



Keeping Kids Safe & Families Stable

2021 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Released April 2022



Franklin County
**Children
Services**

Protecting Children by Strengthening Families



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

OUR MISSION:
**Safety, Permanency
and Well-being for
Every Child**

Through collaboration with families and their communities, we advocate for the safety, permanency and well-being of each child we serve in a manner that honors family and culture.



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Keeping Kids Safe & Families Stable

As a child protection agency, our mission at Franklin County Children Services is to keep children safe and families stable. We know that building a safe, stable, and nurturing environment for parents and children is essential to reaching their full potential. We also know that winning the fight against child abuse and neglect involves building strong relationships with our community. Although there are many challenges, the dedicated staff at FCCS works to ensure that keeping kids safe and families stable is our number one priority.

Community Assistance and Dedication

The community's assistance is a vital part of achieving positive outcomes for children and families in a public child protection agency. Communities that display a meaningful response assist our organization in engaging, protecting, and supporting our families. Mandated reporters, volunteers, adoptive families, kinship caregivers, foster parents, mentors, judges, elected officials, and political leaders assist in creating a stable and connected environment. Therefore, community members possess resources that connect children to a stable environment and are stakeholders for improving the child welfare system. Engaging the community as a resource improves outcomes for children and families; it allows them to remain safely in their community while receiving the support and services they need for stability. We owe the community our best, and in turn, we ask the community for its assistance and dedication to children and families.

Moving Forward

Throughout the past two and a half years, we have experienced many challenges that made us create new methods to engage with our community, children, and families. As we move forward, effectively engaging our community involves implementing programs that provide safety and well-being for our most vulnerable population. We work to build a child welfare system focused on the support and active engagement of the community and build a network that creates a brighter future for our children and families. We must continue to find effective methods and programs that sharpen our cultural lenses and establish an equitable system that reflects the needs of ALL families and children we serve. With community assistance and dedication, Franklin County Children Services continues our focus on *Keeping Kids Safe & Families Stable*.

Chip Spinning
Executive Director

2021 Highlights: A look at some of the year's brightest moments at Franklin County Children Services



Children's Day at COSI



African American Male Wellness Walk

Associate Director of Organizational Health Daryle Cobb and Malaika mentor Lashana Crone represent FCCS at the annual African American Male Wellness Walk



Caseworker Rae Damron

FCCS East Region caseworker Rae Damron was named "Outstanding Caseworker of the Year" by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio



2021 FCCS Mentors of the Year



College-Bound mentor Mike Paesson and mentee Chris



Friendship mentor Mike Finck and mentee Kenneth



Friendship mentor Rachel Brooks and mentee Addison



Simba mentor Fredwood Lockhart with former mentee Mark



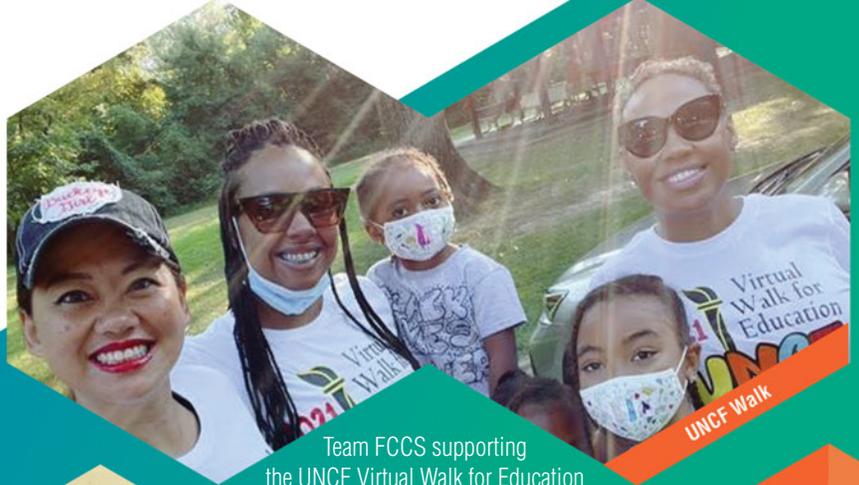
Malaika mentor Shauntiel Qualls and mentee Jai Lynn



Friendship mentor Ming Yi and mentee Kiersten



Family Achievement Award
Honorees Bridget Herron
and Family



Team FCCS supporting
the UNCF Virtual Walk for Education

UNCF Walk



Holiday Wish

FCCS's Frieda
McKarn and
the Proprietors
motorcycle club
at Holiday Wish's
annual Bikers
Challenge toy drive



2021 FCCS Community
Advocates of the Year Teri Polzin
and Lynn Johnson



FCCS's annual Black Girl
Magic Toy Drive



Jennifer Montgomery with three of her daughters

Kinship Care: A Safe Space for Children in Need

If you ask Jennifer Montgomery, the best part of being a kinship care provider is the limitless love. Every day is full of joyful moments with her daughters. “When they get off the school bus and they’re all ‘Mommy!, Mommy!’,” she says, of one of her favorite daily rituals. Montgomery, who has always loved kids and wanted a large family, is busy raising siblings Piper, 7, Aaliah, 6 and Lydia, 1 in addition to her biological children, daughter Kadence, 12 and a newborn baby boy, Kingston.

Kinship families like Montgomery’s are often grandparents, aunts, uncles or caring individuals outside of a family who provide children with a stable, loving home when their parents are unable to care for them. On either a temporary or permanent basis, kinship caregivers offer much needed consistency and support during a challenging time in a child’s life. By placing a child in a more familiar environment, kinship care creates a critical sense of belonging and allows a child to maintain vital connections to culture and community.

In 2018, Montgomery heard about Piper and Aaliah from a family friend. She welcomed the sisters into her home without hesitation when their parents couldn’t care for them and they needed a safe place to stay. “I knew there was absolutely nowhere else for them to go,” Montgomery says, adding that the process all happened really fast. “The day they met me is the day they moved in.” Their baby sister Lydia came soon after.

While the first year was a struggle and she almost lost her house, “now we’re great,” Montgomery says. “I figured it all out.” Consistency and a predictable schedule have been her secret to successfully raising four daughters. “We have a great structure and routine,” Montgomery says. The girls are thoroughly thriving under her care: Piper is a “little rule follower,” Aaliah is outgoing and often ornery, and Lydia is a peaceful baby “who will eat any food you put in front of her,” according to Montgomery. Her oldest daughter Kadence “loves being a big sister” to her younger siblings.

To learn more about how kinship care helps children in times of crisis, visit childrenservices.franklincountyohio.gov/programs/kinship.cfm

Educational Advocacy for FCCS Youth

Equal access to education is a fundamental right for all children. But sadly this right isn't always within reach for youth in foster care, who often face substantial barriers that impact their educational opportunities. This inequity is why Franklin County Children Services has been amplifying efforts to advocate for youth in school with the recent formation of its first-ever **Education Strategy Team**. It's about giving youth in the child welfare system—who have often survived tremendous adversity—the unique supports they need to succeed in school, according to Dr. Jessica Foster, who leads the Education Strategy Team in her role as associate director of FCCS's Organizational Health Department. "The impact of experiencing trauma of any sort, even if it was years in the past, can affect students' ability to do well in school," Foster says. "Additionally children in care can face bias and discrimination. Providing educational advocacy can help ensure that kids in care are treated fairly and equitably."

According to the National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care, youth in the child welfare system are twice as likely to be absent from school as their peers and are much more likely to be suspended or expelled. Additionally, only 65% of youth in foster care graduate from high school by the age of 21.

The Education Strategy Team aims to improve these outcomes by strengthening school services and support; bolstering internal and external education communication; and sharing the latest research and data.

A central part of the Education Strategy Team's mission is the enforcement of the 2016 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a federal law that aims to minimize unnecessary school transitions. For children in foster care who often move from home to home, switching schools unnecessarily can be profoundly disruptive, according to Joy Medlock, the Education Strategy Team's educational support coordinator. "For children in care, it's a sad fact that they're highly mobile," Medlock says. "A huge part of my job is making sure children remain in their school district if it's in their best interest, regardless of transportation challenges. It's almost always better for the child to have that stability. It may be the only stability that they have."



FCCS Volunteers: Mentors Matter More Than Ever

For Adam Foxx, being a mentor is all about sharing positive energy and purpose. These are the key components that Foxx brings to Franklin County Children Services' Simba program, which matches African-American boys with African-American men in one-on-one relationships. For more than three decades, the dedicated men of Simba, which means "young lion" in Swahili, have helped their mentees build confidence and self-esteem, achieve academic excellence, set career goals and create plans for the future.

Foxx, a practice transformation coach for a healthcare company, first heard about Simba after meeting another mentor while on jury duty. He is now not only an enthusiastic mentor for the program but a member of its advisory committee. Widely admired, Foxx is "known for his commitment and engagement," according to Daryle Cobb, Associate Director of FCCS's Organizational Health department, which oversees the Simba program.

Foxx is currently matched to high school sophomore Charles, his third mentee. While they've only known each other a short time, these two have hit the ground running, with Foxx helping Charles with his goals of playing football

and possibly attending trade school after graduation. "We've created vision boards and done some process mapping for good school habits," Foxx says. "[Charles] wants to be a better student."

Foxx's goal as a mentor is to be a dedicated, dependable role model that Charles can emulate. "I want him to see me being on time, keeping my word and being consistent," he says. Foxx knows the transformational power he has as a mentor and sees his involvement with Simba as a "life changing opportunity."

"If you have the time, it's valuable to give back to our next generation of young men," Foxx says. "It's not easy, but it is fulfilling and rewarding." This seasoned mentor, however, cautions those who expect easy or immediate returns. "You can't swoop in and save the day," says Foxx. "You have to put in the work to build a relationship. It's not instantaneous or for the faint of heart, but I love every day of it."

Want to make a difference in a child's life? To learn more about Simba and FCCS's other mentoring opportunities, call 614-275-2690 or visit [franklincountyohio.gov/programs/volunteers-and-mentors.cfm](https://www.franklincountyohio.gov/programs/volunteers-and-mentors.cfm)



**FCCS Simba Mentor
Adam Foxx**



Jaymi Brown



Amy Emerson



Lydia Jones

FCCS Caseworkers: Changing Lives Every Day

Child welfare professionals work tirelessly and selflessly to ensure the safety and stability of our community's children and families. Here's a look at how three of Franklin County Children Services' most dedicated caseworkers are changing lives every day.

When East Region caseworker **Jaymi Brown** first meets a family, it's all about building trust so they know she is there to help. Allowing families to communicate their concerns and needs is a priority, says Brown, who has more than two decades of experience in child welfare. "I always ask: 'What's something you think can be done to help your family?,'" she says. Being kind and supportive is also crucial, she adds, especially when a parent might feel scared or stressed about their involvement with Franklin County Children Services. With families in crisis facing heightened hardships due to the pandemic, it has not been an easy time to be in the child welfare field, Brown says. But she knows how important her job is: Brown is often a family's main link to necessary referrals and community resources such as food, housing and employment assistance. Right now, "families are happier to see us, whether virtually or in person," she says.

The best. These words have been used again and again to describe longtime adoptions caseworker **Amy Emerson**. Emerson recently provided post-adoption assistance to a family in crisis, whose beloved adoptive daughter began to

exhibit complex and problematic attachment issues. The frustrated parents were desperate for help and starting to feel hopeless about their situation. When Emerson was assigned to their case, that was "the best thing that could have ever happened to our family," the adoptive mother says. "She listened, she cared and she treated us so kindly. Amy went above and beyond to help at one of the most challenging times of our lives." Thanks to Emerson, not only is this family thriving, they overcame a seemingly insurmountable situation.

A seasoned intake caseworker, **Lydia Jones** mentors newer caseworkers, imparting wisdom from almost a decade in the social services field. For Jones, building a successful rapport with families is about authenticity and respect. "In this line of work you really need to bring your human self because people pick up real quick when you're not genuine," she says. Jones is a careful listener and knows that there's always a deeper story. "I am just getting a little tiny piece of something that happened," she says. Mindful about putting families at ease in initial interactions, Jones is careful to acknowledge the inherent awkwardness of her job. She will often say something like "I can only imagine how crazy this is, that a stranger is showing up at your house, asking you questions about your parenting. I haven't missed that and I really thank you for talking with me."

2021 Report of Services

In 2021, Franklin County Children Services provided help for **29,448** children and their families via direct services from the agency's professional staff and through purchased services from provider agencies.



Prevention

Children Services believes that its mission to protect children by strengthening families can best be carried out by offering a variety of support services to families at every stage of a case. Prevention services are designed to provide help to families and children to prevent case openings, to prevent out-of-home placement of children, to prevent further maltreatment of children, and to prevent the recidivism of children who have returned home following placement.

Services are aligned with the Children Services mission and with meeting federal goals in three areas: permanency, well-being and safety.

Permanency

Children Services is committed to assuring a safe, permanent home for every child who cannot remain with or return to family.

In 2021:

- **155** adoptions were legalized
- Through FCCS's youth transition services department, **281** older youth under agency care were referred to resources focused on achieving independence and self-sufficiency
- **32** youth headed off to college or other higher-learning opportunities while **142** youth emancipated out of the child welfare system

Well-being

Through our Volunteer Department, Children Services provides special opportunities and services to youth in order to enhance their well-being.

In 2021:

- **4,644** children received gifts through the Holiday Wish program provided by **1,335** individuals and **215** groups
- FCCS's Volunteer Department has hundreds of dedicated mentors matched with agency youth via our longstanding Friendship, Malaika, Simba and College-Bound mentoring programs. We have a committed team of Crisis Center volunteers at our intake, assessment and investigations office, ready to help and comfort children coming into the center by creating a safe and caring environment.
- Length and strength of relationships are critical to the success of our one-on-one mentoring partnerships and we strive to cultivate both. As our volunteer program increasingly focuses on matching higher risk youth, ensuring continuous engagement in supportive and dedicated mentoring relationships is key in promoting positive lifelong outcomes.
- FCCS mentors are a nurturing, stabilizing influence in the lives of our youth. In a 2021 survey, **100%** of responding mentees reported that they felt that their mentor cared about them, that they tried to follow their mentor's advice, and **96%** said that they trusted their mentor.

24-hour Child Abuse Hotline:
614-229-7000

General Information:
614-229-7100

Adoption:
614-341-6060

Kinship:
614-341-6161

Volunteers & Mentors:
614-275-2690

Public Information Office:
614-275-2523

Foster Home Recruitment:
614-275-2711



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

Safety

Children Services intake and investigations staff provides protective services by investigating referrals of children who are alleged to be abused, neglected or dependent. These services are provided 24 hours a day. FCCS also accepts referrals from the Franklin County Juvenile Court on youth who are unruly or delinquent.

When investigations indicate a need for ongoing services, a case is opened and sent to one of the agency's two regional offices or two managed care partner agencies. Children Services provides case management, protective and supportive services, as well as purchased services from community agencies within a case plan agreed to by the family and Children Services casework staff.

In 2021, there were:

- **28,979** intake referrals received
- **13,430** referrals screened in for investigation/assessment
- Ongoing services for **4,022** cases
- **9,592** children and **12,691** adults served as part of the agency's active ongoing caseload
- Family services for **4,275** children through managed care partnerships

Every effort is made by Children Services to keep children with their families whenever safely possible. When out-of-home placement is necessary, the agency's goal is to place children in the least restrictive environment, to provide opportunities for and to facilitate regular visitation, and to reunite families as soon as this can be safely accomplished.

In 2021, Franklin County Children Services had:

- **3,379** children in agency custody
- **2,425** children in paid care
- **1,703** children placed in purchased foster care
- **501** children placed in group or institutional care
- **1,518** children placed with relatives or in other kinship arrangement



FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

2021 Income Statistics

Operating Fund Balance as of January 1, 2021 **\$131,034,970**

Income **(Cash Basis):**

Local & Miscellaneous Funds **\$140,262,723**

Property Taxes	\$137,189,168
Interfund Revenue	2,352,515
Board & Care from Parents	269,535
Miscellaneous	451,506

Federal Funds **\$61,135,733**

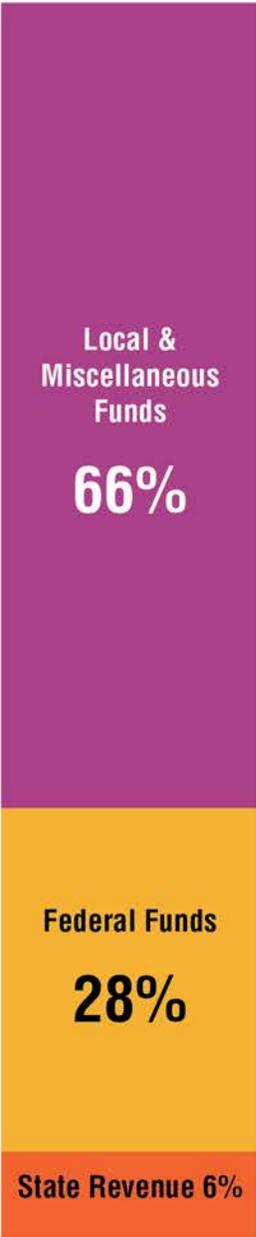
Title IV-E Placement (Administration)	\$19,266,431
Title IV-E ProtectOHIO Waiver	13,940,409
Title IV-E Administration	16,992,720
Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, VA Benefits	897,311
Title IV-B - ESSA (Emergency Services Supplemental Assistance)	957,513
CHAFFEE Independent Living Program	3,483,930
Miscellaneous	5,597,419

State Revenue **\$12,230,852**

Regional Training	\$860,905
Child Protective & Feisel Allocation	7,761,853
Miscellaneous	3,608,094

Total 2021 Income **\$213,629,308**

Beginning Balance plus 2021 Income **\$344,664,278**



FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

2021 Expense Statistics

Operating Expenditures

(Cash Basis):

Protection Program	\$116,612,100
Intake & Investigations	\$35,005,477
Casework Protective Services	37,968,087
Care Partnerships	36,784,621
Family Support Services	6,853,916
Placement Program	\$56,515,731
Family Care Services	\$11,003,707
Foster Home Care	26,145,865
Group Home Care	6,222,663
Kinship Care	3,126,292
Institutional Care	10,017,204
Permanency Program	\$15,869,272
Adoption Services	\$9,152,681
Child Enrichment Services	4,162,405
Emancipation Services	2,554,186
Total 2021 Operating Expenditures	\$188,997,103
Operating Fund Balance as of December 31, 2021	\$155,667,175
Ending Balance plus 2021 Expenses	\$344,664,278

Protection

62%

Placement

30%

Permanency 8%



FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

2021 Purchased Social Services

A Loving Heart Youth Services	\$57,140	Indiana Developmental Training Center	\$519,963
A New Leaf Inc.	\$1,464,603	Individual Couple & Family Therapy	\$11,050
Ability BB LLC	\$2,532	Jasper Mountain	\$174,524
Ability Matters	\$46,690	Jaystarr Homes 2	\$8,820
Action For Children	\$33,637	Jewish Family Services	\$51,800
ADAMH	\$103,245	Journey Home Foster Care	\$71,812
Adelphoi Village Inc.	\$46,758	Julia Paige Family Center	\$9,557
Adoption Advocacy Inc.	\$12,500	Katie Phillips LLC	\$26,250
Adriel School Inc.	\$526,246	Keystone Richland Center	\$132,842
Advanced Recovery Services	\$4,410	Kids Count Too	\$159,280
Against All Odds	\$119,634	Krown Solutions	\$94,350
Agape For Youth Inc.	\$39,525	Lakeland Hospital Acquisition	\$60,325
All That (Teens Hopeful About Tomorrow)	\$12,500	Legacy Residential Homes Inc.	\$237,985
Applewhite Adoptions	\$6,000	LHS Family & Youth Services	\$624,229
Applewood Centers	\$57,683	LifeStart	\$387,255
Ascensions Community Services Inc.	\$2,079	Life's Right Direction Inc.	\$50,778
Back To Basics For Boys	\$200,000	Marie's House of Hope	\$145,089
Bair Foundation	\$1,537,119	Maryhaven, Inc.	\$6,769
Bellefaire JCB	\$56,699	MBH of Elgin	\$68,359
Bethany Christian Services of Maryland	\$1,000	National Youth Advocate Program	\$7,277,022
BHC Belmont Pines Hospital	\$485,883	Nationwide Children's Hospital Dental Clinic	\$267,091
BHC Fox Run Hospital	\$710,235	Necco LLC	\$233,110
Big Brothers Big Sisters Association	\$128,975	Netcare Corporation	\$123,098
Boundless Health Inc.	\$751,693	New Beginnings Group Home	\$18,820
Buckeye Ranch	\$5,046,014	New Life Group Homes	\$783,478
Caregivers Helper, Inc.	\$195,532	Oasis Therapeutic Foster Care	\$247,935
Caring For Kids, Inc.	\$391,360	Oceans Behavioral Hospital of Abilene	\$11,900
Carrington Youth Academy	\$167,874	Oesterlen Services For Youth	\$474,055
CDK & Associates	\$25,119	OhioGuidestone	\$224,418
Cedar Crest Hospital & Residential Treatment Center	\$26,000	Ohio Mentor	\$1,422,519
Center For Healthy Families Inc.	\$6,965	Options Treatment Center Acquisition Corp	\$92,000
Children's Hospital Medical Center	\$275,904	Preventative Aftercare Inc.	\$486,755
Children's Hunger Alliance	\$25,000	RAD Homes	\$14,000
City of Refuge (One Way Farm)	\$168,448	Raven House	\$11,550
Cleveland Christian Home Inc.	\$11,783	Reflections Group Home	\$30,879
Community Refugee & Immigration Services	\$138,230	Rehabilitaton Centers LLC	\$234,745
Community Shelter Board	\$151,423	Restoration Ranch of Ohio	\$68,100
Cornell Companies Group Inc.	\$681,415	Rite of Passage Inc.	\$163,084
Cotillion Home	\$12,400	Safehouse Ministries Inc.	\$379,785
Devereux Foundation	\$143,132	Seacoast OPCO (Coastal Autism Academy)	\$15,833
Directions For Youth And Families	\$100,000	Second Chance Dayton Group Home	\$43,904
Dungarvin Ohio	\$572,320	Self-Reliance Riverview South	\$367,604
Eastway Corporation	\$504,681	Sequel Schools (Northern Illinois Academy)	\$27,786
Eden Counseling Centers	\$74,076	Sojourners Care Network	\$46,975
Educational Service Center of Central Ohio	\$2,118,517	South Community Inc.	\$1,689
ENA Inc.	\$667,529	Southeast Inc.	\$141,986
Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services	\$45,833	Specialized Alternatives for Families & Youth of Ohio Inc.	\$2,600,729
Focus on Youth Inc.	\$2,146	St. Stephen's Community Services	\$1,494,419
Freedom Youth Program	\$105,598	St. Vincent Family Services	\$1,352,703
FuturePromise	\$246,135	The Twelve of Ohio	\$86,541
Gateway To Success	\$19,386	UMCH Family Services	\$1,396,379
George Junior Republic	\$603,799	Unified Dwelling LLC	\$276,336
Good Samaritan Boys Ranch	\$94,958	Unk's Place Inc.	\$749,361
Grace Hearts	\$182,925	Utopia Beginnings	\$31,672
Gracehaven Inc.	\$5,866	Victory House	\$4,675
Guiding Path For Girls	\$165,210	Village Network	\$4,692,694
Healing Pathways Transitional Homes	\$78,611	White Deer Run	\$83,658
Little House	\$49,225	Willow Branches of Healing	\$634,150
House of New Hope	\$210,681	Youth Advocate Services	\$1,706,752
Huckleberry House	\$181,624	Youth Intensive Services	\$26,700
HYS Hands Inc.	\$14,248	Youth Villages	\$2,128,552

Subtotal **\$53,233,235**

Payment to Children Services Adoptive Homes **\$3,984,651**

Other Purchased Social Services **\$304,636**

Total Purchased Social Services **\$57,522,522**

FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES 2021 Commissioners, Board & Committees

Franklin County Commissioners

Kevin Boyce, President
Marilyn Brown (retired May 2021)
Erica Crawley (began term July 2021)
John O'Grady

Franklin County Children Services Board

Tammy Wharton, Chair
Elon Simms, Vice Chair
Maggie Lewis, Secretary
Rev. Dr. Michael Bean
Wilson Browning
Karen Days
Tiffany Hunt
Elizabeth Martinez
Julie McConnell
Douglas Moore
Necol Russell-Washington

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Gayle Lee, Vice Chair
Patti Aronhalt
Lolita Augenstein
Mary Bynum
Chanel Edwards
Tobi Furman
Janet George
Kelly Kildow
Steve Polovick
Elon Simms
Peter Stevens
Peyton Watts
Lee Wooding

Volunteer Services Advisory Committee

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Lee Wooding, Co-Chair
Patti Aronhalt, Secretary
Haley Brickman
Norman Brown
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Terrence S. McTier Jr., Ph.D.
Carla Williams





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