



Hello Hamilton County

November 2008

E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

***“Everyone has an opportunity to be great
because everyone has an opportunity to serve.”***

~Martin Luther King, Jr.

A message to County Employees From County Administrator Patrick Thompson

This past Monday, November 10th, I presented my 2009 recommended budget to the Board of County Commissioners. As reported in the media, it includes significant changes in county government and the proposed elimination of hundreds of positions. Over the next five weeks the Board will hear from department heads, independently elected officials and the public concerning the recommended budget. County employees are encouraged to engage in this process to voice their comments and suggestions concerning the county budget. Although we have made a recommendation, it is unknown what the final decisions of the Board will be and which specific programs and employees will be impacted.

You can see the details of the 2009 recommended budget by viewing it on the county website or by obtaining a copy from the budget office on the County Administration Building's 6th floor. Fiscal officers in every department have been provided access to the detailed funding recommendations. Please call John Bruggen at 946-4316 if you need assistance in getting a copy of the budget.

The county has done a great job the past few years to keep expenditures within the level of available revenue; however, 2008 saw dra-

matic changes in the economy that started with the housing crisis and continued through the troubled financial markets. Adjusted for inflation, 2009 revenues have dropped \$25 million since 2007. Additionally, state reductions in funding assistance to the Job and Family Services Department will approach another \$50 million. Within JFS, reductions in staffing have already begun. I anticipate that most reductions in staffing in other Hamilton County organizations would begin after a final budget is approved.

I have dedicated my entire life to public service and it pains me to make the recommendations that impact the lives of our employees in such a negative fashion. I recognize that it is difficult to wait for final decisions as the 2009 budget process evolves, and I encourage you to think positively about the value you bring to the county in the meantime. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns as we work through this difficult time.

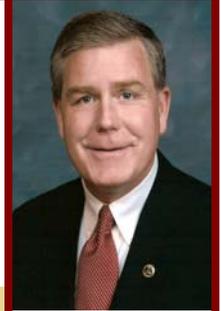
You can access the
2009 recommended budget at this link:

[http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/administrator/
bsi/budget.asp](http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/administrator/bsi/budget.asp)



Patrick's Perspective

Many Important Events for Hamilton County Government Occur In November



**Patrick
Thompson,
Hamilton County
Administrator**

November is a big month for Hamilton County government! Election Day, Veteran's Day, and National Adoption Month all occur in November, and they all tie in with our work. Plus, we continue the budget preparation process in November when we make our 2009 budget recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners.

Election Day, especially when we're electing a President, is a big undertaking. I'm pleased that the Hamilton County Board of Elections, under the leadership of Sally Krisel and John Williams, handled the near-record turnout so well. Many County employees and volunteers from our community contributed to this successful effort, and I thank them for their work. For more details about Election Day, please see the article on p. 3.

In November, Veteran's Day provides an opportunity to recognize the citizens who have served, or currently serve, our country. The Hamilton County Veterans Service Commission (VSC) works throughout the year to provide services for veterans, such as providing emergency financial assistance to veterans and their families and also helping veterans gain access to federal, state, and local entitlements. They also serve as a clear-

inghouse to steer veterans to organizations that can provide services that veterans need. The VSC's work make a big difference for our veterans, and I commend the Commission for their efforts. As we honor our veterans this month, you can enjoy reading about a Hamilton County River City Correctional Center employee who is actively serving as a Captain in the Army Reserves right now. You can read Janel Schlaudecker's story on p. 4.

November is National Adoption Month, and that's an important event for Hamilton County. At Job and Family Services (JFS) many employees are dedicated to finding adoptive families for children who need a caring home. Their work truly changes lives and serves an important need for our community. I thank them for the important work that they do, and I hope that the attention garnered through National Adoption Month will encourage more families to consider adopting a child in need. To learn more about National Adoption Month, please read JFS Director Moira Weir's letter on p. 5.

Finally, a highly anticipated event for Hamilton County has been the recommendation of a 2009 budget to the Board of County Commis-

sioners. This year, the Budget process has been challenging. Resources are limited, and every Hamilton County organization is making difficult decisions about the allocation of available resources. While I anticipate that some of the budget cuts will be painful, I know that the leaders of our Hamilton County organizations are committed to providing the best service possible with the resources available. I thank them for the input and guidance that they have provided throughout the year as we prepared the budget recommendation. Stay tuned for more details about the 2009 budget.

As I reflect this month on the variety and scope of services that we provide to our community through organizations such as the Board of Elections, the Veteran's Services Commission, and JFS, I'm pleased to see the positive impact that our work has on this community. Although we're facing challenging financial situations, we believe in the importance of our work. We are dedicated to continuing to provide the highest quality services to meet Hamilton County's needs.



Hamilton County Board of Elections Successfully Manages Election Day 2008



Candice Kloepfer assisting early voters
at the Hamilton County Board of Elections

On Tuesday, November 4th, The Hamilton County Board of Elections successfully handled one of the county's biggest election days ever. The unofficial total of ballots received in Hamilton County on Election Day was 400,792. But with absentee ballots and early voting, there were even more ballots received.

Election Day culminated an elections process that had been ongoing, with almost 27,000 voters participating in the early voting option at the Board of Election's headquarters in downtown Cincinnati and with the sending of over 118,000 absentee ballots. At last count, 93% of the absentee ballots had been returned — over 110,000 of them!

John Williams, Deputy Director of the Board of Elections, said that overall, Election Day went well. He said it was a busy morning and that poll workers

did a great job setting up the polling sites and helping large crowds of voters as Election Day began. After that initial rush, the polls had an even pace of voters throughout the day.

Williams said that the Board of Elections received ballots a bit later in the evening than usual this year, largely due to the massive numbers of ballots. The poll workers completed their procedures and returned the ballots at about 10:30 p.m., on average. Williams said that there was one computer glitch, but the Board was able to implement their backup procedures and to get that problem solved in just a little over an hour.

Williams said that their work hasn't ended yet! "Now we're continuing to process everything that has come back." According to Board of Elections Director Sally Krisel, among other duties,

they are continuing to count absentee ballots, auditing the signature books from the elections, processing payroll for poll workers, and verifying that the over 17,000 provisional voters were registered to vote. "It's a big process," said Krisel.

Williams said it's important to recognize the many people who helped make Election Day a success. He adds, "We had a lot of help from Hamilton County workers, and they are a great resource. They are highly skilled people who joined in a great spirit of cooperation." Krisel agrees, saying, "We'd like to thank the Hamilton County employees for stepping up and joining us in this election. It took a lot of people power, and it was nice to know that we had people in other County departments who were willing to join us."



River City Correctional Center Employee Janel Schlaudecker Actively Serving as a Captain in the US Army Reserves



Janel Schlaudecker consistently uses her skills to serve our community — and our nation! For the past ten years, she has served our community as a Clinical Supervisor at the River City Correctional Center (RCCC). She also serves as a Captain in the Army Reserves. In July of this year, Schlaudecker was activated and is currently stationed at Fort Drumm, New York. She counsels soldiers who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. She is due to return to work at RCCC in July 2009.

Schlaudecker says her job at RCCC helped her prepare for this deployment. At RCCC, in addition to her supervisor duties, Schlaudecker counsels women who have been physically, emotionally and sexually abused. She also counsels RCCC residents who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

This experience has proven valuable in fulfilling her current duties with the Army Reserves. Schlaudecker says, "I provide mental health services to soldiers who are struggling upon their return from Iraq and Afghanistan. I also do Traumatic Brain Injury and PTSD treatment. The majority of the women who are sentenced to RCCC have suffered some form of trauma. That has helped me work with soldiers who suffer from PTSD and other traumas. The work is similar, yet different. The years I have worked at RCCC have really helped me in preparation for this deployment."

Schlaudecker appreciates the support that she received from her colleagues at RCCC. She explains, "I was informed on a Thursday at 5 p.m. that I needed to ship out the following Sunday. I was only able to give RCCC one day's notice. The Executive Director, John Baron, was very supportive, as were the employees I have worked with for several years."

Speaking on behalf of those at RCCC, Executive Director John Baron and Business Manager Wayne Adkins say, "We miss Janel and hope that she has a safe and rewarding experience while serving our country."

Schlaudecker has strong ties to the Hamilton County area. She graduated from St. Ursula Academy, earned her undergraduate degree from the College of Mt. St. Joseph and earned her Masters in Social Work from the University of Cincinnati.

Schlaudecker says there are many rewarding aspects of her active duty. "It is inspirational to see so many men and women willing to serve our country and give up so much." She notes that "Despite your political position on the war, there are amazing men and women who are willing to volunteer to fight for the freedoms we enjoy every day — even if it means losing their lives. We need support, not judgment."



Celebrating Many Successful Adoptions

A Message from Job and Family Services Director Moira Weir



November is one of my favorite months of the year. This is National Adoption Month and a time to celebrate and recognize adoptive parents, the families we at Job and Family Services (JFS) unite, and the children who still need homes.

I am looking forward to what I now consider one of the most special days of our year at JFS — the day we hold our mass adoption ceremony to highlight adoption month. Our first was last year and it was a tremendously emotional and uplifting event. This year's is scheduled for November 14.

The adoption ceremony is among the happiest days of the year for our staff. Nothing brings a quicker smile than finding a permanent, loving home for children. The event stands as a symbol for all the adoptions we will do this year. We are on pace for 130, which is only slightly short of the county record we set last year, 135.

This year, seven children will join five loving families. Among them:

- Two young brothers, ages 4 and 1, who will be adopted

by the foster family that has cared for them since they were infants.

- A 2-year-old boy who will be adopted by his foster mother, a registered nurse who became a foster mother after seeing children abandoned at the hospital.
- A young boy and a young girl, ages 2 and 1, who will be adopted by their foster parents, who already have four other adopted children.
- An 11-year-old boy who has excelled at school and sports since moving in with his foster — now adoptive — parents three years ago.
- A 17-year-old boy who is being adopted by the foster mother who has cared for him for the past six years. She is a native of Jamaica, and he is eager to travel to her native homeland and learn about his new family's roots.

We also have an adoption appreciation event planned this year to say thanks to our adoptive parents, several appearances on local media outlets, and you will see us out and about beating the drum on adoption because we still have more than 200 children who

need adoptive homes.

Sadly, that number will likely remain constant. Hamilton County investigates more than 6,000 reports of child abuse and neglect a year. When intensive services fail and a child can no longer remain safe in a parent's care, the county will seek custody of the child and attempt to find a safe and loving adoptive home. That sometimes takes months or years.

It is sad to visit our web site, www.hcadopt.org, and see all the cute, smiling children who are still waiting for homes. Especially as they grow older in our system. Yes, many of them have issues because of things that have happened in their lives, but many of them are just children who need someone loving to help and guide them. Even those with issues could overcome and thrive with the right kind of love and support.

If you or anyone you know is interested in adopting, please visit www.hcadopt.org or contact us by phone, 513-632-6366 or by e-mail: adoption@jfs.hamilton-co.org.



Event Brings Together Children and Potential Adoptive Parents — and Also a Bengals Win!

Hamilton County began National Adoption Month by bringing together children who need adoptive homes and families that want to adopt. These children and parents enjoyed watching the Bengals' first win of the regular season together in the Hamilton County Suite at Paul Brown Stadium on Sunday, November 2nd. Maybe these children and families brought the Bengals some luck! They also enjoyed a visit from two of the Ben-gals.

Michael Willis, a JFS Child Focus Recruiter, says the event was fun and that all of the potential adoptive parents who participated are following up with strong interest in adopting children they met that day.

If you're interested in adopting a child, please contact JFS.

Website: www.hcadopt.org

Phone: 513-632-6366

E-mail: adoption@jfs.hamilton-co.org .

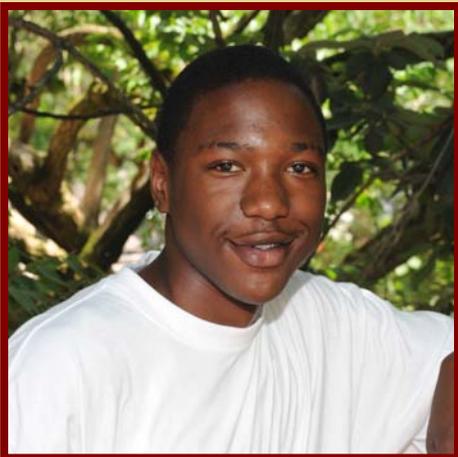




National Adoption Month: Many Children Need Caring Adoptive Families

As our nation recognizes and celebrates adoptive parents this month, it's a great time to become more aware of the children in Hamilton County who need adoptive families. Please read about Ben, Kamyia, and Michelle. You can access more profiles of children who need families by visiting www.hcadopt.org.

Caring Families are Needed!



Benjamin

Born August 1992

Ben has a comical personality., it is one of the things people remember about him. Ben thinks there is nothing better than being able to deliver a good joke, and comedian D.L. Hughley can always make Ben crack a smile.

Although, he is a mellow guy, Ben likes the physical aspects of football, and he likes playing the offensive positions of wide receiver and running back. Ben also likes to swim and shoot hoops. To relax, he enjoys anything that involves hanging out with his friends. Being part of a family that is open about their love and respect is important to Ben.

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



Caring Families are Needed!



Kamiya

Born August 2001

This energetic and active little girl loves to get other people's attention! Kamiya has a terrific smile, an infectious laugh and beautiful eyes and just wants to be part of a family that loves her.

Kamiya is eager and loves her classes at school, especially art class.

After school this sweet child likes to play outside and ride her big wheel. When Kamiya is indoors she enjoys her blocks, cars and

watching Dora the Explorer and SpongeBob cartoons. She is a meat and potatoes girl, she likes potatoes no matter how prepared and snacks like cookies, pudding, pretzels.

Kamiya would mesh well with a calm, structure-oriented family who will be patient and ready to help guide her through her routine.



Michelle

November 1993

Clay courts or grass? The answer probably wouldn't matter to Michelle, as long as she could play tennis. This active young woman is passionate about the sport. Someday she would like to visit Italy, and perhaps even play on some of the courts there.

Michelle enjoys school and works hard for her grades. Friends are also an important aspect of her life, and she'd rather spend time with them after school than do almost anything else.

This pleasant young woman also appreciates the benefits of restfulness; some of the other ways she likes to spend time are by simply sitting down and resting, or reading a good book. A family that will support Michelle and also encourage her in the pursuits she's passionate about would be a wonderful addition to this strong teenager's life.

**To learn more about Kamiya, Michelle, and others available for adoption,
Please call 513-632-6366 or visit www.hcadopt.org.**



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



This month, as always, you'll find a great variety of items available on the Hamilton County Surplus Auction. Current items for sale include a Children's Learning Center "Smoke House," a 2003 Crown Victoria, file cabinets, and much more!

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



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