

Multi-County Juvenile Attention System

Of Carroll, Columbiana, Stark, Tuscarawas, and Wayne Counties




Working together
“to make a difference”

1970 - 2015

This publication is dedicated to all the people past, present and future who have and will work unselfishly to “make a difference” in the lives of the children in our communities, assist them and their families in healing and in turn create a better world for all of us.

Thank you for your dedication and service.

Know that you DO “make a difference.”



*“Don’t turn your face away.
Once you’ve seen, you can no longer act like you don’t know.
Open your eyes to the truth. It’s all around you.
Don’t deny what the eyes to your soul have revealed to you.*

*Now that you know, you cannot feign ignorance.
Now that you’re aware of the problem, you cannot pretend you don’t care.
To be concerned is to be human.
To act is to care.”*

— Vashti Quiroz-Vega

From Judge John Milligan

Forty-five years after an embryonic idea was planted into the minds of government officials in six counties, the Multi-County Juvenile Attention System has survived and counties continue to minister to its founding mission. The Multi-County Juvenile Attention System was born of a unified desire of county governments to provide more hopeful facilities and services for youth in trouble, as well as the specified diverse youth services needs of the counties.

In 1970, most of the counties were in desperate need of basic detention facilities for youth coming before the juvenile courts. In most of the counties, children were being held illegally in county jails. In other counties there was a detention option, but the need for variable treatment facilities was largely unmet at the local levels. Too many were being committed to far-away state facilities.

So, the counties of Carroll, Columbiana, Holmes, Stark, Tuscarawas and Wayne came together to do in a cooperative venture what none could do alone. New laws were required to allow the creation of a Joint Board of County Commissioners and a Board of Trustees, representative of each county.

An integral component of the plan was the need to balance varying degrees of security with the imperative need of education. Some youth could prosper at school, but were out of control in the home and neighborhood. Others, although manageable at home, were habitually truant or out of control at school. Facilities were contemplated and built that provided different degrees of security, but all designed to guarantee that youth attended school. Another compelling concept was that youth who had to be removed from their homes were better cared for in facilities closer to home than those offered by the State of Ohio.

It is a tribute to the commitment of the County Commissioners of each county, the Judges and successor Judges, the staff, and the volunteers who serve as Trustees and other committees, that the current five-county cooperative enterprise is still the largest multi-county juvenile facility in the United States. Long may it live and prosper.

Honorable J. R. Milligan

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*Above all we need,
particularly as
children, the
reassuring presence of
a visible community,
an intimate group that
enfolds us with
understanding and
love, and that becomes
an object of our
spontaneous loyalty,
as a criterion and
point of reference
for the rest of the
human race.*

— Lewis Mumford



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Stark County	The Honorable Judge Jim James
	The Honorable Judge Rose Marie A. Hall
	The Honorable Judge Michael L. Howard
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Wayne County	The Honorable Judge Latecia E. Wiles

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From Sylvia Argento

Chair, Board of Trustees

This year, Multi-County is celebrating its 45th anniversary. As we look back over the past 45 years, I thought about what it is that we are really celebrating.

First and foremost, we celebrate the “vision” that the founding leaders had to create a collaborative system of holistic care for our youth. Their concept of multiple counties coming together for the greater good was, and for the most part still is today, an innovative and unique model. They strived to put into place the best education, the best facilities and the best treatment modalities to meet the various needs of the youth, while keeping them close to home. So today, we celebrate them.

We celebrate the countless juvenile court judges, county commissioners and members of the Board of Trustees who have continued the legacy of the initial developers of the system. They’ve worked together to manage the challenges of overseeing a system that is constantly changing; to develop policies and practices that meet with current standards; to bring their own county’s ideals and situations to the table and tirelessly work to effectively interconnect them with the system as a whole; to be fiscally responsible in managing the day to day operations all the while keeping at the forefront the mission of those leaders who once sat in their chairs.

We celebrate the dedication and conviction of the staff of Multi-County. From those who work hands-on with the youth that we serve, to those in positions of management and leadership and ultimately to the Superintendent of the system. They are truly the ones who, day in and day out, experience the challenges of and the opportunities for making a difference in the lives of these young people and to model for them how to become responsible and productive adults.

Finally, and most importantly we celebrate the countless youth who have benefited from the services and treatment that Multi-County has offered over the years. To those young people who were struggling with whatever life issues brought them to the system. To those who may have experienced for the first time a caring adult, who could show them what healthy trusting relationships look like in a world outside of their own. And who may have had even a tiny seed planted that at some point in their lives took hold and made all the difference, however great or small.

But for those youth, Multi-County would not exist. It is for those youth, that we must persevere.



Sylvia Argento
Chair,
Board of Trustees

Finally, and most importantly, we celebrate the countless youth who have benefited from the services and treatment that Multi-County has offered over the years.

From Richard Regula

Chair, Joint Board of County Commissioners



Richard Regula
*Chairman,
Joint Board
of County Commissioners*

Let us look back at the history of a successful regional system that was years ahead of its time. Judges and Commissioners from diverse Counties came together to form a true regional juvenile criminal justice system: a “Shotgun Marriage” as Judge John Milligan from Stark County described it. It took action from the Legislature to allow Counties to come together to form the Multi County Juvenile Attention System (MCJAS) in 1972. By combining resources, facilities, and Courts, a true intergovernmental system was formed. Currently, Local Government Efficiency Programs are being promoted by the State of Ohio to promote efficiency and collaboration among local Governments. MCJAS was 45 years ahead of its time. By providing quality, cost efficient care for our youth and families, MCJAS is a leader in the State. Thanks to all the Judges, Commissioners and Trustees who have kept the system working in a cost efficient manner for 45 years. Let’s look forward to the next 45 years of “Marriage”! To the credit and vision of the leaders in 1970, today we have a system of which the taxpayers of Carroll, Columbiana, Stark, Tuscarawas and Wayne can be very proud. To learn more of our history go to our website www.mcjas.org and read the story “Judges and Commissioners: A Shotgun Marriage” by Judge John R. Milligan. Keep up the good work on behalf of the youth and families of our counties.

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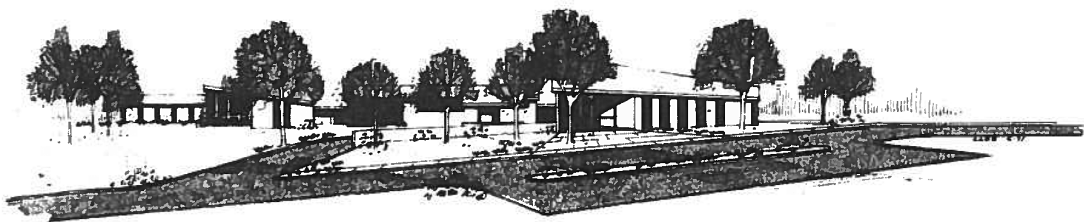
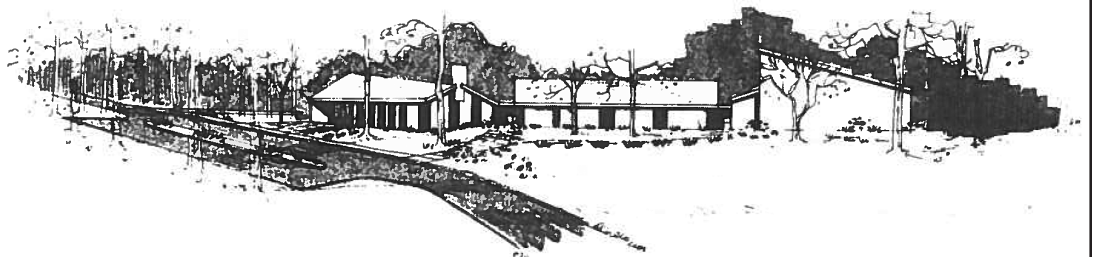
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CENTRAL JUVENILE ATTENTION CENTER



**marr
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Architects, inc.

1485 lexington ave., mansfield, ohio 44907
138 ray ave., n.w., new philadelphia, ohio 44663

project/ multi-county
juvenile treatment
facilities
location/ northeast, ohio

Who is Multi-County Juvenile Attention System?

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Multi-County Juvenile Attention System is to provide innovative and quality services to the unruly, delinquent, dependent, neglected and abused children referred by Juvenile and Family Court Judges so they can return to their homes and families to earn, live and serve successfully in their communities.

The Multi-County Juvenile Attention System (MCJAS) is an innovative regional Juvenile Justice Organization that operates four Attention Center, two group homes, a Residential Treatment Center and Community Corrections Facility which will be explained later. Multi-County's purpose is to treat juvenile offenders and their families in a community setting, in such a manner, as to reduce the probability of the youth re-entering the criminal justice system. Basic to the philosophy of Multi-County is the idea that every young person is an individual who is unique and worthy of respect.

MCJAS was formed under Ohio Revised Code 2151.34. A Joint Board Commissioners and Board of Trustees is charged with the responsibility of designing, funding and implementing coordinated and accountable services for delinquent, unruly, dependent, neglected and abused children referred by juvenile or family court judges.

MCJAS strives to be a leader and innovator in the field of Juvenile Justice. The System constantly looks to develop more effective ways to address the problems of juvenile crime and violence and works diligently to protect members of the community.

MCJAS supports and participates in the development of comprehensive community based systems of care for children and families. The System is committed to providing high quality services which focuses on individual children and families and address the problem of juvenile delinquency. Safe streets and non violent neighborhoods are essential in order to make a positive difference in the lives of our children and their families.

The Attention Center's primary goal is to carry out the mandates as set forth by the Ohio Revised Code which is to provide safe, secure, humane temporary custody of youth held by the Juvenile Courts. Youth are held for a short time pending a hearing, possibly longer if serving a sentence by a court or while arrangements are being made for placement elsewhere. The four attention centers are operated the same to maintain consistency throughout the system and so youth understand the expectations of staff in each center. At times youth are sent from one center to another for safety and security reasons and this consistency makes this transition easier for youth. The focus of the attention centers is learning responsibility for individual behavior. We at MCJAS use the term "attention" center because we don't just detain youth while they are with us. Instead we give them positive attention they possibly lack in their lives in an effort to help them make better choices in the future.

The group homes provide residential care and treatment in an open setting for youth able to function in an open or unlocked setting. Programming emphasizes on the skills needed to return to either the family or independent adult living. Youth attend public schools and are encouraged to get jobs outside the homes. Life skills are emphasized as well as problem solving and independent skills.

The Residential Treatment Center offers live-in care for youth lacking sufficient internal controls for an open setting or who are unable to function within the public schools. In addition to group and family counseling, this setting provides a specialized school focusing on youth with learning or behavioral problems and specialized programming.

The Community Corrections Facility (CCF) receives funding through the Ohio Department of Youth Services and works in conjunction with RECLAIM dollars to off set overcrowding in ODYS and keep youth in their own communities. The CCF takes non-violent offenders and focuses its services on youth who are moderate to high on delinquency scales. The program uses a Behavioral Management System that rewards youth for positive behavior.

While each facility is slightly different, each is designed to help kids understand the consequences of their choices and make better choices in the future. Family involvement is also encouraged.

The array of services offered through these facilities and programs provide appropriate placement approaches. MCJAS continues to be a leader in the Juvenile Justice Field. We are continually evaluating our program and seeking better ways to address the needs of the youth we serve.



It is important for people to know that no matter what lies in their past, they can overcome the dark side and press on to a brighter world.

— Dave Pelzer

