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**MINUTES OF LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD**  
**Regular Meeting Held June 16, 2021**

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The regular meeting of the Lucas County Children Services Board was held at 705 Adams Street, 3:00 P.M. in person and via Zoom.

**Members Present:** Ms. Cowell, Ms. Easterly, Ms. Gagnon, Ms. McCollough, Rev. Dr. Perryman, Mr. Schinharl,  
Ms. Vasquez, Mr. Walrod, Ms. Wilson

**Member(s) Absent:** Ms. Arnold, Mr. Ridi

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Ms. Vasquez called the June 16, 2021 regular meeting of the LCCS Board to order. Roll Call was taken. A quorum was present.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER**

Mr. Jim Walrod gave a brief history of his background and was welcomed to the board.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES**

Starr Bibbs – Caseworker – Training Unit  
Ebony Daniels – Driver – Transportation/Family Visits  
Jessica Eicher – Caseworker – Training Unit  
Andrew English – Caseworker – Training Unit  
Kaylee Fields – Caseworker – Training Unit  
Liesl Gyurko – Caseworker – Training Unit  
Emma Hansen – Caseworker – Training Unit  
Brittany Hughey – Caseworker – Training Unit  
Mitchell Isler – Data Analyst – Quality Improvement  
Cameo Ivy – PT Family Visits Monitor – Family Visits  
Douglas Saar – Utility Person – Support Services  
Heather Schultz – Caseworker – Training Unit  
Sabra Walter – Caseworker – Training Unit  
Robert Yoder, Jr. – Caseworker – Training Unit

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA AND APRIL 2021 LCCS BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Vasquez asked if there were any items to be removed from the Consent Agenda. One item was pulled from the Consent Agenda:

- From Personnel Committee: Motion to approve the NBU pay increase

Ms. Wilson made a motion that the non-bargaining employees be given the same 3% increase as the bargaining unit through April 30, 2022, retroactive to May 1, 2021. Ms. Gagnon seconded the motion.

Ms. Vasquez read the Consent Agenda into the minutes:

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Minutes from 05/19/2021 LCCS Board of Trustees Meeting
- Services and Programs Committee Meeting Minutes ( 06/02/2021 )
- Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes ( 06/07/2021 )
- Finance Committee Meeting Minutes and additional finance documents attached ( 06/08/2021 )

Ms. Vasquez asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Rev. Dr. Perryman made a motion for approval. Ms. Cowell seconded. Ms. Vasquez asked those in favor of the motion to signify by stating aye, those opposed nay. Motion unanimously carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

"Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man" Video was shown to all board members. Discussion was held after.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Ms. Vasquez stated it is time to review the Strategic Plan. There will be no retreat this year. She is looking at this as a two-meeting process; in September sharing the progress report of the plan and then in October holding a special meeting to have any areas revised of the Strategic Plan.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **LCCS Child Placement Statistics**

|                          | Current Month | Previous Month |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Agency Foster Homes      | 309           | 316            |
| Subsidized Adoptions     | 1,223         | 1,219          |
| Purchased Boarding Homes | 122           | 118            |
| Institutions/Group Homes | 10            | 9              |
| Relative Placement       | 330           | 302            |

## **DIRECTOR'S ACTIVITY REPORT**

### **Children Services Transformation Advisory Council**

One of the recommendations coming out of the council was to establish a state-level ombudsman to independently investigate and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of children and families involved with Children Services. As you know, one of my first actions as executive director, was to establish an independent ombudsman office through Family Council. This is the only ombudsman office in Ohio that is responsible for investigating complaints made by families involved with the child protection system. To that end, we have been informed that Governor DeWine's aide reached out to Family Council to request a meeting with the Ombudsman to discuss a Statewide program. The meeting is scheduled on Friday, June 25, 2021. We will be forwarding a letter of support to the Governor's office.

### **Family First Prevention Services Act**

The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) was adopted on February 9, 2018 and must be fully implemented nationwide by October 1, 2021. Family First places emphasis on the use of evidence-based prevention services to alleviate the need for placement of children in foster care, and ensuring appropriate settings are used for children in foster care.

### **State Budget/Child Protection Allocation**

The following Statement may be attributed to PCSA:

"With a federal reform deadline fast approaching, it is a pivotal time for Ohio's children services system and the families we serve. The latest version of the budget, released by the Senate Finance Committee, provides counties with much-needed support to begin transforming children services. We are grateful to the Senate for recognizing that funding must align with new state and federal policy changes by adding \$10 million per year to the State Child Protection Allocation.

In addition, the Senate joined the House in affirming its support for relative caregivers by restoring the Kinship Caregiver Program at \$10 million per year in TANF. This program allows county agencies to provide needed family stabilization and limited childcare assistance to eligible kin caregivers.

The budget will now go to the conference committees to continue discussions that will resolve conflicts between the two chambers on budget. We look forward to continued support in conference committee.”

### **Ohio Start**

We have been an Ohio Start county since August 2019. We have been asked to provide shadowing opportunities to new counties joining in Ohio Start's next cohort.

"Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma) is an evidence-informed children services-led intervention model that helps public children services agencies (PCSAs) bring together caseworkers, behavioral health providers, and family peer mentors into teams dedicated to helping families struggling with co-occurring child maltreatment and substance use disorder."

### **30 Days to Family**

We have been 30 Days to Family county since 2018.

"30 Days to Family is an intense short-term intervention developed by the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition to:

- Increase the number of children placed with relatives when they enter the foster care system.
- Ensure natural and community supports are in place to promote stability for the child.
- The program model features two major elements: family finding and family support interventions"

### **Success Story of the Month**

Ohio Specialist Anthony Cardenas received a referral in March 2021, after a family had been served by Lucas County Children Services since November 2020. He shared that his work started out like any other "day one" of working with a family, completing the initial genogram and searching through the SACWIS system for priority family members. He knew something was different when he called the paternal grandmother, who shared that she had lost contact with her now 10-year-old grandson and missed him greatly. Although the grandmother was initially uncertain whether she could serve as her grandson's primary kinship caregiver during that first phone call, Anthony was hopeful and optimistic that he would be able to reconnect this young person with a supportive family member. Over the next few days, Anthony supported the grandparents as they processed their initial feelings of surprise, overwhelm, and excitement about this reconnection, explored their caregiving plan, and helped them make the decision to pursue a potential kinship caregiving role for their grandson.

Anthony's next step was to talk with the young person. Again, he started as he usually does, and asked an open-ended question to find out who the important people are in the youth's life. The response he received surprised him; the young person stated that he did not have many family members, as his maternal family is small, and he believed his paternal family had passed away. Anthony recalled that in his 20 years of experience working with families, one of the most touching and memorable moments was sharing with this young person that he does have family on his father's side, that they care about him, and they are excited to reconnect with him.

During one of the first phone calls between the youth and grandparents, the grandmother said "I love your father, but he didn't do right by you. My sole purpose now is to keep you safe," reinforcing both her stance of unconditional love for family and commitment to caring for her grandson.

Anthony has supported the family to compile a robust Roadmap to Family and transition plan, and the young person is looking forward to residing with his grandparents soon. The grandmother has been very focused on ensuring the youth's voice is centered in every conversation, to ensure he has the time and resources to build a relationship with his grandparents and make the best decision about his relationships with all family members moving forward. They have been connecting over the phone and participating in visits in preparation for the caregiving transition, with full support of the young person's current resource foster family.

Anthony takes pride in his ability to connect family members and support youth on their healing journey. He noted that workers of record often do not have the time or resources to do the deep family searching, support, and planning that allows him to link young people back to kinship caregivers through the 30 Days to Family® model. By taking the time to focus on the extra steps needed to identify family members, locate their contact information, and cultivate strong professional relationships, Anthony added a whole new branch to this young person's family tree.

### **Building Issues**

We have continued to experience plumbing problems in the building. The commissioners have continued to bring in plumbing contractors and sanitize the affected areas. We also submitted several photos of the carpet problem and old and new broken windows in the building that have gotten worst during the pandemic.

### **COVID-19 Update**

On June 7, we brought all staff back in the building. As discussed last month the Food and Drug Administration has cleared the coronavirus vaccine for emergency use in children as young as 12. We have taken the position that we will approve all vaccinations for children in our permanent custody, legal custody and temporary custody in consultation with parents and primary care doctors. Youth can decline to take the shot.

### **DONATIONS/PARTNERSHIPS**

The Family Visits playground renovation project has pushed past its fund-raising goal of \$250,000. The Ohio EPA has awarded a \$35,000 Recycle Ohio grant, making it possible to install a rubber playground surface made of approximately 1,800 recycled tires! The Lott Conlon Foundation also has awarded \$10,000 to improve the accessibility and inclusion of the playground. Both gifts will go a long way toward making the playground a fun place for kids and adults of ALL abilities!

A parade and picnic are just the beginning for Independent Living graduates and LCCS emancipated youth June 11. 15 youth are invited with their adult guardian or caseworker to another celebration at Maumee First Presbyterian Church, where a new organization called Love and Luggage will present each youth with a wheeled duffle bag and a \$250 Walmart gift card. Each youth will be allowed to fill their duffle bag with a variety of housewares and hygiene products donated by church members and community supporters. The church food pantry also will be open to the youth. Each participating LCCS youth will be eligible for up to \$1,000 worth of gift cards over the next year.

### **IN THE MEDIA**

|                   |                                                                |            |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 13abc             | Robin & Sashem Brey tape Toledo Me PSA's on foster recruitment | 05-19-2021 |
| WGTE Public Media | Robin & Pete interviewed about COVID<br>(Airdate TBA)          | 05-20-2021 |

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

### **OPEN SESSION**

None

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Wilson.  
Seconded by Mr. Schinharl.  
Meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Dr. Donald Perryman, Secretary