



Hello Hamilton County

October 2008

E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

“Action expresses priorities.”

~ Mohandas K. Gandhi

Gold Medal-Winning U.S. Women’s Soccer Team Returns to Cincinnati on November 5th

County Offers Special “Pre-Sale” Opportunity To Residents and Employees



As a part of the “Achieve Your Gold” Tour, the gold medal-winning U.S. Women’s Soccer Team will return to Cincinnati for the first time in four years. The USA, led by Cincinnati’s own Heather Mitts, goalkeeper Hope Solo and Gold Medal-winning goal scorer Carli Lloyd, returns to take on the Korea Republic at Paul Brown Stadium on Wednesday, November 5, at 7:30 p.m. Don’t miss your chance to see these role models in action!

As a special benefit to our residents and employees, Hamilton County has arranged with U.S. Soccer for an opportunity to order tickets ahead of the general public for one of the next games on the U.S. Women’s Soccer Team’s “Achieve Your Gold” Tour, celebrating their successful run in China less than two months ago. This two-day, internet-only private sale starts Wednesday, October 8 at 10 a.m. ET and ends Thursday, October 9, at 11:59 p.m. (Tickets then become available to Visa® cardholders only on October 10 at 8 a.m., followed by the general public sale on October 12.) Prices are \$18 Endlines;

\$28 Corners; \$40 Sidelines; \$55 Midfield; \$90 Front Row Seats; and \$150 On-Field Seats (buyer keeps commemorative tailgating chair).

To participate in the private sale, you must enter the following password: **HOME** (which must be in UPPER CASE) in the space designated on the Ticketmaster.com order page to take advantage of this special offer. All prices listed above do not include convenience and handling charges (which are added through Ticketmaster). Please click the following link to order:

<http://www.ticketmaster.com/event/160041439B0441BF>





Groundbreaking Marks the Beginning of Construction for Cincinnati Riverfront Park

Pictures:

Left: Hamilton County Commission President Todd Portune speaks at the Cincinnati Riverfront Groundbreaking event.

Center and Bottom:

Illustrations by Sasaki Associates, the world-renowned landscape architecture firm that created the design plans for Cincinnati Riverfront Park.



On Monday September 29th, an exciting phase of The Banks development occurred with the Groundbreaking for Cincinnati Riverfront Park. The Groundbreaking was a cooperative effort hosted by Hamilton County, The City of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Parks, The State of Ohio, and the Army Corps of Engineers. "Over 350 people attended the Groundbreaking event, exemplifying that this is truly going to be a people's park," said Julie Horne of the Cincinnati Parks.

This event marked the start of construction of the new 45-acre "front yard" for the City. Cincinnati Riverfront Park will re-connect downtown to the river's edge. With a design inspired by the input of citizen stake-holders at a series of public meetings and focus groups, the Park will feature playgrounds, boat docks, expansive lawns, a carousel, floral gardens, a bike trail, walkways, tree groves, a river edge promenade, dramatic water features, and restaurants and cafes. The park is designed to be universally accessible and sustainable.

The Park will be built in phases over the coming years. Funding is coming from a variety of public sources and also includes a private fundraising campaign, which has already raised over \$5 million.

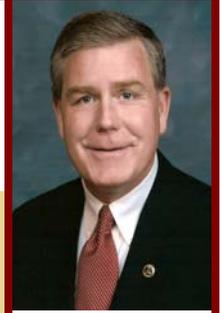
To learn more about the Park, please visit this link:

<http://www.crpark.org/index.htm>



Patrick's Perspective

Hamilton County Government Helped Community Weather the Storm



**Patrick Thompson,
Hamilton County
Administrator**

When I moved from the Rocky Mountain State to Hamilton County, I knew that the weather would be different. But I never anticipated that I was settling in a community that would need to weather the winds of a hurricane! It appears that Hurricane Ike took most of us by surprise.

What didn't surprise me was Hamilton County government's impressive response. I am proud of our response to the damaging windstorm. Hamilton County's response was professional, well-coordinated, and highly effective. I appreciate the extra effort that our organizations and employees made to help our community react to this storm, and I commend them for their efforts.

The Emergency Management Agency, headed up by Mike Snowden, coordinated a disaster response effort out of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC includes the efforts of most political subdivisions and the 12 County region. One major service that the EOC provided was operating the phone bank that received all calls from the emergency number that the media posted throughout the week after the storm. From 8 a.m. Monday, September 15 to 1 p.m. Saturday, September 20, the phone bank was operational so callers could be directed to the ser-

vices they needed. Every time the EOC is put into operation, it becomes more clear just what a phenomenal asset this facility is for our community.

During the storm, the Hamilton County Communication Center reacted effectively to the challenges the storm presented. The employees there handle 911 calls and dispatch emergency services. Their call volume increased by over 250% on the day of the storm, and our call takers and dispatchers were able to think of innovative solutions to ensure that residents' calls for assistance were answered as quickly as possible.

Since it is important that our government continue providing services despite weather emergencies, our County Facilities Department responded by ensuring that backup power systems were operable in various buildings. They also ensured that damage to facilities was limited. Thanks to their efforts, Hamilton County organizations were able to continue with business as usual to serve our community.

An extraordinary effort was made by the staff at Juvenile Court's Hillcrest Training School. They were without power for four days, yet still

needed to operate their residential treatment facility for the 115 youth who reside there. They managed the blackout by providing sleeping space, schooling, meals, and even showers in the few buildings on their campus that were powered by generators, including the cafeteria, recreational hall and gymnasium. On day four, the power returned only to fail again by nightfall. By Thursday morning, it was "back to business." Throughout, disaster protocol was carefully followed and staff performed impeccably. County Facilities played a critical role in helping Hillcrest safely manage the situation.

Cleanup after the storm was essential, and the Hamilton County Engineer's Department played a large role in this effort. They worked constantly to ensure that the County's roads and bridges were cleared of storm debris.

Now that much of the cleanup is done, many residents need to dispose of debris left over from the storm. The Department of Environmental Services' Solid Waste Management District

Continued on p. 4



Patrick's Perspective, continued from p. 3.

is now working with communities around the County to facilitate the efficient management of storm debris. For more information on how to dispose of storm debris, you may visit their website at:

<http://www.hcdoes.org/SWMD/Residents/Yardwaste/ywdisposaloptions.html>

Hamilton County's Department of Job and Family Services (JFS) went above and beyond to ensure that people who needed assis-

tance after the storm were able to apply for help. They offered extended and weekend hours to those who suffered losses in the windstorm and wanted to apply for emergency assistance. The weekend hours were offered to low-income residents who suffered home damage, vehicle damage, loss of food or other storm-damage and losses.

JFS Director Moira Weir said JFS received more than 9,000 applications for emergency assistance, and employees worked diligently to process them quickly and get the money in the hands of those

who need it. The agency also helped more than 22,000 current food stamp recipients who lost food in the storm and needed to apply for replacement. Thank you to JFS for their quick response and flexibility in serving those in need.

Hamilton County is fortunate to have such a dedicated, competent, responsive, and innovative team of employees helping our community face challenging situations like the windstorm. I commend and thank all employees who were involved with this effort to serve our community.

Don't Miss Friday Night Lights at Paul Brown Stadium

Hamilton County is pleased to announce that members of the public can purchase tickets for the Friday Night Lights event that will be held at Paul Brown Stadium. On Friday, October 17th, you can enjoy cheering for your favorite team as four high school football teams compete in two games.

First, the Deer Park Wildcats and the Indian Hill Braves will match up. In the second game, the Mariemont Wildcats and the Wyoming Cowboys will take the field. You'll also get to hear performances by all four of the high school's bands.

If you want to attend this exciting event, you can buy tickets ahead of time through the schools involved, or you can purchase tickets at the stadium the night of the event. Admission prices are \$12 for adults and \$8 for students. Don't miss this fun, affordable family event!

**Friday Night Lights
Friday, October 17th
At Paul Brown Stadium**

6 p.m.: Deer Park Wildcats vs. Indian Hill Braves

8:30 p.m.: Mariemont Warriors vs. Wyoming Cowboys





The National Recycling Coalition's Best Recycling Leader Award Winner: Commissioner Todd Portune



Congratulations to Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune for winning the 2008 Best Elected Recycling Leader award. The award, given by the National Recycling Coalition, cites Commissioner Portune's work with the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District's Policy Committee, which Mr. Portune chairs.

The coalition's write up about Commissioner Portune's efforts says, "Due to his strong support

of the environment and recycling, Commissioner Portune has been instrumental in establishing the vision for the District, developing innovative recycling projects, expanding the District's programs, and promoting recycling and waste reduction throughout the County.

Commissioner Portune continues to challenge the District to develop new ways to increase the amount and types of materials diverted from the landfill.

These programs include: initiating a RecycleBank pilot project, organizing a recycled-content latex paint manufacturing program, initiating a program where felled trees will be used in the construction of new schools, and expanding the District's residential collection programs for materials such as computers and hazardous waste."

Let's Bring Home a Win! Hamilton County Needs Your Help To Win the Green Counties Competition!

Every Sunday, thousands of us in the Cincinnati/Hamilton County area hope for a win. Unfortunately, most of us have little influence over what happens in weekly NFL games. However, we can have a big impact on whether Hamilton County wins the Green Counties Competition.

Please visit www.greencounties.org/changetheworld to take the Energy Star Pledge. It's free, and it only takes a few moments. But if we get enough votes, Hamilton County can win the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Green Counties Competition.

What's in it for you? Bragging rights, of course! "We're #1, we're #1," sounds really good, doesn't it? This might be our only chance to chant that in

November. Another benefit for you is the opportunity to save energy and help fight global warming.

Plus, you'll receive a 10% discount on Office Depot's Green Brand Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs. Finally, you can also help save tax dollars, because the counties with the most pledges by November 30th will receive 1,000 free compact fluorescent lightbulbs from Office Depot.

So don't be an armchair quarterback! Get in the game by logging onto your PC and helping Hamilton County win the Green Counties Competition!



www.greencounties.org/changetheworld



Services Help Grandparents who Care for Grandchildren



Ada Ballew and Great-Granddaughter Heaven appreciate services available to help Grandparents who are caring for Grandchildren.

At an age when most settle into the role of grandparent, Ada Ballew of the College Hill area became a mom again. Ballew, 76, took custody of great-granddaughter Heaven, 10, almost nine years ago.

"They were getting ready to put her in foster care because her parents and grandparents couldn't care for her," Ballew said. "I just hated to see that happen."

Heaven joined an estimated 4.5 million children in the United States who live in grandparent-headed households. About 150,000 children reside with grandparents in Ohio.

"These young girls have these kids and they do not know how to take care of them and do not want them," Ballew said. She noted that she has no contact with Heaven's birth parents.

Ballew had raised two children of her own. A son died in 1983 and a daughter, 60, lives in a nursing home after suffering a stroke.

"Some things, I'd forgotten," Ballew said. "I needed to go back to school myself."

Ballew found support groups, workshops and individual assistance offered through the Children's Home of Cincinnati extremely helpful. Children's Home provides the services under a contract with the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services.

"I just pray hard and thank God for Children's Home," Ballew said.

Children's Home pays for a cab ride for Ballew and Heaven to attend biweekly support group meetings. Ballew meets with other grandparents and relatives who raise grandchildren or other family members, while Heaven gets together with their children in a separate room.

"You find out how to handle things," Ballew said.

"And you get some things out with people who understand. I think all of the things I learned while raising children, I'd forgotten. I had to start all over again."

Participants lend a listening ear and share helpful information with each other. For example, Ballew told another grandparent that she could receive \$245 a month in Ohio Works First (OWF) cash assistance from Hamilton County JFS.

"It's not much, but it does help out," she said.

Children's Home helped Heaven get into the GLAD program, an after-school and summer offering for children of parents with addictions. Children's Home also helped get clothing for Heaven.

When Ballew's husband and grandson died within two years, Children's Home made arrangements for her and Heaven to attend Fernside, which supports grieving families.

"She took it hard," Ballew said. "She and my husband and grandson were very close."

"Ada is 76 years old and manages to provide care very well for Heaven, despite losing her husband recently," said David Lenning of Children's Home. "She puts Heaven's well-being before anything else. Heaven is all she has."

For more information on services for grandparents-raising-grandchildren, please use this link: http://www.hcjfs.hamilton-co.org/Buttons/Clients_Customers/Children_Services/pdf/client_fs/HCFJS7978KinshipCare.pdf



New Hamilton County Job and Family Services Unit Assists Clients Who Can't Speak English

Speaking fluent Spanish, eligibility technician Debbie Arostegui asked a 38-year-old Mexican immigrant a series of questions on a recent morning.

At one point, Arostegui tilted her computer screen toward the woman to confirm the birth places of her four children: Connecticut, Connecticut, Indiana, North Carolina. The woman nodded and smiled.

As the interview continued, parts of the woman's life story unfolded. She wasn't receiving child support, had no bank accounts, and was living with a cousin who worked. She couldn't work due to an arm injury, but received no unemployment compensation...

Then, an animated conversation ensued. Spanish filled the air as Arostegui and her client bantered. "There are so many bad rumors in the Hispanic community," said Arostegui, who belongs to a team in Family & Adult Assistance 1 (FAA) that serves non-English speaking customers. "She was told to only apply for Medicaid because she'd have to repay food stamps when the children turn 18. And that they would have to go into the military."

Arostegui solely handles cases involving Spanish-speaking clients in the team supervised by



Gabriel Estrada of Conversa interprets for Maria Guadalupe Dulroz Tello, as eligibility technician Kevin Rabb processes her application for food stamps and Medicaid.

Teri Jones-Morris. Kevin Rabb mainly serves refugees who speak languages other than Spanish and backs up Arostegui with Hispanic clients. C.J. Stephens, a new hire, will work with refugees. Two others were to join the team in September.

The unit helps the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The law mandates equal access for all who apply for public assistance.

Arostegui majored in Spanish in college. She joined the unit in February, a year after coming to the agency. She had been a police dispatcher.

Rabb, who gained some familiarity with the language while working in Arizona, has been taking classes through Su Casa and ICRC. Jones-Morris is learning to speak Spanish at Cincinnati State. "Their needs are differ-

ent," Arostegui said. "They have culture shock."

Many Hispanic clients live together in apartment complexes, furthering their isolation. They come to Ohio after living for months or years in border states.

Most Spanish-speaking people hear about the agency's services from family or friends. Some

learn about Medicaid while giving birth at a hospital. They discover food stamps and other services while applying for health coverage. Most refugees, however, are referred from social service agencies, having arrived in the country only days earlier.

Arostegui's clients often face big obstacles created by a lack of proper documentation. Only their children qualify for services, although they can get emergency Medicaid for life-threatening situations and births. Their cases require citizenship verification and can present complexities because families share apartments.

"We have to help them understand how the system works," Rabb said. "They lack literacy in either language."

Continued on p. 8



New Hamilton County Job and Family Services Unit Assists Clients Who Can't Speak English

Continued from p. 7.

Gabriel Estrada, an on-site interpreter from Conversa, has assisted the unit daily since April. He helps Arostegui with some dialects and works closely with other team members. He also assists Children's Services and Child Support workers.

At the same time Arostegui served her client on the first floor at the 222 E. Central Parkway office, Rabb and Estrada helped Maria Guadalupe Dulroz Tello, 74, who moved to Ohio this summer. The silver-haired woman

was applying for food stamps and Medicaid.

"I wanted to be here with my family," said Tello, through Estrada's interpretation. Tello, a widow, lives with a grandchild.

The agency carries about 1,200 "Limited English Proficiency" cases, almost 750 Spanish-speaking. About half of those involve cash assistance, food stamps and Medicaid; the other half, Healthy Start/Healthy Families Medicaid.

After Spanish, most speak Russian, French, Arabic and Vietnam-

ese. The caseload includes more than 35 languages.

"These people come with all sorts of barriers," Arostegui said. "They are faced with cultural ignorance, stereotypes and discrimination and I take pride in going the extra step to help them. I have always had an interest in the diverse culture, ethnicity and dialects that come from the Latino communities. My Hispanic clients mean a lot to me. They are always friendly, appreciative and polite. Indeed, it is a very special caseload and I am honored to be a part of it."

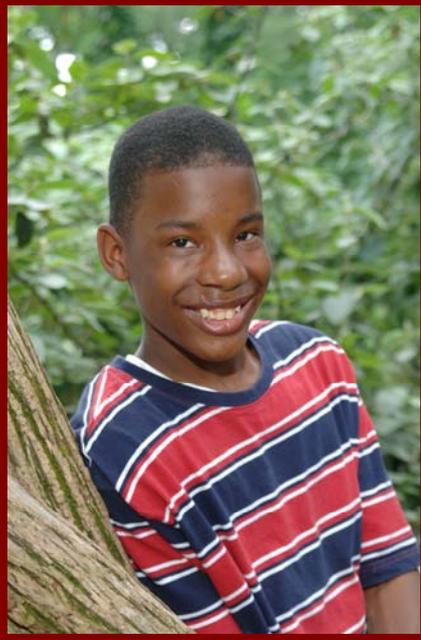
Find Great Items and Bargains On the Hamilton County Surplus Auction!

Check out the Hamilton County Surplus Auction, where you can bid on great items! You never know what you'll find! Items currently for sale include the pictured 1995 Chevy 15-Passenger Van and eight 15 foot aluminum benches from Paul Brown Stadium. They can be yours!



See what kind of items and bargains you can find using the county's online public auction!

www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com



A Caring Family is Needed!

Alvin
Born August 24, 1994

Creativity and imagination are what Alvin is notorious for. This quiet young man is passionate about the short stories he has authored, and he would love to take an art class to further his drawing skills. Alvin would love to be adopted by a family who takes an interest in his writing and who will help him achieve his dreams.

Responsible and respectful, Alvin enjoys school, and he works very hard for his achievements. He likes spending time outdoors or playing basketball. A low-key family that shares these hobbies would be fantastic for him.

**To learn more about Alvin and others available for adoption,
Please call 513-632-6366 or visit 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.

Laura Maus: 513-946-4708
Laura.maus@hamilton-co.org

Eric Stuckey: 513-946-4303
Eric.stuckey@hamilton-co.org