



# Hello Hamilton County

June 2008

E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

*“Great teamwork is the only way  
we create the breakthroughs that define our careers.”*

~Pat Riley

## You're Invited to Attend The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's Pond Clinic



If you're considering installing a pond, but you're not sure if HGTV has provided you with quite enough information, check out this event! You're invited to attend the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's annual Pond Clinic on:

**Wednesday, June 4, 2008  
at the Winton Center—10245 Winton Rd, Green Hills, OH  
6 p.m.—9 p.m.**

You'll get to talk with experts and speakers who will present information and answer questions about everything you need to know about ponds, including:

- Pond construction,
- Fish stocking,
- Aquatic weed control,
- Pond aeration,
- Water gardens,
- Storm water detention pond maintenance.

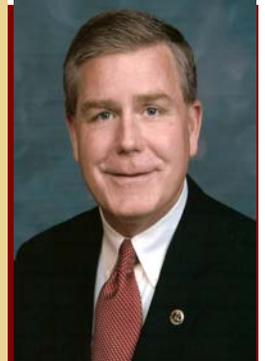
Even your children can get in on the fun! Parents are encouraged to bring the kids along, because as the parents learn about ponds, there will be supervised educational activities for children!

The cost for all of this? FREE! If you'd like to attend, please contact the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District at 513-772-7645.



## Patrick's Perspective

### Bond Rating News Good, Hard Work Remains



Patrick Thompson  
Hamilton County  
Administrator

A few weeks ago, Hamilton County met with officials from Moody's Investors Service. The County was placed on Moody's "watch list" for possible downgrade to our bond rating last November due to shrinking general fund reserves and the inability of County revenues to keep pace with less than inflationary expenditure increases. Moody's took a hard look at the financial condition of the County and assessed the community's overall economic health.

The outcome of the meeting was good for Hamilton County. Moody's reaffirmed the County's general obligation debt rating of Aa2 and removed the County from the watch list for possible rating downgrade. A downgrade would have been a black

eye for the County and increased our cost of doing business.

Moody's noted that, "the county's financial operations are well managed" and that "significant cost reductions have been made, including cuts to personnel counts, wage freezes, and review of general fund purchases." Recognizing our constant fiscal challenges and uncertain economy, Moody's also recommended that the County's outlook be categorized as negative rather than stable. The negative outlook could be raised to stable when the County balances its 2009 budget and makes steady progress towards rebuilding the general fund reserve.

While there is no doubt that maintaining our strong bond rating is excellent

news for Hamilton County, we still have very difficult challenges ahead in balancing our budget and restoring our reserves. I like to say that we have the right prescription for healing the patient, but the required medicine is tough to swallow. The Commissioners are fully aware of the budget challenges facing the County's general fund and that many of the potential solutions require sacrifice. We need to work together throughout Hamilton County government to meet the challenges we face. I have great confidence in our ability to successfully rise to the occasion and continue delivering high quality services to Hamilton County.



## Low Cost Home Improvement Loans Available for Hamilton County Homeowners Again!



The Hamilton County Board of Commissioners voted on May 28, 2008 to reinstate the Home Improvement Loan Program (HIP) .

HIP is an initiative of the Hamilton County Commissioners and the Hamilton County Treasurer. The HIP loan allows homeowners in Hamilton County communities to borrow money to repair or remodel their homes or rental property at interest rates 3% below the lowest rate a bank would normally offer.

For more information, please contact the "HIP" Coordinator, Patrick Hanrahan at 513-946-8234 or visit this link: [http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hc/hc\\_hip.asp](http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hc/hc_hip.asp) . Applications are currently being accepted. Visit a participating bank today!



Buy it from Hamilton County!

## Find Great Buys on Hamilton County's Online Surplus Auction

If you like ***cars and jewelry***, keep your eyes on the Hamilton County Surplus Auction over the next month! The County's internet auction site will sell Sheriff's forfeiture vehicles and jewelry. These items used to be sold on a quarterly basis at a public auction, but now you can enjoy the convenience of shopping for these items online at the time and place that work best for you!

Currently you can place bids on seven lots of seized jewelry from the Sheriff's Department. The jewelry has values between \$200 and \$20,000 and appraisals are attached to each lot.

The surplus auction is also accepting bids on many ***restaurant equipment*** items that were used in Paul Brown Stadium.

When you use the Hamilton County Surplus Auction, you're buying items not only from Hamilton County organizations, but also from these communities:

- |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| City of Blue Ash                 | City of St. Bernard               |
| City of Deer Park                | Cincinnati Public Schools         |
| Green Township Police Department | Sycamore Township Fire Department |
| Village of Indian Hill           | Village of Terrace Park           |



You can bid on this diamond watch before bidding closes on June 18th!

**Have fun shopping!**

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



## Check Out Your Favorite Restaurant's Inspection Reports Online!

Hamilton County Public Health has made it easier than ever for people to check out their favorite restaurants' inspection reports. Thanks to an initiative spearheaded by Chris Eddy, Director of Environmental Health, inspection reports for facilities that have been inspected by Hamilton County Public Health within the last year are available online.

Although you won't find establishments from a few cities on this site (Cincinnati, Norwood, Sharonville, Springdale, and St. Bernard are excluded), all others in Hamilton County are included. As additional facilities are inspected, their reports will become available online.

The online inspection reports are a popular feature. The site averages 400 hits each day! Luke Jacobs, a Public Health Sanitarian Supervisor, says "Feedback has been positive from customers. People enjoy being able to view inspections results before dining in a facility."

Eddy says the online reports are beneficial because, "Not only can the public look over the performance of their favorite restaurants, but also the transparency of our system necessarily provides an incentive for the operators to comply with our regulations." Jacobs adds, "Operators know that if violations occur, the public can easily find out."

The Public Health Department

cautions that a single inspection report should not be used to evaluate a food service establishment. Inspection information shows only the conditions of the facility at the time of the inspection. Looking at a facility's inspection results over a period of time gives a more accurate picture of that facility's commitment to food safety and sanitation.

### ***What information is provided on inspection reports?***

Both critical and non-critical violations are shown on inspection reports. The corresponding food code and recommended corrective actions are listed with each violation so residents understand what is required to correct the problem.

### ***What are common problems found on inspections?***

Many problems found during an inspection are non-critical, do not pose an immediate public health threat and can be corrected while the sanitarian is on site. Non-critical violations, including dirty floors, lack of hair restraints and open waste receptacles, are noted on the inspection report.

Critical violations are more likely than other violations to contribute to food contamination, illness or an environmental health hazard. Examples include food obtained from an unsafe source, inadequate cooking, improper

holding, contaminated equipment, and poor personal hygiene. Critical violations may require additional follow up from the sanitarian to ensure the problems are corrected properly. Critical violations are noted on the inspection report, along with corrective action steps.

If you'd like to view inspection reports, please visit this link:

<http://www.inspectionsonline.us/foodsafety/OHHamiltonCincinnati/search.htm>

### **Food Service Inspection Quick Facts:**

- Health District sanitarians inspect more than 3,000 facilities each year.
- In 2006, more than 7,000 inspections and follow-ups were conducted.
- Most violations are non-critical and can be corrected while sanitarians are on site.
- Violations are found at all types of facilities...fast food to fine dining establishments.

Education is usually the best way to prevent a violation from occurring again.



## Mental Health and Recovery Services Board Honors Three Award Winners During Its Second Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon



Pictured from Left to Right, The Honorable Thomas R. Lipps, The Reverend Reynaldo S. Taylor, and Congressman Rob Portman

The Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board (MHRSB) hosted its Annual Meeting Friday, May 23rd. The theme of the meeting was "Investing in Healthy Communities." This was the second annual meeting since the Community Mental Health and the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Boards were combined in October 2006.

The Board took this opportunity to update provider agencies, local elected officials, and members of the community about the current state of the MHRSB and its services. Plus, the Board honored their award winners, including The Reverend Reynaldo S. Taylor, Board Member, Central Community Health Board; The Honorable Thomas R. Lipps, Presiding Judge, Hamilton County Juve-

nile Court; and Rob Portman, Former Director of the Office of Management and Budget, U.S. Trade Representative, and Member of Congress.

Rob Portman was recognized for "Leadership in Alcohol and Other Drug Services." He has been an active advocate for many years to improve Drug and Alcohol services, both on the local and national levels.

Judge Lipps received the Mary Rose Geckle Award for "Leadership in Mental Health Services." Judge Lipps has been a long-term advocate for improving Mental Health Services for youth in Hamilton County.

Reverend Reynaldo Taylor received the "Volunteering Is Phenomenal Award." Among other

community volunteer activities, Father Taylor has been a long-term volunteer board member of Central Community Health Board, a non-profit Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol services agency.

Hamilton County Commissioner David Pepper gave the keynote address. With skyrocketing criminal justice costs, he emphasized the importance of providing proactive treatment and reentry services for individuals with mental illnesses and addictions, and keeping them out of our criminal justice system as much as possible. He outlined many of the effective local initiatives and reforms that are underway in Hamilton County and challenged the group with the goal that our County become a national model along these lines.



## Hamilton County Employees Shine During Public Service Recognition Week Event

Hamilton County employees were out in full force during the Public Service Recognition Week event at Centennial Plaza on Wednesday, May 7th.

County Administrator Patrick Thompson spoke on behalf of Commission President Todd

Portune. Many county employees accepted awards in recognition of the impact that their dedication and efforts have had on our community. And employees from the Clerk of Courts' Office, Department of Environmental Services, Job and Family Services, Recorder's Office, and

SPCA were on hand to educate and inform about the services their organizations provide.

Congratulations to all who were involved with this outstanding event!





## Hamilton County's 2008 Employees of the Year Award Recipients

In April, Hamilton County announced the names of Hamilton County's Employees of the Year. These employees represent the best of the best! You can read about the employees and their achievements in the next few editions of "Hello Hamilton County."

This month, we highlight the winner of the Professional Achievement Award, Brian Urban, and the winner of the Leadership Award, Robert Obermeyer.

### Professional Achievement Award Brian Urban, Adult Probation

Brian Urban currently serves as Associate Chief of Hamilton County Probation Substations. Brian's dedication to the Probation department is unprecedented.

Brian's expertise in public relations and his knowledge of criminal activity and the justice system has had an invaluable effect on the community. Using his strong leadership skills, Brian has molded highly motivated and highly trained officers, and he accepts nothing less. Through his work with the substations, Brian has reinvented the way the community views the Probation Department.

By opening numerous substations, the Probation Depart-

ment has experienced the beneficial results that are generated from neighborhood direct supervision, including a reduction in crime, enhanced public morale, and positive feedback from community members and the Cincinnati Police Department.

After several years as Associate Chief of the substations, Brian has had numerous communities approach him and the County hoping to receive the next community substation. Thanks to Brian's efforts, community members believe there is a chance to have their neighborhoods enjoy the positive results that neighborhoods that house substations have experienced.



Brian is an amazing role model both in and out of the field, and he deserves recognition for being a true asset to the Probation Department and citizens of Hamilton County.



## **Leadership Award: Robert Obermeyer Hamilton County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board**

Robert Obermeyer currently serves as Vice President of Operations for the Hamilton County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board. In his 30 years of County employment, Bob has repeatedly demonstrated his organizational commitment and leadership. His innovative housing programs ended the cycle of long-term homelessness in Hamilton County and were so successful that they were later adopted by the Ohio Dept. of Mental Health to be implemented statewide.

Bob has led virtually every department within the Mental Health & Recovery Services Board, and he has a unique understanding of how departments must work together, sharing resources and knowledge. Employees thrive under Bob's leadership; he creates "believers" in those he manages with his positive outlook; he understands his employees' needs and motivates them to put forth their best effort.

When Bob sees that action is needed, he does whatever is necessary to make things better. He took on the task of construction manager when this agency relocated. During this time, Bob recognized an opportunity to create a "Recovery Center" for clients. He applied for a funding grant and managed the construction of that building as

well. Bob is an admirable example of organizational commitment, endless initiative, and boundless enthusiasm for the agency mission. His willingness to share his experience and wisdom makes Bob a trusted leader.

Bob says his favorite thing about working for Hamilton County is, "knowing that what we do every day makes a positive difference in the lives of the people who depend on us and the agencies we contract with."

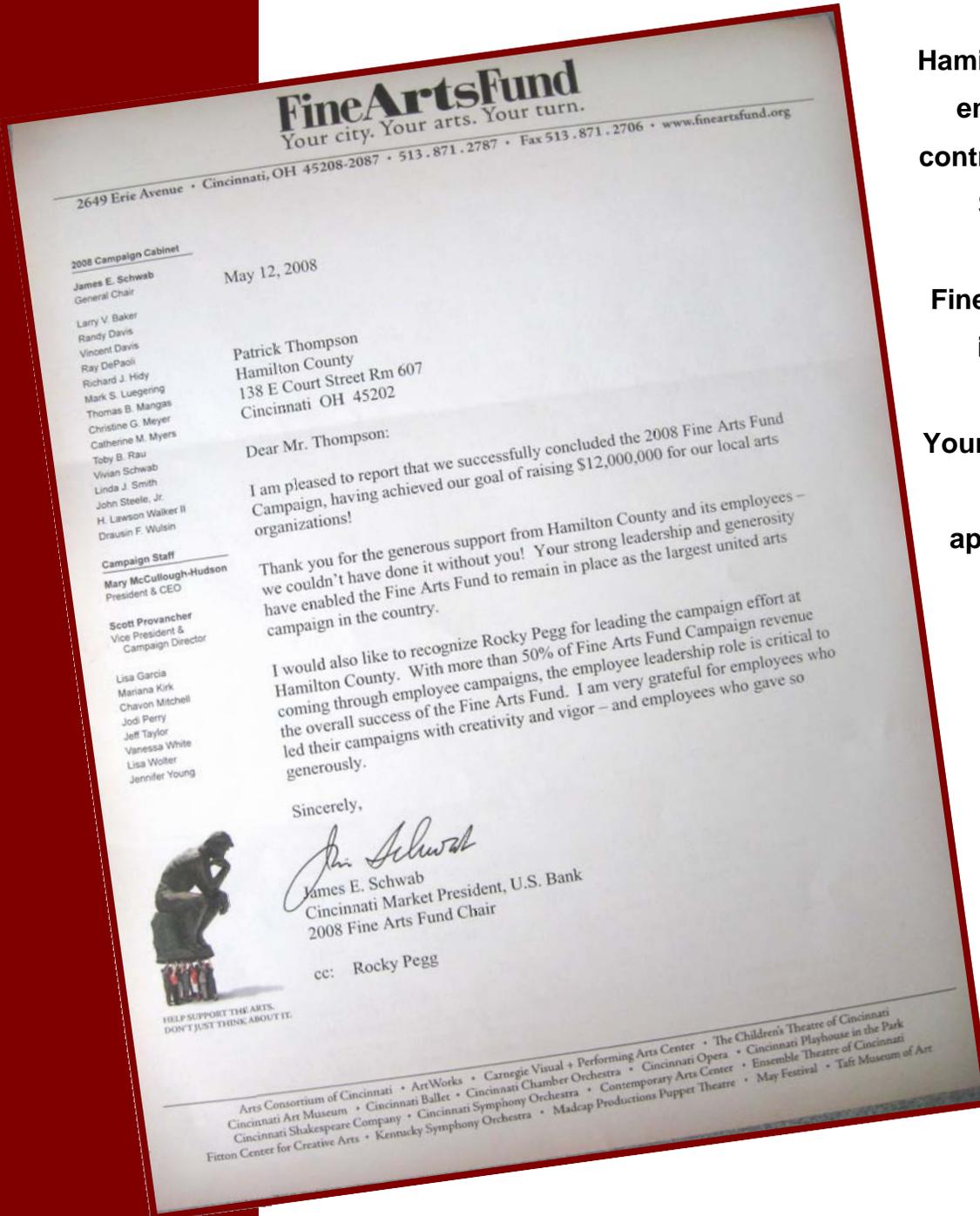
When asked about how he felt receiving the award, Bob said, "I was very, very honored. I've worked in the county for 30 years and know a lot of good people, a lot of very dedicated employees. I am very honored to have been selected by them as a leader among them."



# Thank you Hamilton County Employees For Contributing to the Fine Arts Fund!

Hamilton County  
employees  
contributed over  
**\$17,000**  
to the  
**Fine Arts Fund**  
in 2008.

Your generosity  
Is  
appreciated!



**Fine Arts Fund**  
Your city. Your arts. Your turn.

2649 Erie Avenue • Cincinnati, OH 45208-2087 • 513.871.2787 • Fax 513.871.2706 • www.fineartsfund.org

**2008 Campaign Cabinet**

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- Vivian Schwab
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- Drausin F. Wulsin

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- Scott Provancher  
Vice President & Campaign Director
- Lisa Garcia
- Mariana Kirk
- Chavon Mitchell
- Jodi Perry
- Jeff Taylor
- Vanessa White
- Lisa Woller
- Jennifer Young

May 12, 2008

Patrick Thompson  
Hamilton County  
138 E Court Street Rm 607  
Cincinnati OH 45202

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I am pleased to report that we successfully concluded the 2008 Fine Arts Fund Campaign, having achieved our goal of raising \$12,000,000 for our local arts organizations!

Thank you for the generous support from Hamilton County and its employees – we couldn't have done it without you! Your strong leadership and generosity have enabled the Fine Arts Fund to remain in place as the largest united arts campaign in the country.

I would also like to recognize Rocky Pegg for leading the campaign effort at Hamilton County. With more than 50% of Fine Arts Fund Campaign revenue coming through employee campaigns, the employee leadership role is critical to the overall success of the Fine Arts Fund. I am very grateful for employees who led their campaigns with creativity and vigor – and employees who gave so generously.

Sincerely,

James E. Schwab  
Cincinnati Market President, U.S. Bank  
2008 Fine Arts Fund Chair

cc: Rocky Pegg



Arts Consortium of Cincinnati • ArtWorks • Carnegie Visual + Performing Arts Center • The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati  
Cincinnati Art Museum • Cincinnati Ballet • Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra • Cincinnati Opera • Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park  
Cincinnati Shakespeare Company • Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra • Contemporary Arts Center • Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati  
Fitton Center for Creative Arts • Kentucky Symphony Orchestra • Madcap Productions Puppet Theatre • May Festival • Taft Museum of Art



## A Caring Family is Needed!



### **Daniel** **Born January 3, 1994**

Daniel isn't sure why he likes it so much, but English is this lovable shy young man's favorite subject at school. He gets good grades in his individualized education program. After school Daniel can usually be found playing football, after having a snack. His favorite foods are cheeseburgers and pizza.

Energetic and athletic, Daniel wants to be a professional football player when he grows up. He prefers being outdoors, hanging out with friends, playing his favorite sport or going to football games. This reserved teenager also enjoys going fishing.

Daniel would thrive with an active loving family who will nurture and encourage him and support him in coping with separation and loss.

**To learn more about Daniel and others available for adoption,  
Please call 513-632-6366 or visit [www.hcadopt.org](http://www.hcadopt.org).**



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

Hello Hamilton County is published twice each month. 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 or Eric Stuckey.

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