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**THE 2005 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**SUMMIT COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS**  
**JUVENILE DIVISION**  
**LINDA TUCCI TEODOSIO, JUDGE**



# **2005 Annual Report of the Summit County Juvenile Court**

William P. Kannel Juvenile Court Center  
650 Dan Street  
Akron OH 44310

***Linda Tucci Teodosio, Judge***



**Robert Bickett, Court Administrator**  
**David Horner, Assistant Court Administrator**

## **Magistrates**

Tavia Baxter  
Katherine Bertsch  
Bradford Christman  
Thomas Freeman  
Maria Kostoff  
Kristin Maxwell

Denise McGuckin  
Christine Rees  
Tammy Richardson  
Rita Rochford  
Edward Smolk  
John Vuillemin  
James Whited

### **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



**S**omerset Maugham once wrote, “It’s a funny thing about life; if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it.”

That is my wish for the Summit County Juvenile Court: to strive to be the very best we can be; to strive to offer the youth of our community who are in the system to view this not as punishment, but as an opportunity to seize a second chance and turn their life in a more positive direction. I want this Court to offer a child hope, to restore a victim’s trust, to provide counsel and caring to a troubled family.

I have been a Judge for seven years. I discarded the rose-colored glasses a long time ago. But while my perspective and approach is more measured, my desire to see this Court achieve greatness is immeasurable. And it can, one case at a time, one child at a time.

While my experience on the Juvenile Court bench has imbued me with patience, it has also instilled in me optimism that, together, we can turn lives around. There is no such thing as a disposable life. I firmly believe that there is something in each child that can be stirred, that can be reached, that can be taught. The task, obviously, is finding what provides that indelible spark inside of each child which provides the drive to create a meaningful, productive life.

In the pages of this annual report, you can see what the Court has tried to do to introduce our youth to different options that might help them after they leave here. We will spend the upcoming year searching for more incentives, more education, more options and more programs that allow our Court staff to work with our at-risk youth.

We owe it to the Summit County community to seek greatness from this Court. And we owe it to the children.

*Linda Tucci Teodosio*

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## Court Finance

Prepared by Robert Bickett, Court Administrator

The 2005 Summit County Juvenile Court budget, consisting of both county and state/federal funding, totaled **\$12,704,929.76**

### **County Funding**

Total County funding: \$8,922,700.00

DETENTION CENTER	29%
GENERAL OFFICE/JUDICIAL	33%
PROBATION/ADMINISTRATION	38%

### **State/Federal Grant Funding**

**FY2005 (7-1-04 TO 6-30-05)**

Total State/Federal Grant funding \$3,782,229.76

RECLAIM OHIO GRANT	99%
JUVENILE ACCOUNTABILITY	1%

### **State/Federal Funded Service Provider Contracts To Court** **Service/Provider** **Contract Amount**

#### **Day Treatment**

Akron YMCA Phoenix Day Suspension	105,250.00
East Akron Community House	250,000.00
Akron UMADAOP	100,000.00

#### **Electronic Monitoring**

Secured Monitoring	15,000.00
Oriana House, Inc.	25,000.00

#### **Educational Services**

Akron YMCA Phoenix School	65,000.00
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#### **Out of Home Placement**

Shelter Care Youth Assessment Shelter	137,750.00
Juvenile Court share of Summit County Family and Children First Council/Summit County Cluster for Youth Funding Agreement	100,000.00

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

Shelter Care Youth Assessment	98,550.00
Oriana House Juvenile Halfway House	925,200.00

#### **Crossroads Program**

Summit County Sheriff's Office	20,000.00
Greenleaf Family Center	40,844.00
Child Guidance & Family Solutions	70,000.00

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

Community Health Center	35,000.00
Akron Health Department	60,000.00

#### **Mentoring**

CYO and Community Services	43,373.00
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#### **Mental Health Counseling**

Child Guidance & Family Solutions	25,000.00
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#### **Competency Evaluations**

Blick Clinic	5,000.00
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#### **Youth Risk & Needs Assessment**

Ohio State University	45,636.00
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#### **Community Service/Restitution Program**

Funds to victims	55,000.00
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#### **Citizen's Review Board Coordinator**

48,566.00

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

400,000.00

Summit County CSB, Boys Village, Abraxis, Berea Children's Home  
Glen Mills Schools, Belfair, Parmadale, Homes for Kids

#### **Diversion Programming**

Distributed in varying amounts to fourteen Police Departments and Sheriff's Office	199,571.00
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## **Additional 2005 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 each year 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 2005, grant funding committed to the court for special programming totaled \$253,763\*. The programs assisted by this funding are:

**Firearms Safety Education, \$75,000:** The Firearms Education Officer works in partnership with law enforcement agencies throughout Summit County and speaks to middle school students concerning the proper way to react when confronted with situations involving a firearm. *The funding was provided by Federal Department of Justice and administered through the Ohio Office of criminal Justice Services.*

**Intensive Probation Supervision, \$43,082:** The Court's Probation Officers offer intense services and case management 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 DYS.*

**Permanency Planning & Adoption Program, \$94,000:** This program provides case management services for children in foster care as many youth are about to turn 18 years old and "age out" of the system. The program will design and implement a unique, needs-based permanency plan for each child, including assuring a secure adoptive home, preparation for independent living, education, housing and employment training. The case manager also serves as a Guardian ad Litem. *Funding is provided by a grant from the Summit County Department of Job and Family Services' Title XX.*

**Domestic Violence Case Management, \$5,000:** A Court employee performs intake and initial screening for domestic violence intervention. Court staff then tracks compliance with the treatment plan and prepares reports and recommendations for Court hearings. *Funding is provided by a grant from the Summit County Job and Family Services' Prevention, Retention and Contingency Program.*

**Domestic Violence Case Management, \$20,000:** The Court contracts with Greenleaf to provide case management and treatment services for children charged with domestic violence and/or domestic menacing. Treatment includes anger management counseling, family counseling, group support and victims' counseling. *Funding is provided by a grant from the Summit County Job and Family Services' Prevention, Retention and Contingency Program.*

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## Clerk's Office

Cathy Richardson Thomas, Chief Deputy Clerk

The Clerk's Office receives and processes all documents that are filed with the Court including pleadings and motions filed by attorneys and individuals as well as all orders, decisions and judgment entries issued by the Judge and Magistrates. The Clerk's Office is also responsible for collecting filing fees as well as all fines and costs that are assessed in delinquency, traffic, unruly and adult cases.

In September 2005 the Clerk's Office began assessing and collecting Indigent Application fees as a result of the passage of House Bill 66. As in past years, the Clerk's Office continues to implement various changes to continue to improve the efficiency of processing all filings and copy requests.

In 2005, a total of 10,387 cases were filed with the Juvenile Court. The breakdown by type is as follows:

	<u>Delinquency:</u>	<u>Traffic:</u>	<u>Dependent/ Unruly:</u>	<u>Adult:</u>	<u>Neglect&amp; Abuse*</u>
Cases Filed:	4,404	3,416	645	669	1,253
Dispositions:	5,804	3,044	570	800	1,210

**In 2005, the Clerk's office collected a total of \$424,479.72.** Of this amount, \$27,145.00 was received for the payment of fines and costs in delinquency, unruly or adult cases; \$161,149.00 was collected for traffic fines and costs; \$28,366.86 was collected for restitution; \$4,843.00 was collected for probation supervision fees; \$202,975.86 was collected for computer and legal research, special fees, public defender, reparations rotary fund, county and clerk fees and indigent application fees.

\* These numbers include custody and visitation

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## Information Technology

Todd Schauffler, Director

The Information Technology Department assists with automating processes through the use of technology systems within the Juvenile Court. A new case management system was deployed throughout the Court Center. This information system provides access to case information, scheduling, detention population management, probation caseload management and statistical data for all departments within the justice system. Ongoing projects include a new journal entry module, web access to case and scheduling information for attorneys representing juveniles and/or parents at Juvenile Court, and participation with OCJS (Office of Criminal Justice Services) to provide Juvenile Courts throughout the state with access to juvenile records via a secure network.



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## Detention Services

Bruce Alexander, Superintendent

The Detention Center of the Summit County Juvenile Court consists of seven main housing units plus two annex units. The total capacity of the center is 100 juveniles. In 2005 the Court utilized four main housing units and occasionally the annex units.

Detention staff members are responsible for the safety and security of the juveniles, staff and other persons and assist in the security of the facility. Staff members transport juveniles to court hearings, medical appointments, counseling appointments, diagnostic evaluations and other appointments. Through a cooperative agreement with Akron Public schools all juveniles held in detention attend school within the facility. In addition, detention staff provide daily programming in areas such as anger management, completing job applications, money management and numerous other areas. Physical recreation, non-denominational religious services and other types of awareness and community programs are also offered through collaboration with outside agencies.

### Statistical Information

- **2,779 juveniles** were brought to the Summit County Juvenile Detention facility in 2005.
- **-1,739 (62.6%) juveniles** were held in the detention facility (157 less than in 2004), 73% were males while 27% were females.
- **-1,040 (37.4%)** were released through the admissions process
- The average daily population of the facility in 2005 remained at 51.6, the same as 2004.
- The **average bed days** in detention for 2005 were 11.5, which is an increase of 1.3 days over 2004. (Average bed days reflect the number of days a youth held in detention spends in the detention center from the moment of arrival until departure). The primary reasons for the increase were improvement in admissions releases by utilization of the risk assessment device and the decision to hold juveniles bound over to the adult system in the facility until they reached age 18.
- **Total bed days** used in 2005 were 19,951.

Detention continued utilizing the Global Risk Assessment Device (GRAD) adopted by the Court in 2004. All youth brought to detention have this internet based risk assessment performed. The results of the GRAD assessment provide information to make better decisions on which youth is to be held in detention and which can safely be released. The GRAD also provides information to Court personnel on the programming needs of the juvenile.

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## Diversion Unit

Phil Lucco, Program Coordinator

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 2005, 231 juvenile were ordered into 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, were then turned over to the victim. It is also the responsibility of this unit to compute the hours and track them. **In 2005, youths participating in the Child Responsibility Project completed 12,258 work hours and earned \$69,081.55 which were paid to victims of crime.**

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 2005, 1,296 youth were assigned to community service in 23 Summit County communities, totaling 29,928 hours.**

In 2004, the Court also continued its Special Projects program, initiated in 2003. 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 to the items to those in need. **In 2005, 44 juveniles participated in the Food Project, 35 juveniles participated in the School Supply Project and 46 juveniles participated in the Toy Project.**

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

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## Employees of the Year



For the first time, the Court named two members of the staff as the Court's Employees of the Year.

At a ceremony in County Council Chambers, Judge Teodosio introduced **Patty Blasio** and **Todd Schauffler** as the Employees of the Year.

Patty is a 22 year member of the Court staff and has served in many clerical positions. She currently is the receptionist in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor lobby of the William P. Kannel Juvenile Court Center. Known in the Court as "Mom", Patty helps the Court Bailiffs and Magistrates coordinate their daily dockets. She is also a catalyst among Court staff, a friendly face to greet you in the morning, a concerned and caring person who will help a colleague through a difficult time or simply the person to go to for a recipe.

Todd began his employment with the Court in 2003. In charge of the Court's Information Technology, Todd oversaw the transition from the old building to the new complex and played a major role in "wiring" the new

buildings to make the Court almost completely computerized. He also oversaw the implementation of a voice-activated court-reporting device that recorded daily proceedings. Todd possesses a tremendous amount of knowledge, but he is also blessed with infinite patience which served him – and Court staff – very well during the conversion.

Congratulations to both Patty Blasio and Todd Schauffler.

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## Project: Growth

Part of Judge Teodosio's vision for the Court always involves introducing the youth in the juvenile justice system to alternative interests. One of her ideas in 2005 was, well, groundbreaking, literally and figuratively. When she discovered that Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Bing held a degree in Horticulture, she asked him to oversee the planting and nurturing of a garden on a vacant tract of land on the Court premises. The Women's Board provided the funding, Bing provided the supervision and volunteer youth from the Detention Center provided the labor. It turned out to be a labor of love. The youth took a real interest in what they were creating in the garden, which yielded a variety of vegetables which were served in the detention cafeteria or donated to food banks and pumpkins, which were donated to the CASA/GAL Program, who gave them to the kids in their program to decorate. It is the Judge's hope that what they learned can be something the youth can utilize once they leave detention. In all, it was a matter of growth.



*Kevin Bing, garden pumpkins*





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## Intake Department

Joe Petrucelli, Supervisor

The Intake Department is usually the first and, often, 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.

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 and parents who relate their experiences after losing a child because of a drunk driver. The Catholic Commission and 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.

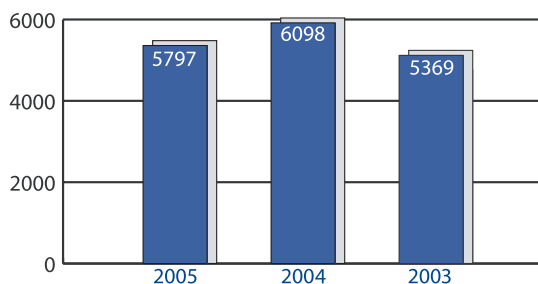
The **Truancy Task Force** continued its collaboration with local school districts, police departments and social service agencies to attack the truancy problem in our community. **Project THRIVE** worked with three school districts to provide direct assistance to families.

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. Offering professional and emotional support for the victim during the Court process providing peace of mind and reassurance for people whose lives have been impacted by criminal behavior.

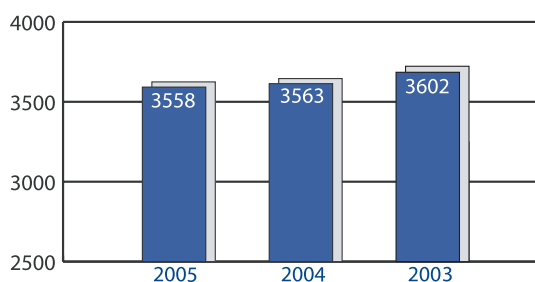
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## INTAKE NUMBERS

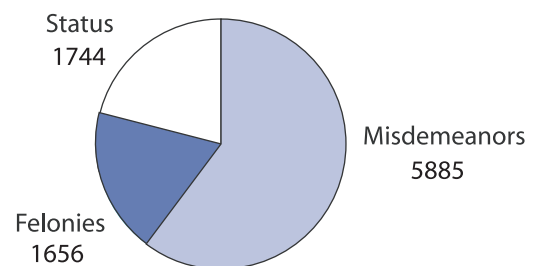
**Total Referrals**



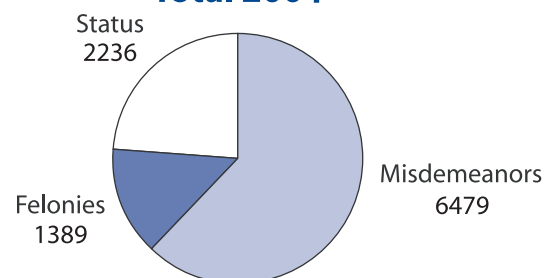
**Children Referred**



**Total 2005**



**Total 2004**



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## Probation Department

Curtis Howard, Chief Probation Officer

The Probation Department was responsible for the supervision and investigation of an average of 55 new cases each month in 2005. The department provided services for **1164 cases** in 2005, which included 659 new assignments and 505 cases that were carried over from the previous year. The number of cases was down approximately 60 cases from 2004.

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 2005 was approximately 32 case per Probation Officer, which is slightly higher than 2004. The Probation staff consists of 12 Probation Officers, 2 Intensive Probation Officers, a Probation Supervisor, an Administrative Assistant, and the Chief Probation Officer.

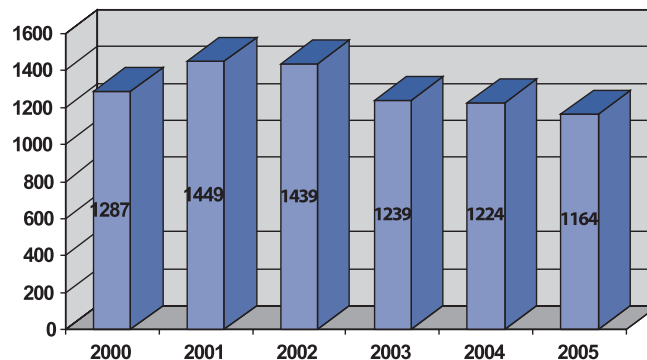
The Probation Department strives to meet the objective of holding offenders accountable, maintaining safety and security of the community and providing a means to attain practical rehabilitation. This is most successful by using the vast dispositional options on a continuum of at least restrictive to most restrictive options.

In 2005, the Probation Department assisted in the recovery of nearly **\$60,000.00 in restitution** that was paid directly to victims of crime. Probationers also worked over 6,000 hours of court-ordered community service.

Of the 118 youths that were committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services, 54 were committed from the Probation Department, which is approximately 45% of the commitments for Summit County. In 2005, 21 juveniles were bound over to the General Division of Common Pleas Court to be tried as adults. Of those 21, four were on probation at the time they were bound over. **Five hundred fifty- two (552) cases** were terminated from probation in 2005.

Summit County Juvenile Court and the Probation Department continue to maintain working relationships with community committees and agencies in an effort to enhance the development and security of the Summit County Community.

*Total Probation Cases in 2005*



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## Sexual Offender Probation Unit

Terry Walton, Felony Disposition Supervisor

The Sexual Offender Probation Unit is comprised of three full-time Probation Officers and the Felony Disposition Supervisor. This specialized probation unit averages 80 cases. These youth have been charged with or adjudicated delinquent of a sexually aggressive offense as described in the Ohio Revised Code. **In 2005, 69 incidents were referred** to the Juvenile Court, reflecting a **32% decrease in referrals from 2004**. The average term of probation for a sexual offender is 22 months.

Unique to this unit, the Probation Officers supervise their assigned youth from Intake through their term of treatment and/ or probation. Probation Officers collaborate with Child Guidance and Family Solutions, Summit Psychological Associates, Inc., and other private providers to facilitate a sexual offender treatment program. These programs provide group, individual and family counseling to help eliminate sexually aggressive behaviors. A Probation Officer from this unit also runs a group called "Wise Guys, Male Responsibility Curriculum". This curriculum was developed and distributed nationally by the Family Life Council and is designed for less serious offenders.

In 2005, the unit continued to update itself on the changes in Megan's Law (sex offender registration law) and DNA testing for all juveniles that have been convicted of a felony offense.

Also in 2005, this unit continued to sponsor quarterly, multi-county Probation Officers meetings. This collaboration between sex offender Probation Officers from counties helps to establish a best practices policy in supervising this population in the community. Probation Officers also sit on some important committees within the county as well as the state. They represent the Court on the Ohio Supreme Court Roundtable, Summit County Sex Offender Management Committee and the Summit-Portage Regional Advisory Group. These committees provide our Probation Officers with the opportunity to keep abreast of new strategies in managing sex offenders successfully in the community.

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## Crossroads Program

Dawn Jones, Program Administrator

In 2005, the Court's Crossroads Program emerged as a viable model for Drug Courts and Mental Health Courts in the manner the Court approached the detection and treatment of co-occurring disorders. The Crossroads Program has been recognized across the nation for its unique methods. An intensive probation program, the Court has been asked to send representatives to national conferences from coast-to-coast. Judge Teodosio was a presenter at conferences in Bethesda, MD and New York in 2005 and the interest continues to grow as more and more organizations want to hear of Judge Teodosio's vision for this program and its mission. Additionally, The Crossroads Program was named the Summit County Mental Health Association's 2005 Program of the Year and received the Friends of the Family Award from the Ohio Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. This award is given in recognition for all the program has done to improve the lives of youth and families in Ohio.

While acknowledgement of this kind is appreciated and encouraging, perhaps there is no better tangible evidence of the impact the Crossroads Program has had than the following letter that was written by a 2005 graduate of the program who granted permission to re-print it here:

*"Before entering the Crossroads Program in August 2004, I was troubled, to say the least. I was carrying with me a huge burden due to thousands of unresolved issues and suppressed emotions. My life was empty. It felt like something was always missing. And no matter how hard I tried to fill the hole in my life, there was still something more missing.*

*I tried many things to fill the emptiness: sleep, relationships, and drugs. I was desperate, desperate to feel the completeness everyone else seemed to feel. When everything else failed to work, and it always did, I turned to drugs. Definitely not the smartest move I've made.*

*Because of the drugs, mixed with the years of suppressed emotions, I lost it. The drugs intensified my emptiness and brought with it all the emotions raging at once. I tried to ignore it at first, but eventually the stupidity overtook my mind and I attempted the worst thing in the world. Because I couldn't understand my life, I decided, against my better judgment, that I shouldn't have one.*

*These are what I call my Dark Ages. I was so used to doing what I wanted when I wanted to do it. So, when I was arrested and put into detention, I was hit with a huge dose of reality. One time in detention and my mind was set. I knew I had to change.*

*After leaving detention, everything around me was different. I wasn't allowed to leave my house and talking to my friends: completely out of the question. At first, I absolutely hated the program, with a great emphasis on hated. A year? It seemed like an eternity. But after awhile, I realized it was for the better. After all, my old lifestyle was what I was trying to get away from. Otherwise I would simply end up in the same exact place again. During Phase I, my probation officer asked me to create a Friends List. I thought she was joking, I mean how much easier could it get? Then she told me the conditions of the list. They had to be people who were drug free and whom my parents approved of. It was at this point that I came to the realization, I had no real friends. I racked my brain for hours, still nobody came to mind. This is what caused me to take a deep look at my life and the way I was living it.*

*After a few months in the program, I started opening up to people and before I knew it, I had friends. Sober friends. Soon afterwards everything else started uphill as well. My attitude towards life and other people completely changed. I became considerate and compassionate. I accepted that everyone is going to have their own opinion. I accepted that it wasn't all about me.*

*School changed dramatically as well. I attended school on a daily basis and went to all of my classes. I started doing my work and turning it in on time, which brought my grades up. Everybody seemed to notice and for the first time in my life, I was proud. I had become a fully functional, civilized human being.*

*Although relapsing is normal in drug recovery, I never experienced it. I knew I couldn't risk it. I had come too far to go back to where I was before. It made no sense to go through all the hard work of getting this far just to throw it away for a lifetime of numbness.*

*My plans after leaving this program are to maintain my healthy lifestyle that I have put in place, go to work, school, and spend time with my family and friends. Just basically live my new life. My life that I'm proud of that's finally worth living.*

*My comment to all of those still in the program would be stick with it. Don't give up, although at times it seems it would be easier that way. Challenge yourself. It's hard. Hopefully no one told you otherwise. It's not supposed to be easy. You're forced to completely reshape your life. Definitely not easy, but ever so worth it."*

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## Psychology Services

Dr. Thomas Webb, Staff Psychologist

Psychology services support a variety of programs. The Court Psychologist was available 24/7 for crisis intervention with youth in the Detention Center and provided, upon Court referral, 292 clinical evaluations of Court-involved youth in 2005. During the year, the number of referrals for forensic Amenability evaluations has tripled. Psycho-educational assessments continue to be provided by Mr. Bendo, a consulting school psychologist. The Court's psychology section has been instrumental in helping design several new services that benefit juvenile offenders within the community.

Not only does there continue to be intensive involvement with the Court's Crossroads Program, a specialized docket for youth with co-occurring disorders, but also has provided routine consultation to the University of Akron and Child Guidance for their implementation of a home-based treatment program for such youth. In anticipation of a new residency program in child and adolescent psychiatry at Children's Hospital, the department has been meeting bi-weekly with community leaders to design a forensic training rotation at the Court.

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## CASA/GAL Department

Julie Wayman, Program Director

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.

In 2005, the CASA/GAL Department once again established a program record with **304** child advocates who provided a voice for **1,112** 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. **The program achieved its status as an accredited program with the National CASA Association through the Ohio CASA/GAL Association in 2005.**

Additionally, the CASA/GAL Toy Shop and the Court's Toy Project coordinated their efforts into one event, providing holiday gifts to over 400 children in care.

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## 2005 Accomplishments

- More national recognition has been received by the Court's Crossroads Program. The Crossroads Program was the subject of a national mental health seminar in Bethesda, MD where Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio was a featured presenter. Judge Teodosio was also invited to part of a national tele-conference where the methods employed by the Crossroads Program in its treatment of youth with co-occurring disorders were discussed at length. The Crossroads Program was also honored by the Summit County Mental Health Association as its "Program of the Year."
- The Court held its first Teen Court Hearings in February 2005. Thirty-two high school students representing high schools from across the county underwent training to volunteer for Teen Court. The volunteers assume the roles of Prosecutor, Defense Attorney, Bailiff and Jurors. They hear real cases that come before the Court. The first-time youthful offender has already admitted to a non-violent misdemeanor and the youth and his parents or guardians agree to have the disposition of his or her offense determined by the Teen Court jury after testimony is presented. The decision of the jury is binding and if the youth doesn't abide by the conditions of the disposition, he or she must come back to the Court to face stricter sanctions. If the conditions of the disposition are met, the youth's case is dismissed and his or her record is expunged.
- The Court's Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem Program received its certification. When Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio began her administration of the Summit County Juvenile Court, one of her first priorities was to enhance the manner in which the Court served children in need. The Court's Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem (CASA/GAL) Program provides that service daily. At the Judge's encouragement, the CASA/GAL Program set about the task of seeking certification. That was nearly three years ago. After a rigorous assessment procedure, the Court recently learned that its CASA/GAL Program has become one of the few programs of its kind in Ohio to be certified. As a certified program, CASA/GAL now has the option to seek a greater variety of grant monies and resources. But more than anything, the certification provides indisputable evidence that the Summit County CASA/GAL Program strives to offer the highest standards to assure that the best interests of the child are always sought.
- The Court's first Firearm Education Program was implemented. This program is designed to educate middle school students about the dangers of guns of all kinds. Former Munroe Falls Police Chief Steve Stahl has been brought on as the Court's Firearms Education Officer. He visits middle schools throughout the county explaining what students should do if confronted with a situation involving a firearm. The Court has also initiated a Gun Safety Info Line.
- With assistance from the Women's Board, the Court was able to introduce two new projects to the youth in Detention in order to help them once they leave. In a project coordinated through the Court's Americorps Program, staff members donated ties and a grant secured by the Women's Board from the North Akron Chamber of Commerce allowed the Court to purchase dress shirts. Detention staff taught the youth how to tie a knot and the tie and the shirt they were given could be worn to a job interview. Also, a garden was created and the vegetables grown there by detainees were used for food in Detention or donated to local food banks.

***None of this could have been accomplished without the professionalism and dedication displayed by the individuals listed on the following page: the staff members of the Summit County Juvenile Court.***



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## **Summit County Juvenile Court Employees**

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Brock Arrington  
Laure Asbury  
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John Wilson  
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Quin Wychanko

Marie Zold

*\* list includes part-time employees, a paid intern and those employees who worked a portion of 2005 at the Court before leaving.*

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