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**THE 2008 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**SUMMIT COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS**  
**JUVENILE DIVISION**  
**LINDA TUCCI TEODOSIO, JUDGE**





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# 2008 Annual Report of the Summit County Juvenile Court



*Turning lives around one child at a time.*

Linda Tucci Teodosio, Judge  
Robert Bickett, Court Administrator  
David Horner, Asst. Court Administrator  
Steve Stahl, Asst. Court Administrator

## Summit County Juvenile Court Vision Statement

" The Summit County Juvenile Court strives to serve the best interests of our children through outreach, early intervention, community education and innovative programming, while fairly administering justice to all whose lives are impacted by the juvenile justice system."

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## A Message From Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio



The administration of the Summit County Juvenile Court comes with its own consistent litany of day-to-day challenges. That was evident from the very first day I walked into the Juvenile Court Center in 2003. In that time, it has been our goal to meet those challenges by using tried and tested methods, when applicable, and implementing newer, progressive methods when possible. The results and the reactions to the entire scope of services the Court offers have been encouraging.

In this past year, the citizens of Summit County were asked to give the Court its ultimate job evaluation when they went to the polls. I am humbled by the vote of confidence my administration of the Court received. I can assure you that it will only serve to heighten my commitment, and that of the Court staff, to not only continue to provide our community with the service it deserves, the security it expects and the support it requires, but to aim to improve the manner in which they are provided.

Yet, with all the challenges inherent to the day-to-day operation of the Court, it was and is confronted with new challenges that are enveloping almost every segment of the public and private sectors. The challenges are not of our making, but they are our responsibility and I can assure the public that we are working hard to address them and adapt to them as those challenges impact the Court and the community now in the near future.

I believe that the work we have done in the past six years will allow the Court to meet those challenges. I am confident that the sturdy foundation we have built the last six years will allow the Court to continue its level of services uninterrupted. It is the job of the Court to anticipate, plan ahead and remain pro-active.

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## **Magistrates and Judicial Attorneys**



**Tavia Baxter:** Magistrate Baxter is responsible for hearing the unruly, truancy and adult failure to send cases. She is also the judicial officer that participates in Summit County's Truancy Task Force.



**Katherine Bertsch:** Magistrate Bertsch hears abuse and dependency and neglect cases as well as legal custody cases. She has developed an expertise in the area of child support and reviews this difficult issue for the Court. Magistrate Bertsch works on a part-time basis.



**Bradford Christman:** Magistrate Christman joined the Court following an extensive career in child welfare, including service in the Juvenile Division of the Summit County Prosecutor's Office and in the Legal Department of the Children Services Board. He hears abuse, neglect and dependency cases as well as private legal custody cases.



**Thomas Freeman:** Magistrate Freeman is responsible for a delinquency docket. He is also working with the Court's Developmental Disabilities Committee in preparation to oversee that docket when it is instituted.



**Maria Kostoff:** Magistrate Kostoff oversaw the Crossroads Program docket of the Court. She held evening sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays to allow youth and their families to participate in Crossroads with minimal disruption to their school and work schedules. She also heard a variety of delinquency matters including sex offender cases.



**Kristin Maxwell:** Magistrate Maxwell has a dependency, neglect and abuse docket. She also hears cases where families have involvement with dependency and neglect cases and delinquency matters to provide consistent support and direction to those families. Magistrate Maxwell also oversees those cases involving minor parents and probation cases for pregnant girls and teenage mothers and served as the Teen Court Magistrate.



**Robert McCarty:** As a Judicial Attorney, Magistrate McCarty is overseeing the accreditation process for the Court. He convenes and presides over the meetings of the Accreditation Committee and writes policies for the Court and detention. Additionally, Magistrate McCarty deals with all of the records requests that come to Court. He hears all types of cases as requested by the Court.





**Denise McGuckin:** Magistrate McGuckin hears all types of delinquency cases. She reviews all parole cases and makes decisions relating to revocation of parole. Magistrate McGuckin's responsibilities include observing the Court's Re-entry Program which began in 2008.



**Mary Ann Mendlik:** Magistrate Mendlik oversees the objections to Magistrate's decisions that come before the Court. She monitors their timeliness on the objections and responses and provides extensive legal research for all aspects of Court operations. Magistrate Mendlik monitors the Court's cases pending before the Ninth District Court of Appeals and updates all judicial officers as to new case law. She also supervises any legal interns assigned to the Court. Magistrate Mendlik hears all types of cases as needed upon the request of the Court.



**Christine Rees:** Magistrate Rees was responsible for the traffic cases filed with the Court. Magistrate Rees held sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings for the convenience of the public. She also provided legal research for various Court departments, as requested.



**Tammy Richardson:** Magistrate Richardson hears a full docket of dependency, neglect and abuse cases as well as private legal custody cases. In late 2008, Magistrate Richardson assumed the Teen Court docket.



**Rita Rochford:** Magistrate Rochford works as a part-time Magistrate reviewing cases of youth that are in Planned Permanent Living Arrangement with the Children Services Board. As the director of the Citizens Review Board, she works with the volunteers who monitor children in Summit County Children Services' permanent custody.



**John Vuillemin:** Magistrate Vuillemin is the Chief Magistrate for the Court. He presides over dependency, neglect and abuse cases and private legal custody cases. He also fulfills the administrative functions needed for the assignment and scheduling of Magistrate cases.



**James Whited:** Magistrate Whited hears a full docket of dependency, neglect and abuse cases as well as private legal custody cases. Magistrate Whited also oversees the Court's Mediation Program.

# COURT FINANCE

Prepared by Robert Bickett, Court Administrator

*The 2008 Summit County Juvenile court budget, consisting of both county and state/federal funding, totaled **\$14,486,272.00**.*

		Reclaim Ohio	\$2,931,460		
		Title IV-E	705,910		
General Office/Judicial	\$3,639,883	Title XX/TANF	565,000	Personnel/Salaries & Benefits	\$9,850,665
Probation/Administration	3,257,492	Title XX/PRC	350,000	Contract Service	2,462,666
Detention Center	<u>2,966,273</u>	Other	<u>70,254</u>	Other	<u>2,172,941</u>
Total County funding:	<b>\$9,863,648</b>	Total State/Federal Grant funding:	<b>\$4,622,624</b>	Total Expenditures:	<b>\$14,486,272</b>

## **STATE/FEDERAL FUNDED**

### **SERVICE PROVIDER CONTRACTS TO COURT**

#### **SERVICE PROVIDER**

#### **CONTRACT AMOUNT**

##### **Day Treatment**

East Akron Community House 250,000.00

Akron UMADAOP 80,000.00

##### **Electronic Monitoring**

Oriana House, Inc. 60,000.00

**Educational Services** 80,000.00

##### **Out of Home Placement**

Shelter Care Youth Assessment Shelter 137,750.00

Juvenile Court share of Summit County Family 100,000.00

And Children First Council/Summit County  
Cluster for Youth Funding Agreement

##### **Short Term out of home placement**

Shelter Care Youth Assessment 98,550.00

##### **CROSSROADS Program**

Child Guidance & Family Solutions 70,000.00

##### **Drug/Alcohol Assessments Services**

Community Health Center 32,000.00

Akron Health Department 55,346.00

##### **Mentoring**

CYO and Community Services 25,000.00

##### **Mental Health Counseling**

Child Guidance & Family Solutions 25,000.00

##### **Competency Evaluations**

Summit Psychological Associates 15,000.00

##### **Community Service/Restitution Program**

Funds to victims 50,000.00

**Citizen's Review Board Coordinator** 52,859.93

##### **Long Term out of Home Placement**

**Citizen's Review Board Coordinator** 52,859.93

##### **Long Term out of Home Placement**

Various Placement Agencies 475,000.00

##### **Diversion Programming**

Distributed in varying amounts to 14  
Police Departments and Sheriff's Office 204,576.00

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## **Additional 2008 Funding**

Prepared by Grants Administrator Woody Tyrrell

In addition to the county's general fund and additional formula funding from state/federal sources that sustain its operation, the Court actively pursues additional revenue through local, state and federal agency grant funding. These funds are typically used to create or expand programs at the Court aimed at meeting our goal of assuring that each child entering the Court leaves with increased opportunity for success in school, work and the community. **In 2008, grant funding committed to the court for special programming totaled \$1,136,894.** A total of 24 full- and part-time positions are supported by these funding streams. The programs assisted by this funding are:

**Intensive Probation Supervision, \$40,939.00:** The Court's Probation Officers offers intensive case management and monitoring services to high risk offenders. Most Intensive Probation cases are placed on a suspended commitment through the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS). All participants are engaged in a minimum of 32 hours per week in structured activities. The funding is provided by the Department of Justice through its Juvenile Accountability Block Grant program and administered by the Ohio Department of Youth Services.

**WIA/TANF Job Re-entry Program--\$175,000:** Youth held in Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS) facilities and referred to this program by ODYS receive intensive case management services and beginning up to 6 months prior to their release and coordinated mentoring upon release aimed at easing their transition back into their families and the community and providing them with employment, training and education opportunities. Funding is made available through a combination of Federal TANF and Workforce Investment Act dollars administered by the Ohio Department of Youth Services through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

**Juvenile Court Health Advocacy Program—HIV Prevention \$5,955:** Trained Planned Parenthood of Northeast Ohio (PPNEO) facilitators delivered HIV/STD Awareness classes in Detention on Saturday mornings in 2008. Tests of basic knowledge were administered immediately before and again after each session to measure gains in understanding of prevention. HIV/STD testing is offered in detention weekly and as of December, 2008 is open to the public every 1st and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday evenings in the FRC. All testing is free, confidential, anonymous and conducted by certified Community Aids Network and PPNEO staff. Funding is provided by the Ohio Department of Health and administered through the Akron Health Department.

**The Child Advocate Team and Permanency Planning & Adoption Program, \$565,000:** Provides intensive case management services to children both in temporary and permanent Children Services custody to help ensure that the best interests of dependant, neglected or abused children are protected and presented at hearings to the court. The ultimate goal is to aid in finding safe, nurturing homes for all of these children. In 2008, more than 400 children were served. Funding is provided by federal TitleXX/TANF funds administered by the Summit County Department of Job and Family Services.

**The Family Resource Center, \$350,000:** Intensive case management is delivered to at-risk youth and their families who are involved in domestic violence disputes, are pregnant or parenting teens, are teens at risk of dropping out of school or are returning from long-term stays in DHS, detention or other placement. The FRC is also a resource for other court-involved youth and the community as a whole. It serves as a central point of referral for all services available throughout Summit County for youth and their families. More than 500 families were served in 2008. Funding is provided by Federal TANF/PRC funds administered by the Summit County Department of Job and Family Services.



SUMMIT COUNTY

**DEPARTMENT OF JOB & FAMILY SERVICES**

*...building stronger families for a better community*



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## Detention Services

Bruce Alexander, Superintendant

The Summit County Juvenile Detention Facility consists of seven main housing units plus two annex units, making the total capacity for juveniles 100. In 2008, the Detention Facility utilized four main housing units the first half of the year before having to open a fifth housing unit which remained open for the balance of the year due to the high number of juveniles being held.

The Detention Facility staff is responsible for providing a safe and secure environment for juveniles, staff and other persons, along with assisting in the security of the facility. Detention Officers (staff) are responsible for transporting juveniles to court hearings, medical appointments, counseling appointments, diagnostic evaluations and other appointments deemed necessary. Through a cooperative agreement and a collaborative effort with Akron Public Schools, all juveniles held in detention attend school within the facility, and are taught by state certified teachers in math, science/health, language arts, history and reading. Judge Teodosio and Detention staff view education as a high priority and believe every juvenile held in the Detention facility should receive the best education possible. To aid in that goal, a new computer system (Plato) was installed to allow youth to work at their own pace and grade level. For the first time in the history of the Detention Center, a juvenile could complete course work that allowed him or her to receive credit and graduate from his or her school. Additional tutorial services are provided by Akron Public Schools through the Title I Program. Juveniles are encouraged to read daily as part of the 100 Book Challenge which is overseen by tutors. In addition, detention staff provides daily structured programming in areas such as anger management, completing job applications, money management, character education, coping skills, decision-making and other areas. Physical recreation, non-denominational religious services and community-based agency programming are offered as well

In 2008:

- 3,037 juveniles were brought to Summit County Juvenile Detention Facility.
- 1,680 juveniles were held in the detention facility; 70% were males and 30% were females.
- 1,357 juveniles were released through the admissions process:
  - 957 through actual admissions process
  - 258 felony releases
  - 118 released to Department of Youth Services
- The average daily population of the facility was 65.33.
- The average bed days in detention were 9.77 (the average bed days represent the number of days a juvenile held in detention spends in the Detention Facility from the time assigned to a unit until departure/release.). There were 42 juveniles who had motions filed to have them bound over to the adult system. Of those 42, 22 youth had their case bound over. The youth who were bound over served a total of 1,674 days in detention for an average of 76.09 bed days per juvenile. That resulted in an increase of 4.89 bed days more than 2007. The Detention facility no longer utilizes the Global Risk Assessment Device (GRAD) adopted by the Court in 2004. In 2008, the Court implemented a new Juvenile Detention Risk Assessment device which provides information to allow staff make better decisions as to which juveniles should be to be held in detention and which can safely be released.

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## Clerk's Office

Cathy Richardson Thomas, Chief Deputy Clerk

The Clerk's Office is responsible for processing and maintaining all documents filed with the Court. The Clerk's Office is also responsible for collecting filing fees and all fines and costs that are assessed in delinquency, traffic, unruly and adult cases.

Effective September, 2008 House Bill 562 went into effect. The Bill created a new statute which requires the courts to collect an additional \$10.00 cost. The funds are transmitted to the Ohio Department of Public Safety and the State Treasury monthly.

In 2008, the Court began accepting Visa/MC credit cards as a convenience for the public. As the department moves into 2009, the Clerk's Office will explore new innovative ways to continue excellent service to the public.

In 2008, the Clerk's office collected a total of **\$356,835.29**. Of this amount, **\$21,798.00** was received for the payment of fines and costs in delinquency, unruly or adult cases; **\$101,110.63** was collected for traffic fines and costs, Indigent Drivers Alcohol Treatment Fund and Indigent Defense Support Fund; **\$15,605.61** was collected for restitution; **\$201,766.05** was collected for computer and legal research, special fees, public defender, reparations rotary fund, county and clerk fees and indigent application fees, bond, credit card fees, sundries, probation fees, attorney fee reimbursement and legal news; **\$16,555.00** was collected for Alcohol Cessation Training (Project ACT), a Prohibition Diversion program and for Staying Accident Free Through Education (SAFTE), a driver intervention program.

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### **Women's Board Celebrates 50th Anniversary**

The Women's Board celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of service and volunteerism at the Court in 2008. It was the first organization of its kind in the state of Ohio. The members of the Women's Board work year-round to raise funds, offer assistance and provide programs and events to benefit Court staff and youth in detention. To recognize the Board's service and generosity, the Mediation Room on the 3rd floor of the William P. Kannel Juvenile Court Center was dedicated in honor of the Board.

Judge Teodosio presented a plaque to the Board commemorating the occasion and County Executive Russ Pry presented the Board with a framed copy of the legislation that he and County Council President Nick Konstandaras sponsored which approved the re-naming of the Mediation Room.

In 2008, the Women's Board logged over 4,000 volunteer hours at the Juvenile Court.



Judge Teodosio (l) and Executive Russ Pry present a plaque to Board President Deanna Clark commemorating the re-naming of a Mediation Room in honor of the Board.

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## Intake Department

Joe Petrucelli, Supervisor

The Intake Department is usually the first and, sometimes, the only contact that alleged delinquent and unruly juveniles and their families have with the Court. Intake Officers explain the legal process to the juveniles and their parents/guardians, gather information about the juvenile's background and make appropriate recommendations to the Court based on that information.

In 2008, the department received **5,803** referrals, of which **3,582** youth were referred to Court dockets. The breakdown of the charges consisted of **1,198** felonies, **5,401** misdemeanors and **1,433** status offenses.

The **Victim Impact Panel** continues to educate juveniles and their parents/guardians about the negative effects of substance abuse. Last year, almost 200 juveniles and their parents/guardians viewed the program. The Victim Impact Panel is coordinated by the Court with the assistance of the Catholic Commission, law enforcement officers, representatives from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and parents who relate their experiences after losing a child because of a drunk driver. **Victim Offender Mediation**, through the Center for Restorative Justice provided the Court with a mediation program that involves the offender, the offender's legal guardian and the victim. The desired outcome of such mediation is for all parties to come to a mutual agreement beneficial to everyone involved and providing a direct accountability to the victim by the offender.

The **Truancy Task Force** continued its collaboration with local school districts, police departments and social service agencies to attack the truancy problem in our community. The **Alcohol Cessation Training (ACT)** program provided the opportunity for adolescents who come to Court charged with a first alcohol possession charge to enter an educational program directed by the Akron Health Department. Upon completion of the diversionary program, the charge against the offender is dismissed.

The **Victim Services Office** was established in 2000 and serves a valuable function for the Court by opening up the lines of communication between the Court and those who have been victimized by crime. Victim Services notifies victims of Court hearings pertinent to the case involving the delinquent youth. The office also assists the victim in structuring Victim Impact Statements and gathering loss information for restitution purposes. The officer can also connect victims with community resources. Such community resources offer professional and emotional support for the victim during the Court process providing peace of mind and reassurance for people whose lives have been affected by criminal behavior.



### **In Memoriam: Michelle Williams**

How often have we read in an obituary that a person died "after a courageous battle with cancer." So many times, they are just words on a page because we didn't know the person. However, we at Summit County Juvenile Court can now apply some real meaning to those words.

Probation Officer Michelle Williams passed away on March 16, 2008 at the age of 54. She leaves behind a loving family, a host of friends and a group of colleagues at the Juvenile Court who will forever have her example of will and bravery in the face of insurmountable odds to treasure and emulate.



Michelle was absolutely devoted to her job. She considered it her dream job and she did everything in her power to make sure she came to work everyday, even when it was apparent that her disease had weakened her body. Her spirit, however, was indomitable. Michelle might have been small of stature, but she had the heart of a titan.

Many of her co-workers became friends. She was able to continue to make and develop relationships throughout her life. She is missed and remembered every day by those with whom she worked and knew her best. Here are some of those people and some of their comments as they remember Michelle:

**Kandy Hixson:** "In her final days she left the world with a legacy of courage, grace and beauty. I will always be forever grateful to have shared her final journey here on Earth with her and eternally grateful for the lessons she taught me about my life and its meaning."

**Curtis Howard:** "She lived every day as if she was going to make a difference. And she did make a difference, in her caseload, in the court system and in the community. Her spirit will continue to make a difference through the lives she touched."

**Keysha Myers-Murphy:** Although a complex woman, I like to think of her as wise beyond her years. We spent a lot of time together talking, debating ideas, but mostly laughing. Her spirit was fresh and authentic. She was very inquisitive and congenial with a sometimes idealistic view of the way the world should be. I would often challenge her on those ideals, just as often as she would remind me of the importance in striving for virtuousness. I learned many lessons from her life, and that is a gift I'll treasure forever."

**Jeff Pope:** "Michelle would call about one of her kids working CRP. 'Hey Popey, when will you get to my kids?' and before you know it we are talking about my family, are the kids ok, how are they doing in school? Michelle would help you if you needed it but don't cross her. Michelle was real and you don't see that much, and I miss that so."

**Raylene Smead:** Michelle was my adventure. She quietly taught compassion for others, courage and strength through adversity; all the while struggling every day to put one foot in front of the other. Michelle's sense of humor at times would only belie the seriousness of her illness and we would enjoy that moment without reservation. I know our roads will surely become one again. Michelle will be waiting there wearing her pink boots. Thank you Michelle for the adventure!

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## Probation Department

Curtis Howard, Chief Probation Officer

The Probation Department was responsible for the supervision and investigation of **1,257** cases in 2008, which included 712 new assignments and 545 cases that were carried over from 2007. The monthly average for new assignments was about 59 cases per month. The number of cases served 1,257, is slightly more than the previous year of 1,167.

Probation cases are assigned based on geographic districts, allowing Probation Officers to establish and maintain rapport with clients, families, schools and agencies within a district. The average caseload for Probation Officers in 2008 was approximately 36 cases for each Probation Officer. The Probation staff consists of 14 Probation Officers, 2 Probation Community Workers, a Probation Supervisor, an Administrative Assistant, and the Chief Probation Officer.

In 2008, the Probation Department assisted victims to recover nearly **\$50,000 in restitution** that was paid directly to victims. Probationers also worked over **5,000 hours** in Community Service.

Of the 131 youth who were committed or revoked to the Ohio Department of Youth Services in 2008, 32 were committed from the Probation Department, which is approximately 25% of the commitments and revocations. In 2008, 23 juveniles were bound over to the General Division of The Common Pleas Court to be tried as adults. Of those 23 cases, only five were on probation at the time they were bound over to the adult system. **Five hundred seventy-three cases were successfully terminated** from probation supervision in 2008.

Again this year the Probation Department implemented and presented The Character Counts principles to two high risk groups of youth. Twice a month, Supervisors and Community Workers from the department, presented lessons on the Six Pillars of Character Counts. Presentations were made at the Youth Outreach Center at East Akron Community House and T.R.U.C.E. (Teens Resisting Unhealthy Choices Everyday) at Akron-UMADAOP.

Summit County Juvenile Court and the Probation Department continue to maintain working relationships with community agencies and committees. These efforts seek to enhance the development and security of the Summit County Community, while holding juvenile offenders accountable for their actions. The community agencies, services and court programs have provided opportunities for our youth to engage in educational opportunities, substance abuse treatment and mental health services.



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## **Sex Offender Management Unit**

Terry Walton, Felony Disposition Supervisor

The Sex Offender Management Unit is comprised of three full time probation officers and the Felony Disposition Supervisor. This specialized probation unit supervises an average of 80 cases a month. These youth have been charged with or adjudicated for a sexually aggressive offense as described in the Ohio Revised Code. In 2008, 57 incidents were referred to this department, reflecting a decrease in referrals from 2007. The average term of probation for a sexual offender is 22 months.

Unique to this unit, probation officers supervise their clients from intake through termination of probation including any placements that may occur. Client contact is made at home, in school, in the office, and/or in treatment sessions. Acting as co-facilitators, the probation officers collaborate with Child Guidance and Family Solutions in providing three counseling groups a week at the Juvenile Court, including a group for developmentally delayed offenders. In addition, it collaborated with the Court's Family Resource Center to consolidate the unit's "Wise Guys" program with the FRC's "Real Talk" counseling program for less serious offenders. Referrals may also be made to private providers to facilitate sexual offender treatment. These programs provide group, individual and/or family counseling to help eliminate sexually aggressive behaviors.

In 2008 the Sex Offender Management Unit, in conjunction with our team from Child Guidance and Family Solutions modified our treatment format to incorporate the newest trends in community management of sexually aggressive youth. Additional focus is placed on proper social interactions. The Sex Offender Management Unit has remained informed about court decisions that impact the process of classification/ registration of juvenile sex offenders. As needed, changes have been made and information has been shared to keep Summit County in compliance with the requirements of Senate Bill 10.

In 2008, this unit continued to sponsor quarterly multi-county probation officer meetings. This collaboration between sex offender probation officers from various counties helps to establish best practices in supervising this population. This unit's probation officers also sit on several important committees within the county as well as the state. They are members of the Ohio Supreme Court Roundtable, Summit County Sex Offender Management Committee, Department of Youth Services committee to develop standards for supervision and certification of treatment providers and the Summit-Portage Regional Advisory Group. These committees provide the probation officers with an opportunity to keep informed of new strategies in managing sex offenders successfully in the community.

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## The Crossroads Program

Lisa DiSabato-Moore, Supervisor

The Crossroads Program of Summit County Juvenile Court is an intensive probation program offered to families of court involved youth who are afflicted with co-occurring disorders, specifically mental health and substance abuse/dependency. Crossroads originated as a drug court program in 1999. In January 2003, Judge Linda Teodosio, in response to the increase in the number of youth coming into the court system who were abusing substances compounded with the affects of mental illness, formed Crossroads. Crossroads was one of the nation's first specialty courts specifically designed to serve children with co-existing illnesses. Research has shown that as high as 80% of adolescents involved in substance abuse programming have a co-existing mental health diagnosis.

Crossroads is a four phase program, designed to be one year in length. The program's intensity gradually diminishes throughout the child's involvement, depending on the child's efforts and ability to meet their specific goals. Crossroads relies heavily on parental support and interaction, and collaborates intensively with community mental health and substance abuse provider agencies to assure comprehensive service delivery, allowing for optimal benefit from services offered.

Crossroads is available to families who are seeking additional accountability and court support, and whose children meet eligibility criteria. A team of Court professionals determines eligibility through examination of a series of evaluations. In order to qualify for the program, a child must be at least 12 years old and have a qualifying mental health and/or substance abuse diagnosis. Accountability is achieved through the use of a number of interventions including regularly scheduled review hearings with a Magistrate. These reviews afford the Court the opportunity to offer immediate rewards and/or consequences to the child. Crossroads uses a myriad of incentives to reinforce positive behavioral change. Exclusionary criteria includes an adjudication for a sex offense, an adjudication for trafficking in drugs, or an adjudication for an offense of violence with the exception of domestic violence.

In 2008, forty-seven families entered the Crossroads program. During that year, there were fifty-five releases, fourteen of which were neutral, meaning they were released either because they reached their maximum benefit; were sent to long-term residential care; or moved out of the jurisdiction of the Court. Twenty-three youth were successfully released, and eighteen youth were unsuccessfully released.

## Psychology Services

Dr. Thomas Webb, Staff Psychologist

Psychology services provide crisis support for detained youth as well as forensic evaluations for the Court. For the former, the Court Psychologist is involved with mental health emergencies as they arise. Crisis-oriented counseling is provided as well as consultative support for detention officers and nursing staff.

For court proceedings, the court psychologist is responsible for forensic evaluations where psychiatric and/or psycho-educational issues are in question. The most weighty of these relates to Amenability Hearings involving transfer of jurisdiction to the adult system. In 2008, **24 Amenability reports were submitted** to the Judge Teodosio, the Prosecutor's Office and defense attorneys to aid decisions regarding whether a youth should be transferred to the adult system or remain under juvenile jurisdiction. More often, however, psychological assessments target the motivational dynamics of youth coming before the Court for other reasons. In 2008, **223 youth** were evaluated using a measure to "Screen Pediatric Psychosocial Influences" (SPPI). This instrument provides vital information on a youth's mental health background, socio-economic circumstances of the family, pertinent medical history and coverage of other life events potentially contributing to a youth's aberrant behavior. Reports compiled from such information are distributed to the principals involved with the youth's upcoming case. In some instances, these clinical assessments are used to qualify youth for participation in special programs or dockets such as "Crossroads", a court docket for youthful offenders with severe psychiatric and substance dependency disorders.

This year was the second during which the Court Psychologist provided forensic training to the Child Psychiatry Fellowship at Children's Hospital. This involved both didactic teaching as well as personal supervision of the Fellows during their part-time placement here at the Court.

The Psychology section has been instrumental in helping design innovative diagnostic and treatment services that benefit juvenile offender populations. Collaborating with the University of Akron and Child Guidance & Family Solutions, strides have been made toward developing more effective interventions, especially for those youth having significant co-occurring disorders or developmental anomalies that dramatically impact their social adaptation.

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## Family Resource Center

Esther Thomas, Coordinator

Now in its third year, the Family Resource Center (FRC) operates under the philosophy that short-term assistance will lessen recidivism and assist families in being self-sufficient. The FRC continues to serve youth and families in addressing challenging issues such as: teen parenting, truancy, community re-entry and domestic violence. The FRC, made possible by Federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families funding through the State of Ohio and County of Summit Departments of Job and Family Services, built on its collaborative community relationships to serve nearly 500 youth and families in the Summit County area in 2008.

Using a case management platform, the FRC Youth and Family Specialists partner with our clients to assess their needs, refer them to the community service providers, problem solve, and provide monitoring, and support along with an array of special in-house programming offered here at the court and in the community which includes:

**The Teen Parent Education and Support Program**, which aims to work with pregnant and parenting teens to acquire the information and skills necessary to be effective parents, to continue their education and to encourage self-sufficiency. The FRC engages clients in individual case management and referrals to area agencies to address their specific needs. It is supported by an 8-week evidence-based Teen Parent Education class, developed by the FRC and community partner, Family Ties of Child Guidance and Family Solutions. In 2008, 54 families were enrolled in the program, with 39 teen parents receiving services.

The **School-to-Work Program** assists in preparing youth in "Jumping Over Barriers to Success (JOBS)" by encouraging school attendance and preparation for work. Each youth who completes the program receives one-on-one job readiness assessment and counseling. In 2008, 80 youth were enrolled in the program and received some level of employability skill training. Seventy percent of youth enrolled obtained employment or participated in Summer Work Experience: 37 youth found employment, and 18 were enrolled in Summer Work Experience. The FRC works closely with the Tri County Jobs for Ohio Graduates Next Step initiative at the Summit County Job Center to meet School-to-Work Program goals.

Thanks to a generous grant obtained by the Women's Board from the Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation and equipment donated by the Summit County Department of Job and Family Services, the FRC is able to offer the **Educational Enrichment Program** that includes a Computer Lab and web-based learning tools for youth and families to explore career software, earn Akron Public School credit and develop an array of self-improvement and coping skills that will serve them well now and in the future.

The **Community Re-Entry** case manager provides individual case management to address the specific concerns of youth returning from the Department of Youth Services or residential care. In 2008, forty-two youth have been involved with the FRC case manager. The FRC works closely with DYS to maximize positive outcomes for youth through educational monitoring, referrals to community support agencies, help with job readiness/placement and family supports.

The **Real Talk** discussion series launched in October, 2007 focuses on the issues facing young men involved with Juvenile Court. Topics addressed include decision-making, education, safety, hygiene, and self control.

To address issues of domestic violence with youth, **Choices for Change**, was piloted during 2008. The program consists of youth and family case management, and 10 weekly group sessions with youth. Targeted to first- time offenders, the course work and discussions revolve around identifying responsibilities and options to violence.

The collaborations with our community partners, allows the FRC to maximize our collective resources. Through a partnership with Catholic Social Services and Greenleaf Family Center, the FRC hosts **Such is Life**, an 8-week life skill building program. In 2008, 30 youth aged 16-18 were enrolled in the program.

During the spring and summer of 2008, the FRC offered two projects funded by the Margaret Clark Morgan Foundation. The **Green Thumb** project offered youth a community service opportunity while learning landscape design and care from Master Gardener, Kevin Bing. Over the growing season, youth contributed more than 90 hours of community service. The **Express Yourself!** project provided an artful experience for 7 youth aged 12-17. Under the instruction of local artist and educator, Anitra Redlefsen, youth explored positive self-expression while learning about photography.

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## Citizen's Review Board

Magistrate Rita M. Rochford, Director

The Citizen's Review Board (CRB) consists of community volunteers who determine whether the best interests of the children in Dependency, Neglect and Abuse cases are being met. The Board consists of representatives with social work, criminal justice, education and/or medical backgrounds or other significant community involvement. The CRB consists of four separate boards, each of which meet twice a month to review the status of children in the permanent custody of the Children Services Board. The CRB ensures that the needs of the children are being met and that Children Services is using reasonable efforts to facilitate the child's permanency plan which is typically adoption.

CRB members review each case at least once every six months and more frequently, if necessary. The Board, in concert with the Magistrate, has the authority to issue orders during the review hearings, to maintain the child's welfare or permanency plan.

The Citizen's Review Board operates pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code and is supervised by a Magistrate/Director under the direct authority of Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio.

**In 2008 there were 285 children on the Citizen Review Board's caseload with approximately 288\* review hearings on its docket.**

*\*sibling groups are heard during the same hearing for Court efficiency.*

## CASA/GAL Department

Beth Cardina, Program Coordinator

The mission of the Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem (CASA/GAL) Program is to recruit, train and support volunteers who speak up for abused and neglected children in court. As a party in the proceedings, it is the role of the CASA/GAL child advocate to provide investigation, assessment, recommendations, monitoring and advocacy in order to assist the court in making decisions in the best interest of children.

The program is funded by the Summit County Juvenile Court and with grants from the Summit County Department of Job and Family Services, local foundations, businesses, organizations and the CASA Board of Trustees, a 501(c)3 organization which exists to promote the program and to support volunteers in partnership with the court.

The CASA/GAL Department consists of twenty-four staff members. During 2008 the staff, along with **over 200** volunteer child advocates, provided a voice for **1,374** dependent, abused or neglected children in Juvenile Court proceedings. The number of the program's active volunteers and the number of children it serves ranks as the highest of any CASA/GAL program in the State of Ohio and the fourth largest in the nation.

Additionally, the CASA/GAL Toy Shop and the Court's Toy Project coordinated their efforts into one event, providing holiday gifts to over **460** children in care.



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## **Diversion Unit**

Phil Lucco, Program Director

The Diversion Unit's primary function is to communicate with all law enforcement departments in Summit County and to assist them with their needs and those of the children involved in the juvenile justice system. The Intake Department forwards police reports for children who may be eligible for diversion services to the Diversion Unit. In turn, the Diversion Unit forwards the name to the appropriate police department for a determination as to whether the child meets its criteria for services. Participation in diversion services allows a lower-level offender to receive services in their community and avoid the Court process and an official juvenile record. In 2008, 1,254 cases went through the Police Departments Diversion Units. Also, 272 cases were sent to diversion by the court.

The Child Responsibility Project is part of the Diversion Unit. It is the Child Responsibility Project's function to locate job sites where youth will work in order to pay restitution to the victim of their offense. The money that the youth earns is provided through the Reclaim Ohio grant and is paid directly to the victim by the Court. The juvenile was paid an hourly wage as dictated by state law. The wages, up to \$600 per victim, were then turned over to the victim. There were 174 juveniles that took part in the Child Responsibility Project, completing 7,193 hours worked and earning \$46,754.93, which was paid to victims of crime. The juvenile received \$6.50 an hour.

Community service hours ordered by the Court are also monitored by the Diversion Unit. The unit works closely with the Intake and Probation Departments to assure that youth are meeting the requirements of their community service sanction. In 2008, 1,460 juveniles were ordered to complete community service. Those juveniles completed 28,513 hours of community service.

In 2003, the Court initiated its Special Projects program. This program allows a juvenile to earn credit for eight hours of ordered community service by earning \$40.00 which, depending on the time of year, will be used to purchase toys, food or school supplies. These items are donated to the needy in Summit County. It is the responsibility of the Diversion Unit to track the paperwork for the projects, take custody of the items and assure the delivery of the items to those in need. In 2008, 61 juveniles participated in one of the three projects throughout the year. 18 juveniles participated in the Food Project, 9 juveniles participated in the School Project, and 34 juveniles participated in the Toy Project.

The Court deeply appreciates the cooperation and the invaluable services provided by the Diversion Units of the community's Police Departments and the Summit County Sheriff's Office.

## **Teen Court**

The Summit County Teen Court is a diversionary program designed to provide the community's youth exposure to the juvenile justice system. Teen volunteers hear actual cases in Juvenile Court and they actually participate in the proceedings.

The Court makes referrals to Teen Court on cases involving first-time offenders who have admitted to committing a low-level misdemeanor. The youth and his or her parents or guardians must agree to have the case referred to Teen Court for a dispositional hearing literally before a jury of their peers. High school students from across Summit County received training on Court procedure and how to apply the principles of restorative justice to their dispositions.

With the help of volunteers from actual trial attorneys and assistant prosecutors, teens take on the roles of defense attorney and prosecutor and argue their cases to a jury consisting of teen volunteers. Once testimony has been delivered the jurors begin their deliberations and return with a disposition. Should the youth abide by the conditions of their disposition to the satisfaction of the Court, the charge against them will be dismissed.

In 2008, 65 active volunteers from 16 high schools participated in 22 Teen Court hearings. There were 31 volunteers who received training at two training sessions conducted in 2008.

## **Mediation Program**

Dependency and neglect cases are lengthy, sometimes lasting two years. In order to address that issue, the Court developed and implemented its successful Mediation Program in early 2006. The Mediation Program is designed to expedite the process to bring the parties together to reach a quicker resolution of their cases.

In 2008, a total of 108 cases were submitted to the mediation process. Of those cases, 66 were successfully resolved, 33 were unresolved and there were nine instances in which a required third party failed to appear. The mediation program currently involves 15 trained attorney mediators.



### **Judge Teodosio Honored for "Making a Difference"**

On October 21, 2008, Linda Tucci Teodosio's vision for the Summit County Juvenile Court was recognized when she was the recipient of the Department of Job and Family Services' *Making a Difference Award*.

Judge Teodosio received the honor at a luncheon at The University of Akron's Student Union. The Judge was cited for the many outreach programs that she has devised and implemented in her six years on the Juvenile Court bench.

The criteria for the award included demonstrating "a commitment to others through specific examples of improving the quality of life for others, having a measurable history of giving of their time and talent to the community, demonstrating ethics and professionalism while serving as a role model for others and valuing the input of others and collaborating to accomplished established goals for the betterment of the community and its residents."

"I am very grateful to the Department of Job and Family Services for this acknowledgement," said Judge Teodosio. "But in all honesty, it is a reflection of the work that so many people at the Court and in the community have done to make these programs so effective and I am also very grateful to them."



Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio (second from left) after receiving the "Making a Difference Award" with Social Services Advisory Board Chair Karen Talbot (left), County Executive Russ Pry and Urban League President Bennett L. Williams.

### **Hawes, Pope Named 2008 Employees of the Year**

As part of *Employee Recognition Week*, county officeholders selected staff members to receive High Point Awards signifying them as Employees of the Year. In 2008, Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio considered nominations submitted by Court staff and chose Jeff Pope and Lisa Hawes as the Juvenile Court's Employees of the Year.

Jeff Pope is a Youth Supervisor with the Court's Child Responsibility Project. He is known for his even-handed approach with the youth in his charge and for his professionalism with the individuals who provide the youth community service opportunities. As one community service provider noted, "Jeff strikes the perfect blend of fairness and firmness in the way he works with the kids. He always knows the right thing to say and when to say it."

In her introduction, Lisa was described as "easily the hardest working person" at the Court. As Judge Teodosio's Bailiff she coordinates the Judge's docket, she is responsible for overseeing the Court Bailiffs, she is liaison to the Women's Board. Lisa is always accessible to the many individuals involved in the Court process, from prosecutors, to attorneys, to citizens who have questions. She is courteous, friendly and is always willing to go the extra step.

Magistrate Thomas Freeman introduced the award winners at the May 28th ceremony. Judge Teodosio could not be there. As Magistrate Freeman noted in his introduction, Judge Teodosio pinpointed her absence to Lisa's "creative scheduling abilities."

Jeff Pope and Lisa Hawes join Patty Blasio and Todd Schaffler (2005), Bryan Bryce, Ursula Gould and Esther Thomas (2006) and Martha Jeffries and Jody Tolley (2007) as winners of the Court's High Point Awards.



Juvenile Court Employees of the Year Jeff Pope (L) and Lisa Hawes with Magistrate Thomas Freeman after May 28th High Point Award ceremonies in County Council Chambers.



### **Women's Board's Kohar Named Volunteer of the Year**

At the Volunteer Recognition Reception on April 28, 2008, Judge Teodosio revealed the honoree as the Court's Volunteer of the Year for 2007. Carol Kohar of the Women's Board, known affectionately as "The Party Lady," looked stunned as the Judge it began to dawn on her that she was the person the Judge was describing in her introduction. Ms. Kohar and other members of the Women's Board organized treat nights for youth in detention who were performing at positive levels. But Ms. Kohar took it a step further. She began to introduce educational elements into the treat nights; anything from teaching dinner etiquette, bringing in community leaders and athletes to speak, teaching youth how to complete job applications, making jewelry, fashioning no-sew blankets for Family Resource Center clients and running a spelling bee, just to name a few.

Such is her commitment to the Court, noted Judge Teodosio, that even when she was in a dentist's chair, she produced something positive for the Court: she convinced her dentist to donate toothbrushes and toothpaste to be used in the detention center.

"Carol Kohar brings energy, purpose, caring and creativity to her volunteerism," said Judge Teodosio. "She is the same as all of you here tonight. She performs her volunteerism not for reward or recognition, but for the good of the kids, the Court and the community."



Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio and Carol Kohar (r) after Ms. Kohar was named the Juvenile Court's 2008 Volunteer of the Year.

### **Lisa Hawes Wins Countywide Award**

When Lisa Hawes walked into Guy's Party Centre for Goodwill Industries' 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Employee of Distinction luncheon on September 3rd, she had no idea that an hour and a half later she'd be a focal point of attention. In fact, Ms. Hawes, a Bailiff at Summit County Juvenile Court, went to the banquet thinking that her boss, Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio, was going to be recognized, a ruse cooked up by her colleagues so not to ruin the surprise.

For the last seven years, Goodwill Industries has acknowledged the good work of employees in Portage, Stark and Summit Counties with its luncheon. The Summit County nominees represented a cross-section of public and private sector entities, from the media to health and social services to industry to education.

From the 40 Summit County nominees, a panel of judges selected five to be honored as Employees of Distinction. When Lisa's name was called, she stood up in stunned surprise before making her way to the dais.

"I couldn't believe it when they announced my name as one of the five winners," said Ms. Hawes. "I was amazed and thrilled that I was even nominated and to be chosen as one of the top five was totally unexpected."

Master of Ceremonies Tim Daugherty quoted Judge Teodosio in his introduction: "She is the kindest and most capable person I have ever met. Lisa keeps all of us on track and makes sure that every detail is covered. The attorneys who practice in the Court appreciate her courtesies, the clients her kindness and her co-workers her dedication. She is truly a shining star and one of the closest friends I have ever had."



Lisa Hawes (l) and Judge Teodosio pose at the Goodwill Industries' Employee of Distinction Award Luncheon.

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## **2008 Accomplishments Under the Leadership of Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio**

**Attorney Help Desk:** This service is designed to assist the public with specific areas of the juvenile justice process. The Help Desk is available every Wednesday from 1pm until 4pm. Local attorneys have agreed to staff the Help Desk. The fees to provide this service are generated through the Court's Special Projects fund. The attorneys offer assistance with completion of forms such as Grandparent Affidavits, Petitions for Change of Legal Custody, Preparations of Subpoenas and Precipes for Service of Process and do so at no charge to the public.

**Credit Card Payment:** For the first time, as a convenience to the public who came to the Court, MasterCard and Visa credit and debit cards could be used for payment of all court costs and fines, including fines imposed for traffic violations.

**Free HIV/STD Testing:** In an effort to promote public health, the Court entered into a cooperative effort with the Akron Health Department, Ohio Department of Health and Planned Parenthood to offer free HIV and STD testing. Certified Community AIDS Network testing personnel administered the testing which is free, anonymous and/or confidential. The service is open to the public and available to both adults and children.

**Plato Learning System:** This teaching element was implemented in the Detention Center in 2008. The Plato system allows a youth to learn different curriculums at his or her own pace. Akron Public Schools is also using this program to assure a continuum of the education. The Family Resource Center also provided access to the Plato system to participants of its Educational Enhancement Program.

**Re-entry Program:** The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) committed \$225,000 to this program that was introduced at the Court in 2008. The Re-entry Program is designed to help a youth and his or her family make an easier transition into the community, particularly in the area of job preparation, after a commitment in a Department of Youth Services facility.

**Responder Program:** Summit County was one of two counties in the state to receive \$40,500 in grant funds from the MacArthur Foundation to develop a pilot program at the Juvenile Court. The goal of the Responder Program is to provide schools with an additional tool to utilize when dealing with the issues presented in the classroom by children with mental health issues. The program can direct these children and their families to the appropriate mental health services in the community and hopefully reduce contact of mentally ill youth with the juvenile justice system.

**Staff Development/Training:** Staff Development Training: During 2008, Court staff completed 6,639 hours of staff development. Each month the Court conducted mandatory training for staff in the areas of improving communications with clients and Court personnel, reviewing Court policies, legal update for all staff and protecting the records of clients from identity theft. There were also nine specialized training programs offered, including such issues as substance abuse, gang activity, suicide prevention and improving communication with families. The Court also sponsored 24 Brown Bag presentations during the year. These Brown Bags gave Court staff the opportunity to learn about programs, services or organizations to assist their work with clients and were conducted during their lunch break. Additionally, the CASA Board of Summit County hired a trainer to conduct training sessions for CASA volunteers.

**Takin' It to the Streets:** This outreach program was created by the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Planning Committee to examine trends that indicated that there were too many minority youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Enlisting the help of three churches, a series of summer discussions were scheduled for youth, parents and community leaders, including Judge Teodosio, to engage in meaningful dialogue about a diversity of issues. The program was funded by the Ohio Department of Youth Services, which acknowledged the effectiveness of the program by awarding it a Certificate of Achievement. Also, the success of the program helped the Court seek and receive \$103,232 in additional Title II grant funds to further decrease disproportionate minority contact with the creation on an in-Court diversion program.



## **The Employees of the Summit County Juvenile Court\***

Robert Aaron Bruce Alexander Akaree Anderson Cheryl Anderson Mary Elizabeth Anderson Chariti Armstead Rebecca Armstrong Lori Augustus	Brian Fogle Darin Ford Lauren Fortnoff Tom Freeman Julianne Fuller Alan Futo  Tom Gaffney Susan Gatts Ursula Gould Davine Green Norma Green Keith Griggs Don Guthrie  Karen Haddad Aimee Harris Charece Harris Jody Hathaway Lisa Hawes Tom Henretta Jennifer Hergenroeder Katie Herman Jessica Heropulos Erica Herrin LaTonya Hill Kandy Hixson David Holmgren Erin Hookey David Horner Curtis Howard  Andre Jackson Perry James Genesis Jeffries Brandy Johnson Nate Johnson Tammy Johnson Brandon Jones Kenneth Jones Lavel Jones  Kristen Kaludy Lisa Karas Sabrina Kearns Allen Kelly Joseph Kernan Judi Keyes Maria Kostoff Michelle Kreidler Irene Kuckovic Rocky Kurchak  Shawn Lazarus Richard Lilly Barbara List Donald Lomax Leslie Lorenz Phil Lucco Keith Luhring  Melissa Madden	Joshua Magyarics Jim Martin Lavar Martin Stacey Mathieu Kristin Maxwell Tracy Mays Rob McCarty Olivia McClellan Nick McCoy Robert McFarren Denise McGuckin Shawn McNulty Mary Ann Mendlik David Molis Kandy Monroe Robert Moore Andrea Morton Lynda Mullins Patrick Munford Lora Mycoskie Keysha Myers-Murphy  Shanda Nagle Michelle Neely Steven Nettle Mary Nicholis  Jimmy Oliver Juwana Owens  Juston Palmer Laure Palmeri Linda Palmeri Jeanne Papoi Karen Parnell Joe Petrucelli Keith Philpot Jonathan Pooler Jeff Pope Kevin Prevo  Hema Ramachandran Christine Rees Leslie Rice Tammy Richardson Trumaine Riley Angela Robinson Rita Rochford Ralph Roebuck Susan Rollings Tarah Ross Sarah Roupe Amy Russell  Jennifer Samardak Jeri Sampson Rebecca Scalise Robert Scalise Todd Schaufler Cory Schweigert Scott Scislo Reginald Scott	Kathryn Sellers Cynthia Shama Lola Simmons Cheryl Simpson Justin Sims Robert Singletary Annie Skapin Latana Slayton Eric Small Raylene Smead Carie Smith Christopher Smith Kathy Smith Thomas Smith Mike Soyars Steve Stahl Sara Stenger Tammy Stiles Maureen Sullivan  Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio Adam Testa Cathy Richardson Thomas Esther Thomas Jody Tolley Michael Tramonte Mary Beth Tschantz Tazmin Turpin Triston Tyrrell Woody Tyrrell  Don Ursetti  Ed VandenBulke Katy Van Horn Joanne Vetter John Vuillemin  Rashara Walker Terry Walton Michael Ward Dr. Thomas Webb December West James Whited Tim Wilkes Kevin Williams Michelle Williams Jane Wilson Eddie Winstead Tiffany Worthey Quin Wychanko  Kimberly York  Joan Zito  * list includes part-time employees and those employees who worked a portion of 2008.
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