subscribe or unsubscribe visit www.hamilton-co.org and click on the green "Newsletter" button.