



# Hello Hamilton County

September 2010

## E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

*"The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life simply by altering his attitudes."*

~William James

## County Seeks Work Experience Sites

Hamilton County needs more businesses, schools, non-profits and faith-based organizations to serve as sites where public assistance recipients develop good work habits and job skills.

In return, the sites obtain free help with work they need completed. They also get a chance to evaluate possible future employees. And they get to help strengthen the community.

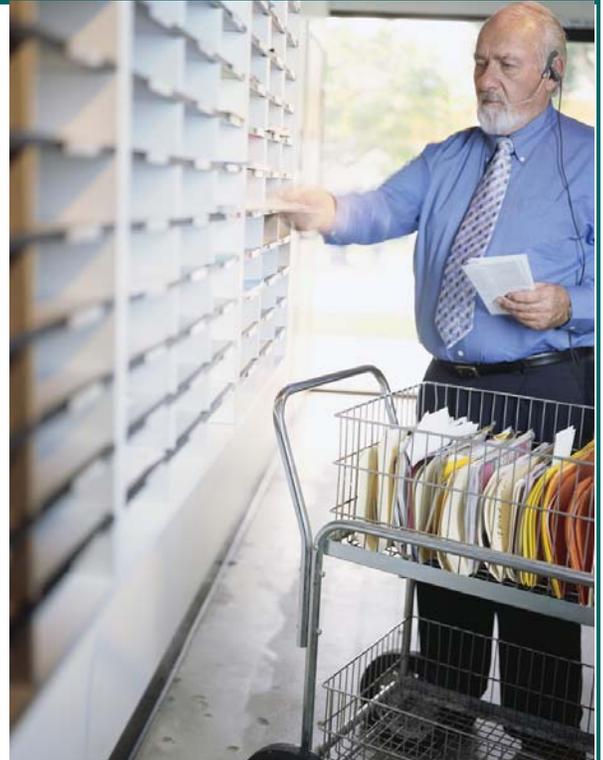
Hamilton County's Work Experience Program (WEP) has placed public assistance recipients in dozens of jobs ranging from assembly of paper materials for mailing to computer data entry.

But more sites are needed, as the number of Ohio Works First (OWF) cash assistance recipients grows in the current economic climate. More than 5,000 Hamilton County households now receive cash assistance – nearly double the number two years ago. Many are getting OWF for the first time.

In Ohio, cash assistance recipients are required to participate in 20 to 30 hours of work activities per week, depending on ages of children in the household.

"The goal of the Work Experience Program in Ohio is to enable each participant to develop work skills – both behavior and job skills – that will enable that individual to obtain and retain employment and work toward a better job," said April Barker, a project manager at the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services.

Barker noted that OWF – Ohio's version of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – is time limited. Recipients may only get 60 months in a lifetime, with extensions for certain emergencies.



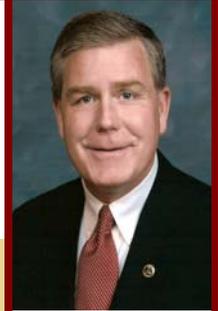
"We do not like to keep a participant in a WEP assignment for more than six months," she said. "It could be a month. They are not paid by the site. They get their OWF payment. We hope that they become considered for employment if it becomes available."

*Continued on p. 3.*



*Patrick's Perspective*

## Citizen Survey an Important Part Of Hamilton County's Budget Process



Patrick  
Thompson,  
Hamilton County  
Administrator

Throughout the United States, citizens frequently express their desire to have more control over how their tax dollars are spent. Here in Hamilton County, residents are not only invited to advise County officials about their views early on as the County's budget is created, they are provided with an incredibly convenient method for doing so.

Recently, Hamilton County residents were invited to complete a citizen survey. The survey is provided online, so residents can complete it at their convenience. The survey questions span a variety of topics that are of importance in the 2011 budget, including:

- Shared or combined government services;
- Economic development options;
- County government reform;
- Public safety issues;
- Stadium fund deficit solutions;
- Public transportation issues.

This year, over 1,300 residents completed the survey. That's more than the number of residents who participated in public budget hearings over the last four years combined! Clearly, residents find that the surveys provide a convenient

method for sharing their views. Plus, 84% of the respondents said they had never before provided input in the County budget process or attended budget hearings. I'm pleased that the survey is reaching residents who otherwise may not have shared their thoughts regarding the 2011 budget.

More than one-third of the respondents added comments at the end of the survey, sharing views in addition to their responses to the survey questions. These comments are helpful and provide worthwhile insight to what's on citizens' minds.

Hamilton County Administration is taking into account the views of our citizens as we craft a budget to present to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). This is an exciting development in itself! It used to be that citizens could formally provide input regarding the budget only *after* the budget was recommended. And to do so, they needed to attend public hearings. Beginning last year, the citizen survey has provided residents with the option to share input *before* the budget is created.

Soliciting residents' input early on in the budget process is

something that we find valuable, and we are pleased to be able to make that happen.

Now that the results of the citizen survey are available, the BOCC and County Administration can take into account citizens' views as we create various components that guide the budget and our work in 2011, including:

- BOCC budget policy statements;
- County Administrator's Recommended Budget;
- The final 2011 budget;
- The 2011 management work plan, work objectives, and executive dashboard.

These components drive where we focus our efforts in 2011, and it's great to have citizen input.

The Hamilton County citizen survey is an important tool as we create the County's budget and 2011 workplan. I want to commend the employees who have made this innovative tool available and thank the citizens who took the time to complete the survey.



*Continued from p. 1*

WEP sites are required to monitor and track attendance – and report it monthly to Hamilton County JFS or Community Link, a contracted entity that helps welfare recipients overcome barriers. Hamilton County JFS pays Workers Compensation, and provides gas cards or bus tokens for

WEP participants as well as subsidized child care, food stamps and medical coverage.

“We want them to treat participants like employees – with attendance requirements, dress code, skill building and the like,” Barker said.

“Businesses, schools, churches and non-profits have gotten good em-

ployees through this program. We encourage others to get involved.”

For more information, contact Barker at 513-946-1068 or [barkea@jfs.hamilton-co.org](mailto:barkea@jfs.hamilton-co.org).

## Co-Bedding Under the Influence Provides Serious Safety Risk for Infants and Children

*A Message from Job and Family Services Director Moira Weir*

Child abuse is a problem that few people will tolerate. There are groups, campaigns, programs, media stories, books and more dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. Every child that dies from child abuse is front-page news.

But there’s a more frequent killer of our community’s children that draws very little attention. Most often the deaths are ruled accidents or undetermined, but the circumstances surrounding them are similar and, in my mind, attribute to the death of innocent children. I am talking about co-bedding while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

So far this year, at least seven tiny children have died in co-bedding situations. In 2009, according the county’s Family and Children First Council’s Child Fatality Report, one child died of accidental death while co-bedding and four others died “undetermined” deaths in similar situations.

We dissect a lot of the county’s child deaths at our agency, particularly when the family was involved with our Children’s Services Division. I can tell you that a common factor in a lot of co-bedding deaths is that the parent was using alcohol or drugs in the 24 hours previous to the death.

When a parent is under the influence, they sleep more soundly than normal. There is a greater chance of rolling over on a sleeping baby. There is also a greater chance of a baby being placed or moved into a bad position. And, someone in an alcohol or drug-induced state is far less likely to wake up when a baby struggles or cries because they are in danger.

Greater Cincinnati hospitals do a tremendous job of disseminating information to new mothers about the dangers of co-bedding. Help Me Grow agencies visit with some new parents in their homes and discuss the proper way for their children to sleep. The Cincinnati Police Department has special trainings for police officers to recognize improper sleep arrangements and educate parents. Hamilton County Family and Children First Council will help if a family does not have a crib for the newborn.

But I too often find – when our agency is dissecting a tragic co-bedding fatality – that the parent knew the risks. They had received the proper information. They even have a crib in the house. They just did not make a proper choice because they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Their goal was to instinctively quiet a crying baby in their arms – but they passed out and, when they woke up, the baby was dead.

We, as a community, cannot tolerate this. Please work to make sure every baby has a chance in life. Encourage parents to make good decisions with clear heads. Too many babies are dying, and no one is noticing.



Moira Weir,  
Hamilton County  
Job and Family Services  
Director



## Hamilton County Neighborhood Stabilization Program Showcases Renovated Home in North College Hill



County Commissioner David Pepper spoke about the Neighborhood Stabilization Program at a College Hill home renovated under the program.

Hamilton County Community Development and Homesteading Urban Redevelopment Corporation (HURC) officials unveiled the latest home renovated under the local Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) on Wednesday August 11. The home is located at 1820 Goodman Ave in North College Hill.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) was established for the purpose of stabilizing communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment. Through the purchase and redevelopment of foreclosed and abandoned homes and residential properties in Hamilton County, the goal of the program is being realized.

"This work will allow us to revitalize communities, create jobs, and increase property values for neighbors," said Commissioner David Pepper. "A big credit goes to the Hamilton County Community Development

Department. Susan Walsh and her staff have worked tirelessly to dedicate all the NSP funding over 11 communities. Stay tuned, there are more success stories to come."

Hamilton County, HURC, and other local non-profit developers are rehabbing more than 20 local homes in areas of high foreclosure rates. Potential buyers of those homes can participate in a Down Payment Assistance Program, if they meet certain criteria. For more information about the Down Payment Assistance Program and to see all properties eligible for purchase, please visit this website:

[www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/commdev/v2/NSPHomes.asp](http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/commdev/v2/NSPHomes.asp)

All homes listed have been acquired and rehabbed with NSP funds and are located in NSP targeted communities.



To learn about these NSP properties available for sale and more, please visit [this link](#).



## Dr. O'Dell Owens Shares Thoughts as He Transitions from Hamilton County Coroner to Cincinnati State President

As Hamilton County Coroner Dr. O'dell Owens prepares to begin his new role as President of Cincinnati State Technical & Community College, he shared some thoughts about his work as Coroner.

Dr. Owens, who was elected Coroner in 2004, says he will step down from the Coroner role when the Hamilton County Democratic Party's Central Committee selects the new Coroner. Dr. Owens believes this will likely happen in September.

### Educational Initiatives

Dr. Owens is recognized as an innovative Coroner, partially due to his focus on educating people. His office's mantra is "We speak for the dead and educate the living."

"We simply wanted to make the Coroner's office more about life than about death," said Dr. Owens.

Dr. Owens described three major educational initiatives:

- Rollover infant deaths.  
These deaths occur when a parent falls asleep while holding the infant, and the infant is accidentally smothered. "We brought delivery nurses together from local hospitals and talked to them about safe co-sleeping. They could educate mothers as they delivered babies. We saw a decline in rollover deaths," said Dr. Owens.
- Suicides  
"We average about one suicide every three days, but people in Hamilton County had no clue

about these statistics," said Dr. Owens. "No one talked about it. The media didn't publicize it. How can you turn your back on something that happens one out of every three days? I've gone to the schools. Kids know the number for LaRosa's, they know the number for 241-KIDS, but when you ask them for the number for the suicide prevention hotline, it was silence."

- Violence  
"The biggest educational initiative was focused on violence," said Dr. Owens. "I gave an average of 125 speeches each year that I've been Coroner. Half of those speeches were to adults about giving back to the community. The other half were to schools, for children. My message to them has been to get educated. Be the best they can be. Go to college and get a career." If adults and children do these things, violence will be less prevalent.

Dr. Owens said his office took on less formal educational initiatives, too. "Coroners know why people die. We have all of the data and the statistics. We need to take on more of a public health role."

For example, when one family lost the father at age 37 to a heart attack, family members told the Coroner's employees that they had also lost their grandfather at a young age to a heart attack. "We said, 'your family may have a real problem with cholesterol,'" said Dr. Owens. "We encouraged every member of the



family to get cholesterol checks. If you do these kinds of things, you can impact the living. They'll get diagnosed and change their lifestyle."

### Challenges

When asked about changes while serving as Coroner, Dr. Owens explained that the Hamilton County Coroner's Office handles not just typical Coroner's duties, but also has responsibility for a very sophisticated forensic laboratory — one that carries out more functions than any other Coroner's Office in Ohio. "The challenge was learning about trace, ballistics, DNA, drug testing, and handwriting analysis," said Dr. Owens. "It was all a challenge, but I love learning."

In response to questions about the specific challenges involved with working for government, Dr. Owens acknowledged that, "When you work for government, it's tough. At varying times, there are limited resources and everyone has to take a piece of the cut."

*Continued on p. 6.*



Continued from p. 5.

Dr. Owens said he did his best to help the Commissioners understand the importance of the Coroner's office's work, and he was able to avoid layoffs by getting contracts from the state and other counties to do their autopsies. "We were able to save everyone's job."

**Achievements**

When asked about achievements as Coroner, Dr. Owens spoke about three accomplishments.

"The thing I'm probably most proud of is that we created transparency," said Dr. Owens. He noted that his office gave people information quickly about deaths — even controversial deaths — and they educated the public about what's involved with the evaluation of a death case.

Secondly, "We raised the standard," said Dr. Owens. "We have three outside agencies, national accreditation agencies, that evaluate morgue activities, the forensic lab,

and investigative/administrative operations. There's not another Coroner's Office in Ohio that has all three accreditations."

And finally, "I think I brought dignity back to the office," said Dr. Owens. "When I ran my campaign in 2004, it focused on dignity in life and dignity in death. And we brought that dignity back."

**Volunteerism and Community Service**

Dr. Owens is actively engaged in volunteer work and community service. When asked what motivates him, Dr. Owens explained, "I grew up very poor in the West End and was just fortunate enough that things aligned so I was able to graduate from the Cincinnati Public Schools and twelve years of Ivy League education. I was helped by other people, and it's important for me to give back."

**Cincinnati State**

A great deal of Dr. Owens' volunteer work is related to education. His

message to youth as Coroner has been to get a good education and begin a career, as opposed to just getting a job. Dr. Owens says education has always been an interest of his, which makes his move to President of Cincinnati State a natural progression. "Cincinnati State provides you with a two year college experience or a chance to begin a career through the Certificate Program," says Dr. Owens. "I've been telling kids to do this, and now I have a chance to create the pathway."

**Gratitude**

"I have truly appreciated the support and feedback from the people of Hamilton County," said Dr. Owens. "Every day that I go out among the public, whether in a store or at a sporting event, strangers come up to me and say thank you. They say, 'We know when there's a death, you're going to come up and explain everything to me.' When you're a public servant and people come up to you and say thank you, that means a lot. That's your pay."

## Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District Offers "Best Garden Ever!" Seminar

- Date:** September 21, 2010
- Time:** 5 p.m.—7 p.m.
- Location:** Hamilton County SWCD  
22 Triangle Park Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45246
- Fee:** \$5 per person

This class will provide you with the basics about how to have your best garden and lawn ever. Information on macro and micronutrients will be shared, along with instructions on how to test your soil fertility and adjust the levels for maximum growth. Soil fertility test kits will be available for purchase at the seminar.

Pre-registration is required with payment. Please mail your name, address, daytime phone number, and number of participants, along with a check made out to Hamilton County SWCD to:

For additional registration information, please call 513-772-7645.



Hamilton County SWCD  
22 Triangle Park Drive  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45246.



## HEMI Program Needs Volunteer Mentors to Build on Program's First Year Successes

Since September 2009, the Higher Education Mentoring Initiative (HEMI) program has paired each of 41 new mentors with a Hamilton County foster youth attending high school. The mentors' mission was to help the students focus on their education, especially on awareness of and preparation for post-secondary education. The mentors and students achieved great successes working together!



Hamilton County. National studies indicate that 70% of foster youth want to go to college. Yet, in Hamilton County, less than one-third of eligible foster youth graduate from high school. Fewer than one in five take the ACT or complete a financial aid packet. In 2008, only a few of the 150 Hamilton County foster youth who were enrolled in high school

pursued higher education. A program like HEMI can help more Hamilton County foster youth achieve their goal of pursuing post secondary education and securing a more promising future.

"My hopes in conceptualizing this mentoring program have been surpassed by the outstanding results we have seen in HEMI," said Moira Weir, JFS Director. "Our foster children are not only graduating and heading off to better things, but they are making life-long friends in their mentors. We know these children face tough obstacles on their journey, but it is a bit easier when they have someone walking by their side."

### HEMI Program's First Year Results

To date, 100% of the HEMI seniors (13 students) graduated and all are pursuing post secondary education. All 13 are now college freshmen. They're attending Cincinnati State, the University of Cincinnati (including Raymond Walters and Clermont College), the College of Mount St. Joseph, Kent State University, and The Ohio State University. They have secured \$20,589 in scholarships through the University of Cincinnati.

Although these students have made it to college, their mentors' work is not done! They will continue working together until the students complete their college educations. The 28 HEMI youth who are still in high school are continuing to work with their mentors, as the youth progress through another year of high school and get closer to post-secondary education.

### HEMI Program History and Partners

The HEMI program began in early 2009, when Commissioner Greg Hartmann and Job and Family Services (JFS) Director Moira Weir asked the University of Cincinnati to join them in developing the program for Hamilton County Foster Youth. In May, they launched HEMI. Now, the program thrives, in large part because of the volunteer mentor support and the partnership with UC, as well as Cincinnati State Technical & Community College and Great Oaks Career Campuses.

The outstanding results with this first group of seniors is especially impressive when you consider the challenges foster youth face. These are youth who have been abused or neglected and are now being cared for by

### Become a HEMI Program Mentor

There are many more foster youth who could benefit from HEMI mentors. Those interested in becoming a HEMI mentor are invited to attend a one-hour informational session this fall. In January 2011, new mentors would attend training, and they would be paired with a student in March 2011. Then, mentors would attend ongoing mentor trainings on the first Thursday of each month. These ongoing sessions are a great way for mentors to continue their education and to help each other with solutions to issues faced.

To register to attend a one-hour informational session, please contact Annie Dick at 513-556-4368.

For more information about the HEMI program, please visit this link:

<http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hc/higherEducationMentoring.asp>



## Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children Celebrates Ten Years Of Helping Abused and Neglected Children



Pictured here are some of the Hamilton County Job and Family Services Children's Services caseworkers at the Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children.

Ten years ago, several entities came together to show their continued commitment to fighting and preventing child abuse and neglect. This year, The Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center celebrates a decade of a coordinated effort to keep children safe in the Greater Cincinnati area.

The Mayerson Center staff includes officers from both the Cincinnati Police Department and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, Job and Family Services workers, a victim advocate from the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office, and Cincinnati Children's staff of physicians, nurses and social workers.

"The concept of the center is actually pretty simple and practical," said Sue Moore, who was a caseworker in the sex abuse investigation unit when the Mayerson Center opened and is now a supervisor. "It makes sense

that victims shouldn't go through multiple interviews. It's a one-stop shop -- and we all help each other. We all use our personal expertise to further the investigation and help each other."

"With all of the professionals in one place, we are able to each use our specific expertise to further the investigation and help each other," said Moira Weir, director of the county's Job and Family Services Department, a founding member of the Mayerson Center partnership. "But the most important reason the center exists is that it makes it easier on the children. Many have been through horrific ordeals, and we need to ensure they are treated with as little trauma as possible."

### **Interviews conducted in comfortable setting**

With brightly colored walls, child-sized furniture and colorful artwork, the Mayerson Center offers a comfort to child victims of sexual

abuse, physical abuse and neglect. When it is suspected that there's been an incident of abuse, the children are brought to the center to be interviewed, usually by a Children's Services Intake caseworker located at the center.

"The center has made it so the investigation and interviews are less intrusive and less traumatic for the victims," Children's Services Section Chief Traci Marr said. "There's a mutual respect among the partners, which didn't always used to be there. And that's a good thing. The center is a best practice model and we're lucky to have it in Hamilton County."

The combined efforts within the Mayerson Center include state-of-the-art diagnostic treatment, prevention and training programs and cutting-edge research in the field of child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, child neglect and parenting.

*Continued on p. 9*



Continued from p. 8.

**Strong relationships at heart of center**

"I think the Mayerson Center is so successful because of the relationship we have formed at an individual level, at an agency level and at a county level," said Heidi Malott, clinical program manager at Mayerson. "We communicate with one another, we collaborate with one another and we support one another in doing this very difficult job of protection, intervention, prosecution, treatment and prevention of child abuse and neglect. I often tell others that I wish I could bottle up what we have and give it to other communities so they could replicate this."

**Role of center expands**

In 2000, there was only one sex abuse unit at the Mayerson Center. "We used to only handle sex abuse cases, but the one unit was so overwhelmed that we've gone to two units," Marr said. "It's also helped us to expand our scope of cases." Moore said that while the workers are busy, it's proof that the

collaboration is working at the center.

Bryan Peak, who has been the Sheriff's Office detective assigned to the Mayerson Center since 2003, agreed that the cohesiveness is what makes the center succeed. "It has taken time, although as with most things, the more you work with people in a group, you get a more comfortable feeling working with them," he said. "This is huge because at any given time, I can go directly to a doctor and ask questions regarding my investigation. The doctors do not only encourage this, but welcome it. This is a direct result of us working within an arm's length of each other."

Every Tuesday, the Mayerson staff has a team meeting where they discuss the abuse cases from the week or weeks prior.

"This meeting is a chance for the people involved in an investigation to collect facts and get on the same page," Peak said. "This is wonderful to meet the other 'players' involved

with your investigation – from emergency room doctors to social workers to trauma abuse doctors, etc. Any person who has had contact or given aid to your victim can and usually is available at these meetings."

**Community support essential**

Marr, who was on the Mayerson Center implementation team in 2000 and was the first JFS supervisor there, believes the center has also improved because of community awareness.

"In 10 years, there's been a lot of education about the services we offer here," she said. "There's not a lot of funding for child advocacy centers, but the community partners that make up the center have really stepped up to do more with less. This improved collaboration between these partners has really benefited the families and children of Hamilton County."

For more information about the Mayerson Center, please visit [this link](#).

**All are Invited to Attend  
Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's  
65th Annual Meeting/Open House**

**Date:** Thursday, September 16, 2010  
**Time:** 2 p.m.—7:30 p.m.  
**Cost:** Free  
**Place:** District Office  
22 Triangle Park Drive  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45246

Light refreshments will be served starting at 2 p.m., and a silent auction funding the Odegard/Diebel Memorial Scholarship will take place throughout the day. A short business meeting and awards ceremony begins at 6:30 p.m. Eligible voters can cast their ballot in the election of Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. For more information about the election, please visit this link: [www.hcswcd.org](http://www.hcswcd.org).

To RSVP, please call 513-772-7645 or e-mail [susan.juriga@hamilton-co.org](mailto:susan.juriga@hamilton-co.org).



Check out The Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District's new office during the annual meeting/open house.



## Hamilton County Law Library Co-Sponsors Collaborative Divorce Seminar

As a public service, the Hamilton County Law Library,  
in conjunction with the Cincinnati Bar Association's  
Lawyer Referral Service, will present:

**You and the Legal System: A Better Way to End a Marriage**  
**Friday, September 10, 2010**  
**12 noon**  
**at the Hamilton County Law Library**  
**Hamilton County Courthouse**  
**1000 Main St., Room 601, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45202.**



This program is free to the public and is designed for the non-lawyer citizen. It will last one hour.

John L. Heilbrun, a Cincinnati attorney with over 30 years of experience helping clients with family and marital law problems, will speak about Collaborative Divorce, including the following points:

- Use of common goals and interests to resolve disputes related to terminating a marriage;
- Spouses' control and decision-making about the most important issues;
- Benefits of the Collaborative approach as opposed to the adversarial/litigation process;
- The Collaborative process as a team approach to resolution of issues;
- Open and full disclosure and communication;
- Working together for the benefit of all, particularly the children;
- Collaborative law as a self-respecting, client-centered approach.

Please call 513.946.5300 at the Hamilton County Law Library to reserve a seat. Walk-ins will be accommodated as space permits. For directions to the Hamilton County Law Library, please see <http://www.hamilton-co.org/cinlawlib/about/findus.html>.

For more information: Please contact Mary Jenkins at  
513.946.5300  
or [mjenkins@cms.hamilton-co.org](mailto:mjenkins@cms.hamilton-co.org).





## Master Recycler Program Offered to Hamilton County Residents



Interested in learning all there is to know about the recycling process, waste reduction and composting? You can learn from the experts and become a Master Recycler by participating in the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District's three-day program. The program will take place over three Thursdays, and refreshments will be provided.

The cost for registration by September 16 is \$10. The cost for registration after September 16 is \$15.

The deadline to register is September 21. Space is limited, so please register today!

### Master Recycler Program Details:

#### Week One

Date: Thursday, September 23  
Time: 6 p.m.—8 p.m.  
Topic: Introduction to solid waste: focus on reduce and reuse (includes tour of Building Value)  
Location: Building Value, 4040 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45223

#### Week Two

Date: Thursday, September 30  
Time: 6 p.m.—8 p.m.  
Topic: Reducing household waste: the journey of your recyclables after pickup  
Location: Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services, 250 William Howard Taft Road, Cincinnati, OH 45219

#### Week Three

Date: October 7  
Time: 6 p.m.—8 p.m.  
Topic: Backyard composting  
Location: Civic Garden Center, 2715 Reading Road, Cincinnati, OH 45206

For more information or to register, please contact Susan Schumacher at 513-946-7734 or at [susan.schumacher@hamilton-co.org](mailto:susan.schumacher@hamilton-co.org).



## Cincinnati Youth Collaborative Mentors Help Youth Achieve Success



Demetrious Shields, a recent high school graduate, benefitted from working with a CYC mentor.

Now more than ever, children residing in Hamilton County who have incarcerated parents have the resources to be successful and the support of people who care about their futures, thanks to a unique program through Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (CYC) called S.P.A.R.K.

S.P.A.R.K. (Strengthening Partnerships and Resources for Kids) is a one-on-one mentoring program that is designed to support over 960 children ages 4 to 17 in Hamilton County with one or more parents in prison.

The S.P.A.R.K. mentoring model partners with local non-profit and faith-based organizations using each organization's collective resources to complete three main goals. These goals are to recruit 600 mentors, to link these 600 mentors with a child, and to support a sustainable relationship in which the mentor and mentee can enrich their learning experiences. The partnership now

includes the Council of Christian Communion and Talbert House.

Demetrious Shields, a recent graduate of Hughes High School, is one such student who has benefitted from the S.P.A.R.K. experience. Demetrious's father is incarcerated; and he has spent much of his life being raised by a foster parent. Demetrious has been matched with his mentor, Marlin Hillman, for three years. The two have developed a close bond.

"When I first met [Demetrious], he had goals. He just needed that extra push," said Hillman. "Since then, I've seen a positive change in his demeanor and his reputation."

Demetrious agrees that S.P.A.R.K. was a beneficial program for him. "We have a very fulfilling relationship that I hope continues in the future," he said.

On April 24, Hillman joined Demetrious on stage at the CYC

"Salute to the Class of 2010!" ceremony, which honored graduating seniors involved in one or more of CYC's mentoring and college access programs, including S.P.A.R.K. Hillman personally awarded Demetrious his certificate and medal. This was a poignant moment for recognizing their mutual success, since several national research studies indicate that children of incarcerated parents are at high risk for a number of negative behaviors that can lead in some instances, absent positive intervention, to school failure, delinquency and intergenerational incarceration.

"The program made me really proud of myself," said Demetrious, who will attend Cincinnati State this fall to pursue a career in auto mechanics.

To learn more about becoming a mentor for a Hamilton County child, please visit the CYC website:

<http://www.cycyouth.org/ways-to-volunteer.php>



## Shop the Hamilton County Surplus Auction



Buy it from Hamilton County!

In September, you can find great items to purchase using the Hamilton County Surplus Auction. Items for sale include:

- Diamond rings, earrings, and gold jewelry
- Fans and power blowers
- Office furniture
- Laptop computers
- And more . . .



To see what's available and place bids, please visit [www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com](http://www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com)

## Hamilton County Residents May Set Recycling and Composting Records This Year

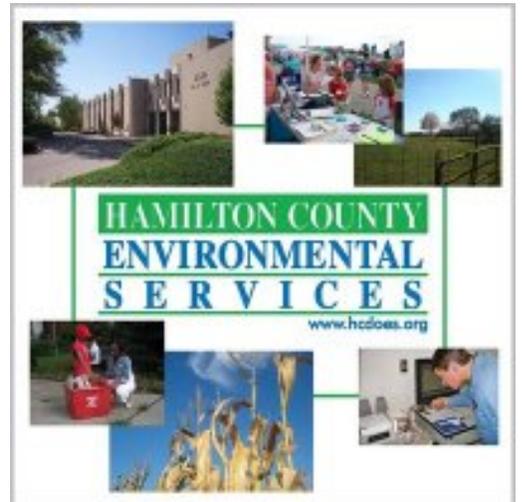
Hamilton County residents are on a roll! According to the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services, 2010 could be a record setting year for recycling and composting in Hamilton County.

So far in 2010, Hamilton County residents have:

- Recycled 115 tons of computer equipment and televisions;
- Composted 670 tons of yardwaste;
- Purchased 1,862 discount backyard compost bins.

Thank you Hamilton County residents and keep up the great work!

For more information on how you can participate, please visit <http://www.hcdoes.org/SWMD/Residents/Residents.html>.



## Recycling DropOff Sites

Do you live in an apartment or a community without curbside recycling? Hamilton County is home to over 50 recycling drop-off sites.

To find a recycling drop-off close to your home, visit: <http://www.hcdoes.org/SWMD/Residents/Recycling/DropOff.html>.





## Caring Families are Needed!



**Ky'Mahn**  
**Born July 8, 1999**

Sitting still is not in Ky'Mahn's DNA. This energetic pre-teen is happiest when he is running around in gym class or playing with his friends after school. He's one tough cookie, who likes video games with fighting and scary movies, but Ky'Mahn has channeled these interests into a healthy and productive desire to become a policeman or a football player.

Ky'Mahn is outstanding at sports, and plays running back on his school's football team. Throwing the football around with his buddies is his way of blowing off steam, unless its going skating at the local rink.

A family who likes participating in lots of activities would be a fantastic positive influence on this young man. Ky'Mahn would do well with parents who will support him and keep him busy.

**To learn more about Ky'Mahn 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 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.

Laura Maus: 513-946-4708  
[Laura.maus@hamilton-co.org](mailto:Laura.maus@hamilton-co.org)