

Ashtabula County Children Services Board receives Kinship grant

We have received word that the Ashtabula County Children Services Board

COUNTY Q&A

by PEGGY CARLO

Ashtabula County Commissioner

has received a 3-year grant of \$134,800 annually through the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) Enhanced Kinship Navigator Program that will directly benefit the 250 Ashtabula County families who are involved in the Kinship Program.

Kinship Caregivers are grandparents, aunts / uncles, cousins, siblings, and close family friends who have taken on the responsibility of raising children when parents are unable, unwilling or unavailable to care for them.

Through their sacrifice, these loving adults manage to keep thousands of children out of the foster care system, and connected to their families. But it's not an easy job. Many of these caregivers are grandpar-

ents, who may be retired and on a fixed income. They no doubt have plenty of love to lavish on their grandchildren, but the added cost of raising a child - or children - can be a crushing financial burden.

According to Kathryn Whittington, Community Services Coordinator with our local Children Services, said that this grant will lift some of that burden, which these people have taken on.

"They take these kids with nothing," Ms. Whittington told me.

The grant will help to fund support groups, help with back-to-school and Christmas purchases, and provide emergency services on a limited basis, among other things.



Commissioner
Peggy Carlo



Commissioner
Joe Moroski



Commissioner
Dan Claypool

above.

I would like to commend Kathryn Whittington and Kinship Coordinator Katie Lane for their work with these families. It is so important to keep

"The big thing is, we will be partnering with other agencies, getting resources to these families to help ease their financial burden," Ms. Whittington said.

The Public Children Services Association of Ohio, in collaboration with seven Ohio counties (including Ashtabula), and the Human Services Research Institute, with support of Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, is working to demonstrate the effectiveness of Kinship Navigator programs in high-need areas of Ohio. This grant will provide enhanced Kinship Navigator programming as Ms. Whittington noted

these children connected to family. Many of these children have parents who are unable to care for them because of drug addiction, or because they are serving time in prison. Others are simply abandoned by parents who may be too young to care for them properly.

I applaud those 250 families who have stepped up and taken on the responsibility of giving these children a good, loving home. I know how hard it must be, and just knowing that there's someone out there trying to help may be the encouragement that keeps them going.