



# 2006 Annual Report

## **Mission**

*Butler County Children Services Board (BCCSB) is committed to protecting children by strengthening and preserving families. Through open communication, we will partner with the community to ensure quality outcomes for the children and families we serve.*

## A Letter from the Director

To the Citizens of Butler County

2006 has been a year of tremendous contradictions for BCCSB; we have experienced the highs and lows of sadness and success. The community and staff were overcome with grief over the tragic death of three-year old Marcus Fiesel at the hands of his foster parents. Even though ODJFS concluded that all actions taken by BCCSB in Marcus Fiesel's case were in compliance with existing rules and regulations, intense scrutiny continued from the media, the community and local officials.



It is important to understand that all public child protection agencies deal with the following dilemmas:

1. We operate with tremendous risk – our clients can be troubled, despairing, hostile and unpredictable and despite the best skill and caution, things can and do go wrong. When crisis occurs, the agency and its leaders are subjected to intense review and reputations are always at stake. This rarely happens in other units of government.
2. There is extensive federal and state oversight of child protective services but rarely client or public support. Clients aren't happy our agency has intervened and because of the adversary nature someone usually ends up unhappy. Because the reality of child abuse is so horrific, the public's attitude toward parents and caseworkers can range from contempt to compassion, depending on whose story one believes.
3. Public children's services have many responsibilities but must count on partners to deliver in order to get its job done. Without excellence in service from mental health and chemical dependency systems, housing, local attorneys and a smooth working relationship with the court system, the whole process can break down.

Public child protection agencies must learn to deal with such tragedies and continue to serve the thousands of other children and families in their care. BCCSB caseworkers and staff have continued to focus on our mission. We know we must educate Butler County residents about our role and the fact that nothing is more important than keeping children safe from those who may abuse or neglect them due to addictions or violence.

This Board and staff have been very deliberate in implementing best practice. Many new competent workers have been added this year and new accountability measures have been designed. We have continued our focus around families by increasing access to visitation and parent modeling at the Family Connection Visitation Center and opened the Middletown Satellite. The Foster Parent Group and Foster Youth Group are active members of our team and more providers join the services list every month.

But all of us know that nothing will change for these children unless their families are empowered to change through engagement with individualized, common sense services that meet their specific cultural and geographic needs. This is not a challenge we alone can meet, but one we must share with the United Way, other funders, the Commissioners and the entire social service community of Butler County. Rather than single out BCCSB and child welfare as the problem, the community needs to rally together and support these families through:

- continuum of accessible and competent family and child mental health care through the mental health board
- appropriate housing
- full spectrum drug and alcohol services including aftercare
- open and efficient court system allowing children, clients and caseworkers access to courtrooms; integrated case management system with BCCSB and prosecutors
- better utilization of TANF dollars for drug treatment and more integrated DJFS services with child welfare

The children can only benefit from adults who focus on what actually works. The taxpayer would call that good government. This report shows you that BCCSB has provided excellent results for the investment. Thanks to our terrific board who has been the strong voice of the citizen and to an energetic and committed staff – and to you, the taxpayer, for your trust.

Jann Heffner, JD



**Butler County Commissioners**  
**Michael A. Fox**  
**Charles R. Furmon**  
**Gregory V. Jolivet**



### Board of Directors

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*Chairman*

**Frankie Carlson**

*Vice Chairman*

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**Jeweldene Baker**

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## Why are we here and those we serve?

Each year hundreds of thousands of referrals regarding children who may have experienced abuse or neglect are made to public child protection agencies across the country.

In Butler County, BCCSB is the officially designated agency receiving these referrals. Our job is to serve:

- as the first responder to reported allegations of child abuse and neglect
- by investigating reports in a timely manner
- by providing protective services to children found to be abused or neglected
- by providing compassionate and individualized services to help support families through crises
- by helping them reunify with their children
- for those who cannot reunify, good adoption matches or excellence in life skills learning and mentoring for those emancipating

BCCSB staff is available 24/7, 365 days a year. 80% of the victims were maltreated by parents with 62% experiencing neglect, 20% physical abuse, 10% sexual abuse and 8% emotional abuse.

### Child Abuse Month –April 6, 2006

*The Pinwheels display helps people understand just how much of a problem Butler County has in the areas of child abuse and neglect.*



## Consistent Improvement Seen in 2006

- Kids spend 6.3% fewer days in care
- Adoptions finalized more quickly
- Employee turnover decreased from 21% to 16%
- Staff improved skills as 34 now hold masters degrees with 26 currently enrolled (up from 2 in 2003) \*
- No wait mental health and chemical dependency assessments for families with immediate access to residential drug treatment and quicker access to mental health therapy \*
- Family drug court revived to help fast track parents with addictions who have kids in custody \*
- Levy promise fulfilled as Middletown Satellite Center opens \*
- 3116 Family visits were supervised at model Family Connections Visitation Center enabling a family reunification rate among best in the state
- Levy promise fulfilled as North Star treatment center opens to serve girls near home in Butler County \*
- Grant improved services for victims of domestic violence and treatment for batterers \*



- Progress towards performance based contracting to ensure taxpayer and client gets what they pay for \*
- Technological enhancements initiated to improve caseworker productivity, data tracking and data accuracy
- Two million dollars contributed to improve the delivery of services to the community through Family and Children First Council and local service providers \*
- Foster care recommendations were implemented adding safeguards in wake of the Marcus Fiesel tragedy

\* Partnerships

## Protecting Children and Preserving Families

In 2006, BCCSB delivered on its levy commitments to improve services to children and families.

This report shows the progress made in key strategic areas:

- less time spent in foster care and institutions
- increased rate of family reunification
- better access to more individualized services
- increased administrative efficiencies and staff competencies
- more effective community partnerships

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## Summary of Financial Statement - not audited

### 1996 – 2006 Improvements

27 % drop in number of children in placement

37 % decrease in children permanently removed from their parents

68% decrease in children placed in long-term foster care

50 % decrease in children in foster care longer than 2 years

35 % decrease in foster care days used

### 2003 – 2006 Improvements

26.6 % increase in children reunited with parents

58.75 % drop in days spent in foster care

38.1 % of adoptions finalized in 2 years

<b>Beginning Fund Balance, January 1, 2006</b>	<b>7,250,085.14</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Operating Levy	15,158,510.25
Federal Funds	7,912,269.88
State Funds	1,499,405.57
Local and Other Funds	399,523.32
<b>TOTAL REVENUE:</b>	<b>24,969,709.02</b>
Reduction in Fund Balance	608,165.13
<b>Total Resources Available</b>	<b>25,577,874.15</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	
Employee Salaries	8,341,748.31
Employee Fringe Benefits	2,333,668.62
Substitute Care (Paid Institutions, Foster Care, & Subsidized Adoption)	10,353,576.50
Clothing, Food Services, and Transportation	267,299.83
Health Related Expenses for Children	6,293.04
Building, Supplies and Contracted Services	4,006,564.82
Other Expenses	268,723.03
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>25,577,874.15</b>
<b>Ending Fund Balance, December 31, 2006</b>	<b>6,641,920.01</b>

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Calls to Reporting Line	15803	17252	17444	19486
Allegations	2889	3350	4478	4266
Investigations	1808	2238	2953	2875
Avg. Families Served	857	915	894	925
Avg. Children Served	*	*	2385	2372
Avg. No. of Days a Child Spends in Custody	683	645	504	472
Finalized Adoptions	67	55	55	37

\* Data not maintained in this format



