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**September 2009**

**Dear Child Advocate,**



Every child is a wonderful gift, a unique individual with unlimited potential. In honor of all children, FCCS is hosting a special Children's Day celebration at COSI, on Friday, September 25, from 5 to 9 pm. Children and families under the care of FCCS will receive passes for free admission, thanks to donations from Kroger and Huntington Bank, along with a partnership between the Franklin County Board of Commissioners and COSI to actively offer programming that supports family learning.

Additionally, all community children attending on this special day can participate in the drawings for wonderful prizes (two bikes are being given away), exciting stage performances, and appearances by local mascots. The first 300 community children to enter will get in free. With the help of media sponsor 92.3 WCOL, many families will learn about

**Message**

Welcome to *Children Services Connects!* Please let us know what you would like to see in future issues or submit your own stories to [enews@fcss.co.franklin.oh.us](mailto:enews@fcss.co.franklin.oh.us).

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## Taking A Stand Against Abuse

### FCCS Child Advocate Honored



**Adoption Supervisor Pat Hill, right, receives an award from Joseph Crumbley, president of NACAC's board of directors.**

For her unwavering commitment to helping all children find loving, permanent homes, Children Services employee **Pat Hill** was recently recognized as a 2009 Adoption Activist at the North American Council on Adoptable Children's annual conference. An adoption supervisor in Franklin County Children Services' permanency division, Hill has been with the agency for a total of 18 years and has spent the past decade advocating on behalf of children waiting for adoption. Hill's ability to empathize with her kids' difficult life experiences makes her good at her job. "What drives me is that I understand what it feels like to be abused," Hill said. "Knowing that is the force that drives me."

One of the FCCS guiding principle states "We Are Child Welfare Professionals" and over and over again, our talented and professional [social workers](#) are shining examples of this principle in action.

### Back-to-School Blitz



Franklin County Children Services Kinship Assistance Program recently held an event to help kinship care providers ease the stress of back-to-school by providing basic school supplies and backpacks for children in grades K-12. Over 300 backpacks were donated to the Kinship Assistance Program by the Tom Fennessy Back-to-School Project, AT&T Pioneers and the Institute of Real Estate Management Chapter 42. For more information on Kinship Care, click [here](#).

The Volunteer Department also sponsored a back-to-school cookout where nearly 200 volunteers, mentors and their matched youth participated. Many organizations helped collect supplies, including Value City employees who generously donated several thousand dollars worth of supplies. For more information on volunteer opportunities, click [here](#).

## Tips for Today

### Keeping Your Family Healthy

FCCS and Nationwide Children's Hospital want your whole family to stay healthy. Here are a few steps you can take to help keep yourself and your family from getting sick:



- Good hand washing is key to preventing the spread of germs.
- Alcohol-based hand rub is also effective.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Stay home if you get sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Give your immune system a boost by getting plenty of sleep, getting plenty of exercise and eating healthy foods. Click [here](#) for tips on eating healthy.

Nationwide Children's Hospital recommends anyone with persistent flu-like symptoms and a fever consult with their pediatrician or primary care provider. Click [here](#) for more information on H1N1.

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**Children's Heroes**

**Busy People Can Volunteer**



FCCS Friendship Volunteer, Cathi Havens, is motivated, passionate and very busy. She works a full time job and participates in activities such as Light the Night for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Nationwide Children's Hospital Rock-n-Bowl, and Service Day to help senior citizens. Havens is also an active church member and is married.

Havens has been matched with Tiffany for more than a year and during this time they have established a wonderful friendship. "It brings me such joy to give Tiffany the opportunity to experience new things and see what the world has to offer," she said. Despite being extremely busy, Havens added, "It's not difficult to find time to mentor because I truly enjoy my time with Tiffany." If you would like more information on becoming a mentor, please contact 614-275-2560 or click [here](#).

**Getting the Word Out About Safe Havens**



### Jonathan - A Safe Havens Success Story

Community partners, social service staff, medical professionals, foster and adoptive parents and local media recently gathered at Fire Station 10 in Columbus to learn how they can promote the Safe Havens program and help save the lives of babies. The Safe Havens for Infants Law, enacted eight years ago, allows a birth parent to confidentially leave an unharmed infant (less than 30 days old) with a medical worker at a hospital, emergency medical staff at a fire station or with an officer at a law-enforcement agency. Birth parents who decide to do this can avoid prosecution.

The event brought back memories for an adoptive mother, Chris Arni, joined by her adoptive son Jonathan who was left six years ago as a newborn in the Safe Havens program. Since the inception of the law in 2001, Ohio has seen the rescue of 70 infants (13 in Franklin County). If you or someone you know is at risk of abandoning a baby, call the Safe Havens for Infants Hotline at 614-229-7200. For more information and literature, call 614-341-6060 or click [here](#). To see photos from the Safe Havens event, click [here](#).

## Ways to Act Now!

### Teaming Up to Send Youth to College

The United Negro College Fund is well known for its motto, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." And because Franklin County Children Services supports higher education for youth, the agency has participated in the UNCF Walk-A-Thon for the past 10 years. This year's Walk-A-Thon will be held on October 3. During September and October, Children Services helps raise money for UNCF and half of those proceeds go to the Alvin Hadley College Scholarship, which benefits college-bound youth of any race served by FCCS. In addition to raising funds at the Walk-A-Thon, FCCS will host a fashion show. The fashion show will feature agency staff as the models at the October 9 event. Call 614-275-2683 to donate or for more information.



### Donate Here to Help Children in Need



Franklin County Children Services needs your help to make children's lives brighter and all you have to do is [click here](#) to donate online. Did you know that agency dollars cannot be used to provide special camps, college tours or holiday gifts for children under care? Tax deductible donations by caring citizens of our community can enrich the lives of children and youth.

You can donate online to the Children's Fund to help children attend special summer camps, take part in sports, or provide a partial scholarship; or donate to the Holiday Wish program, which provides gifts to nearly 5,000 abused, neglected and troubled children each year. Individuals, community groups, organizations, church groups and businesses are needed to help these children know that someone cares about them. To learn more about how to help children, [click here](#) or call 614-275-2633.

## Upcoming Events

### September

#### **September 25 - Children's Day at COSI**

This event at COSI, sponsored by Kroger, 92.3 WCOL, Franklin County Board of Commissioners and Huntington National Bank, offers fun to children and families from 5 until 9 p.m. Each year, through generous support and donations, abused and neglected children enjoy a free day at COSI. Special entertainment and prizes are featured. For more information, call 614-275-2520.

### October

#### **October 17th - Volunteer Fall Event at Circle S Farms**

Volunteers and their matched child are invited to spend the day at Circle S Farms to pick pumpkins and engage in fall fun. FCCS volunteers and mentors can RSVP to 275-2736 by October 12.

### Contact Information

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