



# Hello Hamilton County

May 2010

## E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

***"Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago."***

~Warren Buffet

## Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance Awarded \$17 million Grant



Hamilton County Commission President David Pepper, Duke Energy of Ohio and Kentucky President Julie Janson, Kentucky Energy and Environment Secretary Leonard Peters, GCEA Executive Director Andy Holzhauser, and Governor Strickland shared information about the GCEA in September 2009.

The Department of Energy has selected the Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance (GCEA) to receive a \$17 million Recovery Act grant award through its Retrofit Ramp-Up Initiative.

Greater Cincinnati is one of only 25 communities nationwide to receive this funding. The funding is awarded specifically for the purpose of enabling communities, governments, private sector companies, and non-profit organizations to work together on pioneering innovative programs for large-scale retrofits and making energy efficiency accessible to homeowners and businesses.

"This initiative will help overcome the barriers to making energy efficiency easy and accessible to all — inconvenience, lack of information, and lack of financing," said Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "Block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, we will make our communities more energy efficient and help families save money. At the same time, we'll create thousands of jobs and strengthen our economy."

The Department of Energy will use lessons learned from programs like Greater Cincinnati's to develop best-practice guides to comprehensive retrofit programs that can be adopted and implemented by other communities across the country.

The GCEA, which will administer the funding, is a collaborative program involving seven local government partners, including Hamilton County. It intends to serve the following sectors with these grant dollars:

**Residential:** Promote efficiency through large-scale community outreach and social networking; behavior change; building improvements; and long-term, sustainable financing options.

**Non-Profit Program:** Expand audit, retrofit, and incentive programs to serve larger nonprofits, including schools and hospitals, and facilitate energy performance contracts.

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**Small Commercial:** Leverage community outreach approach focusing on pre-qualifying businesses for lighting and major measures that have incentives from Duke Energy.

**Large Buildings (Commercial, Industrial, Manufacturing and Institutional):** A two phase approach that combines operational and behavioral assistance upfront with sustainable financing mechanisms to increase implementation of major energy efficiency retrofits.

Investing in energy efficiency is considered by many to be an economic development initiative. "We intend to leverage these funds to attract private capital, designed to create an economic impact of as much as \$100 million or more," said Andy Holzhauser, Executive Director of the GCEA.

Implementing energy efficiencies saves energy costs, creates local jobs that can't be outsourced, reduces dependence on foreign oil, and positively impacts our community's carbon footprint.

"Receiving this very large grant opens up a huge opportunity to being on the cutting edge when it comes to energy efficiency and green job creation," said



During a GCEA Home Energy Audit, a homeowner and inspector assess cold air infiltration, one aspect in which efficiency can be enhanced.

Commission President David Pepper. "This is a great partnership."

For more information about the GCEA, including how to access services, please visit this link:

<http://greatercea.org/>.

### Non-Government Entities Engaged with the GCEA's "Ramp-Up" Initiative

- Ohio and Kentucky State Energy Offices
- Duke Energy
- Metropolitan Sewer District
- Organized labor
- Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network
- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College
- Gateway Community and Technical College
- Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency
- Northern Kentucky Community Action Agency
- People Working Cooperatively
- The Greater Cincinnati Foundation
- Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Apartment Association
- Energy service companies
- And many other workforce development and private sector partners.

\* Clean Energy Solutions and the Natural Resources Defense Council will serve as major technical and organizational support.

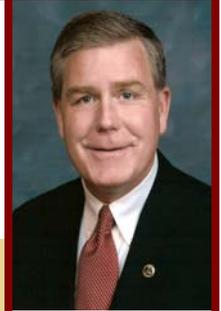
### GCEA's Government Participants

- Hamilton County, OH
- City of Cincinnati, OH
- Kenton County, KY
- Boone County, KY
- Campbell County, KY
- City of Covington, KY
- City of Florence, KY



*Patrick's Perspective*

## Celebrating National Public Service Week



**Patrick  
Thompson,  
Hamilton County  
Administrator**

This time of year is always meaningful for me, as I enjoy participating in events recognizing public employees. It's inspiring to hear the descriptions of the good work, dedication, and commitment the employees demonstrate.

National Public Service week begins May 2, and I'm pleased to join other Hamilton County leaders in recognizing our local public servants. Along with recognizing public servants, it's a great time to share information about how the Greater Cincinnati American Society of Public Administrators Chapter's (GCC ASPA) events can benefit all public servants.

### **Recognition Events**

The GCC ASPA held its annual awards luncheon on Friday, April 23. Congratulations to Hamilton County Human Resources employee Lisa Doerger, who earned GCC-ASPA's Public Administrator of the Year award in the Early Careerist category!

The Board of County Commissioners recognized Hamilton County's Employee of the Year award winners during the meeting on Wednesday, April 28. Please take some time to read about the award-winning employees on pp. 13—18 of this newsletter. Their work is outstanding!

And a number of public entities, including Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati, hold a public recognition event on Fountain Square at noon on Thursday, May 6. If possible, please stop by to join in the celebration!

These events provide a great way to publicly recognize county employees whose exemplary service is noteworthy. For every employee being formally recognized, there are hundreds of other Hamilton County employees who are just as dedicated to doing great work for our community. Thank you to all county employees for your service!

### **Greater Cincinnati ASPA**

Employees who want to enhance their perspective as public servants and public administrators should consider attending the GCC ASPA Chapter's events.

Most GCC ASPA events are free, and they are available for anyone who wants to attend. You don't have to be a GCC ASPA member to participate.

Every year, GCC ASPA holds an awards luncheon in April and also a post-election meeting and discussion in November. In addition, throughout the year, there are lunchtime events featuring a variety of speakers focusing on topics of interest to public servants.

Previous speakers have included Commissioner David Pepper and Dr. O'dell Owens, the Hamilton County Coroner. These events provide a great opportunity to meet and network with other public servants while learning new information.

If you want more information about GCC ASPA's events, please visit this website:

<http://www.aspaonline.org/grcinn/>

Or, for more information, talk with one of the Hamilton County employees who have served on the GCC ASPA Board. They include:

- Jeff Aluotto, County Administration;
- Jim Cundiff, Budget and Strategic Initiatives;
- Kerri Castlen, Environmental Services;
- Evelyn Sears, Mental Health Recovery Services Board.

I encourage you to check out the opportunities that the Greater Cincinnati ASPA events provide!

Thank you to all of the Hamilton County employees who perform such vital services for our community!



## Board of County Commissioners Pursues Sharing Services To Save Millions Regionally



Commissioners Todd Portune, David Pepper, and Greg Hartmann voted on April 28 to pursue cost-saving shared service initiatives.

During its April 28 meeting, the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners approved a motion enabling the county to actively pursue sharing two services with the City of Cincinnati that could potentially save millions of dollars for the community.

The Board approved moving forward with efforts to consolidate 911 services between the City and the County. That initiative alone could result in substantial savings.

The Commissioners also approved an initiative to share large, heavy equipment with the City of Cincinnati and other local municipalities, rather than each entity having to pay the costs involved with purchasing and maintaining its own. This could potentially save \$6 million.

“What this will do is give each administration the direction they need to begin the important work of coming up with implementation plans,” said Commission President David Pepper. “I really appreciate the work of City Council members to do the same.”

Pepper noted that Cincinnati City Council would be considering the same initiatives in an upcoming

Council meeting.

“Both initiatives signal a serious commitment by the county and city to looking at every way we can save dollars and take steps to regionalize where we can,” said Pepper.

Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati began looking at ways to save resources by sharing services with the Government Cooperation and Efficiency Program (GCEP.)

GCEP is a voluntary effort designed to help local communities improve service delivery and control costs through cross-jurisdictional cooperation, sharing of services, and possible service delivery coordination. All 50 local governments in the County, including cities, villages, and townships, plus the county itself, were included in the GCEP.

One of GCEP’s first goals was to identify service sharing opportunities that could potentially improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which local government services are provided. The 911 and heavy equipment initiatives are a direct result of this initiative.

For more information about GCEP, please visit this link: <http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hcrpc/partner/gcep/>



## Learn How You Can Help Foster Youth During National Foster Care Month

In Hamilton County, over 700 children are in foster care. These youth have experienced some level of abuse or neglect and have been placed in the care of Hamilton County Job and Family Services (JFS).

Despite the challenges they have faced, most of the children are much like any others. They laugh and play, and they have favorite toys, games and friends. They also have hopes and dreams for their futures.



struggle. In 2008, only 45 of the 150 Hamilton County foster youth who were enrolled in high school received a diploma, and only a few went on to pursue higher education.

By becoming a HEMI mentor, you can help a foster child have a better future. You'll be paired with a Hamilton County foster child currently in high school. You'll talk to him or her about higher education, about choices, and about preparing

for life after high school. You'll show that he or she is not alone, that someone is listening.

Foster children need support in order to achieve their dreams. There are many ways that Hamilton County residents can help. Whether you're interested in becoming a foster parent or in helping in other ways, May is the perfect time to learn how you can make a positive difference for a foster child.

### Foster Parenting

Foster parents provide a home and temporarily care for children who are in the custody of Job and Family Services (JFS). Hamilton County JFS is committed to ensuring that quality local homes are available for children in agency care. To find out if foster parenting might be right for you, please visit [www.hckids.org](http://www.hckids.org).

### Higher Education Mentoring

Through the Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI), you can mentor a foster child regarding higher education options and life after foster care.

For many foster children, attending a college, university or technical school may not seem like an attainable goal; even finishing high school can be a

The HEMI program is still relatively new. It began in 2009, when Commissioner Greg Hartmann, together with JFS Director Moira Weir, asked the University of Cincinnati to join the County in this partnership to help foster youth. As the program evolves, opportunities for volunteers have expanded beyond mentoring.

For more information about how you can get involved, please click the HEMI logo below, call HEMI Program Coordinator Annie Dick at 513-556-4368, or visit: <http://www.hamilton-co.org/hc/higherEducationMentoring.asp>

### Volunteering Time or Donating Resources

The Mathis Foundation for Children and the Foster Child Enrichment Council provide opportunities for people to volunteer time or donate resources to benefit foster children. These organizations offer flexibility regarding your level of involvement. To learn more, please click the logos below.

If you are interested in helping foster youth, please take time in May to learn more about your options. You can make a big difference for a child!





This event has been put together by youth

# Break the Cycle!

Support Foster Youth  
Bring Awareness to Abuse

Walk  
with  
US

Support Foster Care  
Awareness Month by  
Walking with Us

Friday, May 28, 2010  
11:30 am to 12:30 pm

This is a FREE event

Join us at  
222 E. Central Parkway  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

This event is supported by the Hamilton County Youth Advisory Board  
& The Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI)



## Rotary Club of Cincinnati And Hamilton County Help Students Learn About Local Government



High School students heard Commissioner Hartmann and other county leaders speak, and they participated in a case study during The Rotary Club of Cincinnati's Hamilton County Government Seminar.

On Tuesday, April 27, students from 13 local high schools got an insider's view of County government as they participated in the Rotary Club of Cincinnati's 49th Hamilton County Government Seminar.

More than 75 juniors and seniors attended the event. They participated in case studies to learn about the factors that enter decision making, and they listened to speeches by elected officials including Commissioner Greg Hartmann, County Auditor Dusty Rhodes, County Coroner Dr. O'dell Owens, and Judge Robert

Ruehlman. The teens ended their day with a tour of the Justice Center.

Cincinnati Rotary President Bill Shula believes the event shares an important message with the students. "Service above self is the Rotary motto," said Shula. "Many high schools have service learning programs. And county government involves service to community. It's all interconnected."

"I encourage you to stay involved with your communities," Commissioner Hartmann said to the students. "A big part of being

successful and achieving anything is giving back to your community."

County Administrator Patrick Thompson encouraged the students to consider careers in public policy and administration. "It's an exciting career."

"I'm excited to learn more about the court system and how it works," said a Lockland student named Aron.

To learn more about the Rotary Club of Cincinnati, please visit this link: <http://www.clubrunner.ca/CPrg/home/homeA.asp?cid=2319>

## Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners Community Tour Meeting in Delhi Township

**Monday, May 3, 2010**

**7 p.m.**

**Delhi Township Administration Building —  
2nd Floor**

**934 Neeb Road, Cincinnati, Ohio**

The Hamilton County Commissioners invite Delhi Township residents to take part in county government by attending a meeting in their own neighborhood. During the meeting, Delhi Township officials will present a summary of what's happening in their community.



## Hamilton County Job and Family Services' 421-LIFE Reporting Line Celebrates 20 Years

Twenty years ago, the Simpsons and Seinfeld premiered on television. Milli Vanilli and New Kids on the Block were popular. Mikhail Gorbachev became the president of the Soviet Congress. Joe Montana led the San Francisco 49ers to a Super Bowl Championship. Here in Cincinnati, the Reds won the 1990 World Series Championship.

And, 20 years ago, the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services (JFS) made a commitment to ensuring the safety of the elderly of the county by starting 421-LIFE, the 24-hour elder abuse and neglect reporting line.

JFS became one of the first agencies in the country to operate a centralized elder abuse reporting line. JFS employees were acknowledged for their hard work on the line in 1991 when 421-LIFE won an achievement award from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Before 421-LIFE, county residents called JFS Adult Protective Services workers, Cincinnati Area Senior Services, University Hospital and others to make the reports. Agencies faxed the information to JFS.

Twenty years ago, former JFS Director Don Thomas questioned Adult Protective Services managers as to why Hamilton County's referrals lagged behind other counties' referrals; this inquiry led to the creation of 421-LIFE. For nearly a decade, the line was covered 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. After-hours calls were recorded in voice mail. Around-the-clock coverage started in 1999 to help the agency comply with Council on Aging (COA) standards.

The calls that come into 421-LIFE show that there are many forms of elder abuse – it includes abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation:



- **Neglect/Self-neglect:**

Neglect can be intentional or unintentional. For example, a caregiver unintentionally neglects, forgets or is physically unable to meet the needs of the elder. Or, a caregiver deliberately withholds necessities, such as food, medical treatment or personal care. Self-neglect occurs when older adults are unwilling or unable to care for themselves due to mental confusion or physical inability.

- **Psychological abuse** is deliberate conduct that causes mental anguish; it dehumanizes

or belittles the elder. Often, psychological abuse takes the form of name calling, threats of physical harm or threats of a nursing home placement.

- **Physical abuse** is any non-accidental conduct that causes bodily harm. This type of abuse includes hitting, scratching, cuts, bruises, broken bones, physical restraint, attempted murder and murder.

- **Exploitation** is the theft or misuse of money, assets or other valuables. Assets include cash, Social Security and retirement funds, real estate, jewelry, furniture or any other items of value. Exploitation can be perpetrated by family members, caregivers, housekeepers, sales persons, telephone scams, etc.

In 2009, one in 200 elderly Hamilton County residents (574) were involved with Adult Protective Services. As the number of older Americans increases, that number is expected to rise, which makes 421-LIFE even more important in the upcoming years.

JFS encourages citizens to call 421-LIFE if they are concerned that an elderly person is being neglected, abused, or exploited.



# Concerned about Allergens? Smog and Air Quality? Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services Can Help!

Spring has sprung! It's that wonderful time of year when we don't have to monitor weather reports to learn about potentially snowy and icy conditions. Instead, we turn our attention to monitoring conditions related to allergens, smog, and air quality — all big concerns when the weather turns warmer. Fortunately, the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services (DOES) can help when it comes to allergens, smog and air quality!



## Allergy Season

Do you find yourself sneezing, coughing and scratching your eyes during this time of year? If these symptoms last longer than 7 days you could be one of the more than 35 million Americans who suffer from allergies.

Most allergies are caused by pollen and mold, which can develop inside and outside of the home. Pollens are spread through trees, grasses, and plants, and the wind can carry these pollens for hundreds of miles. To help in reducing allergy related symptoms try the following:

- Avoid areas with freshly cut grass
- Minimize outdoor activity between 5 a.m. and 10 a.m.
- Close windows and use an air conditioner to reduce the amount of allergens entering your home
- Avoid activities such as raking leaves, mowing the lawn, and working with compost when feeling reactive.

To help manage your allergies, you can track pollen and mold counts using the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services' Pollen and Mold Hotline.

Just call 946-7753

or visit this link:

<http://www.hcdoes.org/airquality/webpages/pollenmold.htm>



## Smog Season

Most urban areas have issues with smog, and Southwest Ohio is no exception! Fortunately, DOES has a Smog Season program that helps. Between April 1 and October 31, DOES works in conjunction with other area environmental experts to determine when to issue Smog Alerts.

Smog Alerts help residents in Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren Counties protect themselves against the health risks associated with smog and reminds them to reduce their impact on ground-level ozone and particulate matter levels.

By paying attention to the news and weather reports and staying aware of the Smog Alert warnings this season, you can protect yourself and others against the many health risks associated with ground-level ozone and particulate matter. When there is a Smog Alert, certain groups of people may want to avoid prolonged outdoor exertion. Plus, your awareness of Smog Alerts can inspire you to take steps to reduce the level of air pollution, which is one of the main contributors to smog. Steps to take are listed on the next page.

By doing your share to reduce air pollution and staying aware of the air quality monitoring information offered by HCDOES, you can make 2010's Smog Season a safer and healthier one.

To learn more about smog and air quality monitoring, visit this link:

<http://www.hcdoes.org/airquality/webpages/Smog.html>



## What is Smog?

Smog is a term used to describe air pollution that is a result of the interaction of sunlight with certain chemicals in the atmosphere. The two primary pollutants in smog are ground-level ozone and particulate matter. These pollutants come from a variety of sources, including:

- Automobiles, trucks and buses
- Large industry and combustion sources such as utilities
- Small industry such as gasoline dispensing facilities and print shops
- Consumer products such as paint and cleaners
- Off-road engines such as aircraft, locomotives, construction equipment and lawn and garden equipment.

## Do Your Share for Cleaner Air!

The Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services Recommends taking these steps to keep our air cleaner and help reduce the number of Smog Alerts:

- Maintain your vehicle—make sure tires are properly inflated and schedule regular oil changes.
- Don't idle your vehicle—idling wastes gas and pollutes the air.
- Conserve energy—turn off lights and computers.
- Refuel your car after sunset.
- Don't top-off at the pump and tighten your gas cap.
- Avoid using gas-powered lawn equipment.
- Rideshare, combine trips, and eliminate unnecessary trips.
- Walk to your destination or ride a bike. This is a great way to exercise and save money!

## Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services Partners with Forest Park Police

A unique partnership between Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services (HCDDS) and Forest Park Police has become a proactive effort to improve safety for individuals with disabilities.

Eric Metzger, manager of the health and safety investigative team at HCDDS has been steadily working with Forest Park Police for more than a year.

"After emergency situations involving individuals with disabilities connected us with Eric and his team members, we developed a mutually beneficial training and information-sharing process," said Jeff Larsh, Forest



Eric Metzger and Forest Park Police Chief Phil Cannon.

Park Lieutenant.

With Metzger's assistance, the Forest Park Police Department changed policies and developed a referral process as well as

relationships with staff in non-profit agencies contracted by HCDDS.

In recognition of this partnership that has assisted in allocating police resources more efficiently and reducing safety risks among people with disabilities, Forest Park Police Chief Phil Cannon recently recognized Metzger for providing outstanding service to the community.

Alice Pavey, Director of HCDDS Community Services, praised Metzger as well as Forest Park Police. "Eric's persistence and professional knowledge and manner, as well as the Forest Park Police's openness and cooperative spirit, have improved our mutual service to citizens with disabilities."



## Hamilton County Surplus Auction Raises Over \$1 Million

The Hamilton County Surplus Auction recently reached a milestone, generating over \$1 million in revenue for Hamilton County. Through the auction, the county sells items and equipment that the county no longer needs.

Hamilton County Purchasing Director Amy Hoh introduced the auction in 2004 as a way to save money — as well as raise money. The County used to offer a traditional, on-site auction, which necessitated paying storage fees for the items that would be sold. With the online auction, storage fees are not necessary, which generates big savings. And more people can bid on the items online, since they don't have to be in a specific place at a specific time to participate in the auction.

The wide variety of auction items keep things interesting, for shoppers and employees.

"In general, folks love the auction, and you never know what you will find on the site for sale," says Hoh. "We have sold semi's, garbage trucks, ambulances, computers, workout equipment, televisions, desks, jewelry, mowers, tractors, taco stands and pretzel warmers. You can never really tell what generates a lot of interest."

The Surplus Auction, which earned a National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement award distinguishing the program as a model for other local governments, offers many benefits in addition to the funds it raises. The Surplus Auction is a great way to recycle, as it keeps items out of landfills and allows them to continue being used. The auction also supports small businesses, because they can buy used office items and



Amy Hoh, Purchasing Director, implemented the Surplus Auction in 2004.

equipment rather than taking on the cost of buying new.

The Surplus Auction provides a great example of how local governments can successfully share services. Nineteen government entities have signed on to use the County's Surplus Auction.

If you would like to check out the Surplus Auction, please visit this link:

[www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com](http://www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com)

### Hamilton County Surplus Auction Participants:

- Amberley Village
- Cincinnati Board of Education
- City of Blue Ash
- City of Deer Park
- City of Miamisburg
- City of Sharonville
- City of Silverton
- City of St. Bernard
- City of Wyoming
- Colerain Township
- Delhi Township
- Green Township
- Loveland Fire Department
- Sycamore Township
- Village of Indian Hill
- Village of Lockland
- Village of Terrace Park
- Village of Woodlawn
- Western Joint Ambulance District



## Pinwheels Planted to Raise Awareness About Child Abuse and Neglect



April was National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and more than 5,300 pinwheels -- each representing a report of child abuse or neglect to 241-KIDS -- were planted at Burnet Woods Park on Monday, April 12. The pinwheels are planted in a dramatic attempt to draw attention to one of the area's most horrific problems.

"Pinwheels for Prevention: It's Your Turn to Raise the Leaders of Tomorrow" is a statewide campaign organized by the Ohio Children's Trust Fund to promote awareness and prevention of child abuse. In Hamilton County, 5,353 reports of abuse and neglect to the 241-KIDS child abuse hotline were validated in 2009.

Hamilton County joins all 88 counties participating in Pinwheels for Prevention. This year's Pinwheels event is sponsored by Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, HCJFS, Hamilton County's Family and Children First Council, the Council on Child Abuse of Southern Ohio, Inc., the Cincinnati Police Department and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department.





## Hamilton County Honors Employee of the Year Award Winners



The Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners recognized seven employees who earned Employee of the Year awards. Pictured in the front row, left to right: Chris Noble, John Schwind, Ken Edgell, Natrasha Christian-Beasley, Karen Evans, and Patti Singler. Not pictured: Tom Sanders.

The Hamilton County Board of Commissioners recognized seven Employee of the Year award winners during its April 28 meeting. The award winners were nominated by their co-workers, supervisors, employees, and members of the public in recognition of their exemplary service.

The County Commissioners recognized each employee individually and shared their thanks with all.

"It's not an easy time to be a county employee," said Commissioner Greg Hartmann. "In these difficult times, your leadership is more important than ever. Thank you for all you do for the citizens of the county."

"Just hearing the different examples of employee achievements today underscores why we're so proud of what the county does and what our workforce does every day to improve the lives of our citizens," said Commissioner David Pepper.

"Thank you for your incredible service through both good times and bad to the people of Hamilton County."

"You always hear pundits taking shots at public employees and government officials," said Commissioner Todd Portune. "I wish those people could see ceremonies like this, because what they would see is that the people they are taking shots at are innovative, creative, and dedicated. They work very hard to make a difference. When we have ceremonies like this, I am reminded of what a great place Hamilton County is and how privileged I feel to be able to work side by side with the men and women who make up the Hamilton County family. We are all very honored by what you do day in and day out to make Hamilton County a wonderful place to live."

To learn more about each award winners' achievements, please see pages 14—17.



## Innovation Award: Tom Sanders, Job and Family Services

Tom Sanders, Information Systems Programmer for Job and Family Services (JFS), is well-deserving of the County's Innovation Award. Tom has worked on many important projects that have moved JFS forward; however, in 2009, Tom made a significant and cost-saving contribution to the agency by designing and implementing a consumer log-in system called the Appointment Management System (AMS). While 44 other counties in Ohio and 6 other states were using a similar system through a third party vendor, JFS could not afford the \$550,000 to \$650,000 start up cost or the \$200,000 yearly maintenance fees. So, that's when Tom began working with the Family & Adult Assistance staff to design an in-house system specific to the agency's needs.

In the Fall of 2009, JFS began to pilot the AMS. Using a weekly download of scheduled interviews from the State, reception staff could log consumers in for their

appointment and direct them to color-coded lobbies. Eligibility staff could access a "bucket" and accept the next waiting consumer. This new system ensures consumers are seen in the order they arrive. The system is now working so well, the database has been expanded to include scheduling telephone and intake interviews. Tom designed the system to include many additional features to help manage workloads.

The AMS will save JFS and the County an estimated \$1,000,000+ over a five year period. The system improves customer service by ensuring JFS consumers are seen in the order they arrive, they are seen quickly and not spending much time waiting. The system gives management staff the tools to increase productivity – timeliness rates will improve with application processing during State audits. Communication has improved drastically, and the staff loves this new system!

## Customer Service Excellence Award: Karen Evans, Job and Family Services

Karen Evans, Customer Service Manager for Job & Family Services, serves as the point person for all complaints regarding the public assistance program.

During 2009 – a year that saw record levels of County residents seeking public assistance and the layoffs of hundreds of JFS employees – Karen faced a very busy and difficult job. In fact, All of the employees who worked for Karen were laid off. Even when faced with this tremendous pressure, Karen was determined to remain positive and to serve the customer with respect. Karen stood as a symbol to all employees on how to be innovative and step up to the plate when needed.

Karen worked closely with line managers and public assistance staff to handle complaints, and she worked late many nights to ensure customers received the answers they needed.

In addition to providing outstanding customer service, Karen went above and beyond the call of duty by helping in other areas when needed. Karen worked closely with the manager in charge of Child Support and Children's Services complaints to learn that complaint resolution system and serve as a back-up. When the Call Center lost a manager, Karen helped monitor and manage the Call Center staff in between her daily duties. Karen also volunteered to monitor and train



staff working in the waiting rooms to ensure they were treating consumers with respect and providing quality customer service.

In 2009, more than 2,000 calls a day came into the agency's main phone line. Many of these calls ended up on Karen's desk. Karen's outstanding customer service work led to many complaints being resolved. Karen is an outstanding example of dedication to customer service.



## Administrative/Clerical Support Award Patti Singler, Human Resources



Since 2007, Patti Singler has served as the HRD Coordinator for Human Resources' Human Resources Development (HRD) Division. Patti's outstanding work has made the HRD program more efficient and productive.

Patti handles an incredibly large workload. In 2009, she processed over 1,900 training participant registrations, set up over 180 classes, and ensured that instructors, participants and HRD staff members had everything they needed for classes. Patti serves as Training Coordinator for JFS' over 800 employees, who contact her directly for any HRD training need. In addition to handling her regular workload in 2009, Patti served on a team that created a new database for maintaining HRD's training

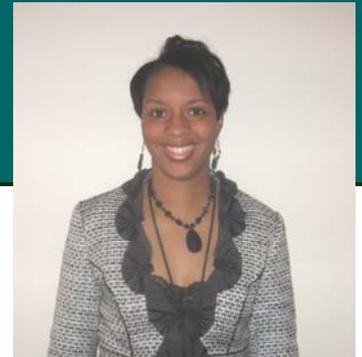
records, earning Project Gain recognition for the money it saved. The new database has streamlined HRD's processes and saves staff time.

Patti takes the initiative to improve practices and procedures. Her ideas have had a positive impact. Patti came up with an idea about sending reminders to employees who were enrolled for classes to minimize the number of unplanned absences. She implemented her idea in 2007, and the number of unplanned absences decreased. Also, Patti developed a new process to ensure that HRD formally recognizes employees in class when they attend their last "Leadership for Results" session, and it's working great.

Patti notices needs and takes the initiative to help make things better. For example, Patti volunteers each year to help the Benefits Division with Open Enrollment paperwork. She noticed that HRD's records didn't always get updated when employees left employment with the County. So Patti updated over 500 records and implemented a process for updating this regularly. Patti regularly volunteers to cover phones for the HR Dept.

In addition to doing great work, Patti is courteous and professional with everyone.

## Leadership Award Natrasha Christian-Beasley, Job and Family Services



Natrasha Christian-Beasley, Children's Services Supervisor for Hamilton County Job and Family Services, demonstrates excellent leadership skills and endless energy – no matter what kind of day she is having. Natrasha makes her staff feel supported, motivated and respected. She never asks her team to complete a task or visit that she hasn't or wouldn't do herself. She is an advocate for continuing education and helps her staff identify ways to enhance their own skills.

Natrasha is committed to the safety and well-being of Hamilton County children. She ensures that her staff adheres to the organization's mission and commitment of child welfare.

Natrasha supervises her staff's caseloads with patience and demonstrates endurance, all while balancing her delivery of clear directives and expectations of work performance. Natrasha has proven to be a supervisory role model to her unit and other frontline employees. She knows when her staff is overwhelmed or stressed, and always finds time to help. Natrasha has a way of helping her staff refocus during difficult times by providing empathy and guidance, – which increases the quality of service delivery.

Natrasha is also respected by the social service community. Many comment on her being a good

supervisor and former caseworker. Natrasha demonstrates leadership and leads by example. She contributes to her unit's productivity by taking the initiative to make things better through her ability to facilitate and mediate. Natrasha supports her employees and co-workers through her professionalism and ethical behaviors.

Natrasha is a phenomenal leader and a great example to all.



## County Hero Award John Schwind, Adult Probation

John Schwind currently serves as a Probation Officer in the Intensive Supervision Unit in Price Hill's Probation Substation. John's outstanding work as a Probation Officer has contributed to a continued reduction in crime and to Price Hill again becoming a community that's a great place for people to call home. The community no longer sees the same offenders repeatedly victimizing the Price Hill neighborhood and its residents. There's still work to do, but John is, in large part, responsible for this progress.

John sees a problem, dissects it, and finds a solution. He's wise beyond

his years. John's spirit of cooperation produces results. He works collaboratively with the Cincinnati Police Department, neighborhood community councils and agencies, residents, and other County agencies and departments. This spirit of cooperation and collaboration takes time and energy. It requires his attendance at meetings and community events.

John takes the time to listen, to get to know neighborhood partners, and to develop relationships. John keeps community partners informed on critical matters related to safety in the neighborhood and advises community groups on issues of



safety. John displays courage and uses good judgment – always keeping the safety of others in mind. John has made it clear that he's always just a phone call away.

John's continued excellence in serving the County and the Price Hill community makes him deserving of the County's Hero Award.

## Extra Mile Award Chris Noble, Adult Probation

Chris Noble, Probation Officer 2 for Hamilton County's Adult Probation Over-the-Rhine Substation, exemplifies "going the extra mile."

Chris has been an unbelievable role model for his coworkers and the community. As the senior officer at the Over-the-Rhine Substation, Chris has an unmatched work ethic and puts in extremely long days to make sure the neighborhood stays safe.

Chris has been in several extremely difficult and dangerous situations. Through these situations, Chris has gained experience that he has passed along to less experienced officers, ensuring that the unit continues to grow by using teamwork and positive reinforcement.

Chris always remains on good terms with the residents of the Over-the-

Rhine community by demonstrating a just, fair attitude. Chris treats everyone he encounters with an open heart and attempts to help anyone he can – normally going out of his way to do so.

Chris also goes out of his way to assist the Cincinnati Police Department with vital probation-related investigations, receiving phone calls from them at all hours of the day and night. He has helped the Cincinnati Police Department solve numerous violent crimes, including shootings, robberies and murders. Chris keeps thorough tabs on individuals who commit crimes.

Chris devotes extra time to ensuring that a 400+ page mug shot book is updated, so fellow officers in his substation are able to become



familiar with repeat offenders. In addition, Chris helps the property owners in the Over-the-Rhine community by attempting to keep their properties free from wanted felons.

No matter how big or small the problem may seem, Chris tackles it immediately, always going above and beyond the call of duty. But, in his words, "It's just part of the job."



## Professional Achievement Award Ken Edgell, Environmental Services



Ken Edgell, Environmental Administrative Coordinator for the Department of Environmental Services, is a hard-working, well-respected employee known for his dedication to the environment and for his concern for the health and wellness of residents in Southwest Ohio. Ken has made significant contributions to the agency's mission of working with government agencies, businesses, communities and citizens to achieve and maintain healthy air quality for Southwest Ohio.

In 2003, Ken developed the Southwest Ohio Clean Diesel Campaign (SOCDC), a program to reduce the diesel-powered school buses, trucks, and non-road equipment in Southwest Ohio. Through Ken's resourcefulness and

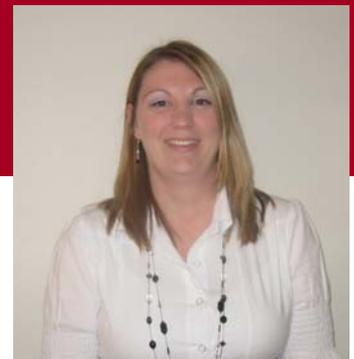
hard work, this program has received over \$1,500,000 in grant funding to retrofit over 460 district-owned buses with clean diesel technology and to purchase 60 new clean diesel technology school buses for seven Hamilton County school districts. This has resulted in over 43,000 pounds of air pollutants being removed annually, meaning tens of thousands of school children enjoy a cleaner, healthier commute to and from school. Ken's work with the SOCDC has been recognized both locally and nationally. He has received numerous awards for this initiative and has been invited to speak at a reception held by the Diesel Technology Forum in Washington, D.C.

Ken has been instrumental in the compilation of data and production

of the area's first air toxics report. The report, which helps residents understand what chemicals are in our air and what their presence means in terms of public health, received outstanding feedback from both citizens and the scientific community. The report was honored with the 2010 Risk Communication Excellence Award by the Alliance for Chemical Safety.

Ken has gone above and beyond his job duties to enhance the quality of life for our residents.

## Greater Cincinnati ASPA Public Administrator of the Year: Early Careerist Award Lisa Doerger, Human Resources



Congratulations to Lisa Doerger, Human Resources Officer with Hamilton County Human Resources (HR), for receiving the Greater Cincinnati American Society of Public Administration's (ASPA) Public Administrator of the Year award in the Early Careerist category.

This award is presented to an individual who, though early in his or her career, has demonstrated commitment to the ideals, ethics, and professionalism required to pursue a career in public service. That perfectly describes Lisa!

Lisa successfully handles a large, diverse workload. Her position

involves supporting the Benefits Division and the Human Resources Development (HRD) division. Lisa has two supervisors and two distinct workloads, and she balances it all well. Lisa excels at tasks that involve people, and she is equally good at projects that involve data, statistics, and numbers.

Lisa volunteers for extra work and takes on challenges. Lisa has volunteered for temporary assignments that supported the Staffing and Risk Management divisions. In doing so, Lisa enabled HR to achieve what it needed to for its customers, and she did exemplary work in every assignment.

Lisa demonstrates ideal ethics and professionalism. Lisa uses good judgment and behaviors that are not always achieved by seasoned professionals, let alone by someone so new to the workforce. In fact, the HR Director noted in one of Lisa's first performance reviews that, "Lisa is a positive influence on our staff." That's still true, four years later. Lisa remains calm in stressful situations, works extra hours without complaint, and shows enthusiasm for every task.



## Caring Families are Needed!



### **Makeeba**

August 1996

The colors she uses when making her crafts tell you a lot about Makeeba's personality. This shy and quiet teenager almost always chooses the pastel colors of the rainbow when she's coloring, pasting or painting, and her works of art are enchanting. In addition to art, this pleasant girl is thrilled when she has time to get engrossed in the latest teen novel or when she's concentrating on beating her opponent at a board game or two.

Makeeba usually enjoys school, but at the end of the school day she is happy to go outside and ride her bike or play at the park. In the summer she loves to swim and a trip to Disneyland ranks at the top of her list of wishes.

An active family who enjoys going places and having fun would be a dream come true for Makeeba. This sweet girl has so much love to share and she hopes to find the family of her future soon.

**For more information about adopting Makeeba, or about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, call (513) 632-6366 or visit [www.hckids.org](http://www.hckids.org)**



## **Please post "Hello Hamilton County," so everyone can see what's going on!**

Hello Hamilton County is published monthly. It is designed to inform citizens and employees about news and events related to Hamilton County government and our community in general. You can find current and archived editions on the County's website. If you have questions, suggestions, or article submissions, please contact Laura Maus.

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