

The Montgomery County Youth Service Bureau

808 W. Pike St.  
Crawfordsville, IN 47933  
Phone: 765-362-0694

## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Thank you for your support:



### YSB Staff

**Karen Branch:** Executive Director  
**Jessica Bravo:** Alternative School Para Professional  
**Jane Christophersen:** CASA Director  
**Sara Clapp:** JUMP Program Manager, Middle School Teacher  
**Cameron Cole:** Youth Program Manager  
**Kate Doty:** Assistant CASA Director  
**Diamond Justus:** Drug Free Montgomery County Coordinator  
**Cathy Kruse:** Nourish Coordinator  
**Michelle Justus:** Director of Finance  
**Carlee McClure:** High School Alternative School Teacher  
**Pat Moser:** Mental Health Professional

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# Montgomery County YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU

SEPTEMBER 2025

## From the Desk of the Executive Director

"Do your little  
bit of good  
where you  
are; it's those  
little bits of  
good put  
together that  
overwhelm  
the world."

Have you noticed how there seems to be so much tension and frustration for so many people right now? We see it, both in our youth and adults. People are uncertain, they are angry, and the world is changing, sometimes faster than we can keep up. All of this can lead to divisiveness, separation and the demise of unity.

Recently HUE held their annual day of unity, helping facilitate our community coming together in a positive way. In a world that often highlights differences, the power and benefit of unity can sometimes be overlooked. Building unity is not simply about agreement, it's about cultivating understanding, trust, and collaboration across diverse perspectives.

Unity is the foundation of strong families, thriving communities, and successful organizations. It promotes resilience in the face of challenges, increases creativity through collaboration, and nurtures a sense of belonging that every individual craves. When people feel valued and connected, they are more likely to contribute their time, talents, and energy toward collective goals.

Unity spreads. When individuals model collaboration and mutual respect, it influences families, workplaces, and communities. A united group can solve problems more effectively, advocate for positive change, and inspire others to join in. In times of division, unity stands as a reminder that we are stronger together than we could ever be apart.

Building unity is an ongoing effort. It requires patience, humility, and courage to bridge divides and extend grace. But the results—a more compassionate, supportive, and empowered community—are worth every effort.

Unity begins with each of us. In our words, actions, and attitudes, we have the power to build bridges rather than walls. And when we choose unity, we set the stage for hope, progress, and a brighter future for all, particularly our youth.

-Karen Branch, Executive Director

### Our Mission is:

The Montgomery County Youth Service Bureau empowers children/youth to become responsible citizens through delinquency prevention, community education, youth advocacy, direct services and information and referral.

## BINGO Supports Youth As Resources

By: Cameron Cole

Youth as Resources was able to host our annual Bingo Fundraising event in July. This year we were so thankful to have Lakeside Book Company sponsor the event for us! Prizes for our fundraiser included Longaberger Baskets and Vera Bradley items. We also had raffle and door prizes. The funds raised from our YAR Bingo event go directly back into the community. All funds raised go into a grant pool and other youth-led organizations in Montgomery County and are able to apply for grants up to \$500. In years past we have had organizations like North Montgomery High School's FFA chapter apply for a grant so they can make blankets for children at the Ronald McDonald House in Indy. We have had 4-H Junior Leaders apply for a grant so they could purchase canned goods

for the FISH food pantry, and more! If you know of a youth-led organization in Montgomery County that could use a grant, encourage them to apply! For more information on YAR or our bingo fundraiser contact Cameron at [cameron@mcysb.org](mailto:cameron@mcysb.org) or by phone at 765-362-0694 ext 114.





## CASA Program Celebrates 35 Years

By: Jane Christophersen

The Montgomery County CASA Program is celebrating 35 years of service this year. CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) began in 1976 when Judge David Soukup in Seattle, Washington decided that he needed to find a way to gather more complete information about the children he had in his court for whom he was making life changing decisions. His idea was to recruit volunteers who would make a very thorough independent investigation on behalf of the child or children in an abuse or neglect case and then make a report to the court with recommendations. The volunteers were called Court Appointed Special Advocates. In January of 1977, the first group of volunteers was trained and began to advocate on behalf of the children. Other programs were started across the country. The Montgomery County CASA Program began in response to the need for child advocates in our local court system. The Honorable Thomas Milligan believed that the Youth Service Bureau would be the appropriate agency to develop and maintain the CASA Program. Tom Carlson trained and assigned the first CASA volunteers in 1990. I was in that training class. The Indiana State Office of GAL/ CASA also began that year. Through the years hundreds of volunteers have advocated for thousands of children in our county. CASAs have been instrumental in getting those thousands of children in safe,

permanent homes. Most of them returned to their parents, but only after the parents made significant changes in their lives. Some were adopted by family members or foster parents who were ready to become their forever parents. Others aged out of the system, but with the continued support of their CASAs to ensure they were ready to become productive members of society as young adults. It has been a privilege to be part of the CASA Program since its beginning to witness the positive life-changing impact so many people have had on our county's most vulnerable children. And it has been a tremendous honor to serve both the children and the volunteers who have been their advocates as the CASA director since 2002. I want to thank all the incredible volunteers who have given so generously of your heart and your time throughout the 35 years. You have made the world a better place for your "CASA kids."

If you have been a CASA, please contact me by email ([jane@mcysb.org](mailto:jane@mcysb.org)) or phone (765-362-0694, x104).

Unfortunately, we have lost records of those who served before our current case management system was in place. We would like to thank each of you personally. We are thrilled to announce five new volunteers were sworn in on September 10<sup>th</sup>. Nikki Cogdill, Amy Cox, Caroline Erdahl, Warren Rush, and Dawn Samuelson completed 30 hours of training. We have rarely had

a training class with such an extensive amount of experience with children as this group. We know they will be outstanding advocates for their CASA kids.

The State CASA Conference was held on Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, in French Lick. Kim Nixon, Sheila Sowers, Steve Frees, Glenda Frees, Bill Lindeman, Sandra Salazar, and Catlynn Lee attended with Kate Doty and myself. We thank those volunteers for making the trip to southern Indiana. I believe that we were all inspired by the speakers and enriched by the workshop presentations. Please contact Kate Doty at [kate@mcysb.org](mailto:kate@mcysb.org) or 765-362-0694, x 106, if you are interested in becoming a volunteer or to learn more about the program. We would love to talk with you.



## Resilience Starts With Self Control

By: Pat Moser

\*\*\*Special Note- because of the confidential nature of the Mental Health Specialist position, I try to share articles for the newsletter using generalities regarding the concepts that I teach teens in one on one sessions.

When I was new to counseling, I found that there was an un-named quality that almost always indicated that a student would be successful. I not only recognized it, but admired and tried to foster it when I saw it. Finally, I was fortunate enough to go to a professional conference where our speaker had written a book called *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character*. This book helped me put a name to the quality I saw in students and helped me identify ways to help bring out this quality in students that needed a little extra boost to be successful. Today we very appropriately refer to this quality as resilience. Resilience and self-control remain the top

qualities that I appreciate and praise students for as they make their way through the challenges they face. I continue to use the word "Grit" when I teach students about resilience. I teach them to use it in their self talk as they fall down and get back up to try again.

The attribute that must first be acknowledged and encouraged in order for a child to have "grit" or resilience is self-control. I work daily with teens who after they have made a poor choice and are dealing with the consequence can truthfully tell me that they followed an impulse, or didn't think about the consequence when they chose to act. We usually think of self control as saying no to distractions or waiting patiently for a reward. But it is so much more than that. It's the ability to pause, reflect and choose a response instead of reacting to an impulse. The skill of self control is very deeply connected to resilience as resilience is something we all want our children to have.

Resilience is a child's ability to recover from challenges, adapt to change,

and keep going in the face of difficulty. It is not about avoiding stress it is about GROWING through it. Self-control is what makes resilience possible. When children develop self-control they grow to be adults who can: manage emotions, stay focused and make thoughtful decisions. Emotional regulation is another key component of resilience but is not likely to be attained without self control. Emotional regulation helps people stay calm when frustrated, try again after a setback and think clearly when under pressure.

Programs that teach mindfulness, goal setting, emotional regulation, or conflict resolution are not just nice to have, they are giving children and teens lifelong tools for navigating stress, overcoming challenges and building healthy relationships. We can all support our children as they learn these skills by modeling self-control, completing difficult tasks and remaining calm even though those around us are struggling to do so.

## REINdear Around the Corner

BY: Cameron Cole

Believe it or not but the Holiday season is just around the corner! Here at the YSB our REINdear season has begun! REINdear is Montgomery County's Christmas assistance program. REINdear applications are currently on the front porch of the YSB. REINdear week is scheduled for the week of December 14<sup>th</sup>. Donors are asked to deliver all their gifts to the 4H building on December 15<sup>th</sup> and then parents will pick up their kiddos presents on December 18<sup>th</sup>. We are always so grateful for all that our donors do to support the REINdear program and the youth of Montgomery County. If you would like to become a REINdear donor, please contact Cameron at [cameron@mcysb.org](mailto:cameron@mcysb.org) or 765-362-0694 ext 114.





## Mentoring Matters: JUMP Navigates Post-Pandemic Challenges

By: Sara Clapp

In a time when many young people are seeking guidance and stability, the JUMP Juvenile Mentoring Program continues to offer a lifeline—pairing youth with adult mentors who offer encouragement, support, and consistency.

For years, JUMP has quietly made a difference in the lives of local youth, helping them build confidence, make positive choices, and envision a better future. But like many mentoring and volunteer programs across the country, JUMP is now facing a new reality: post-pandemic volunteer fatigue and a steep decline in participation.

Those who mentor through JUMP often describe the experience as unexpectedly transformative.

"I came in thinking I was here to help someone else," said one longtime mentor. "But what I didn't expect was how much I would grow, too."

Mentors in the program are not expected to solve every problem. What they provide is presence—reliable, nonjudgmental support that

helps young people feel seen and heard. Over time, that connection can become a turning point in a young person's life.

For the mentees—many of whom have experienced trauma, instability, or involvement with the juvenile justice system—a consistent adult presence can provide the structure and hope they need to change direction.

Despite the program's proven impact, JUMP is now grappling with a shortage of mentors. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted nearly every aspect of life, and community volunteerism has not fully rebounded. Many potential mentors are now juggling heavier workloads, family pressures, or lingering health concerns. Some have simply fallen out of the rhythm of volunteering. National trends show a significant drop in volunteer rates, especially among young adults.

Unfortunately, the timing couldn't be worse. Youth who experienced social isolation, disrupted education, and heightened emotional challenges during the pandemic are now in even

greater need of mentorship and guidance.

The JUMP program provides all the training and resources mentors need. Volunteers commit just a few hours a month and are supported every step of the way. Whether it's through conversations, shared activities, or simply being present, mentors play a crucial role in helping young people feel connected to their communities again.

At its core, mentoring is about human connection. It's about building trust, showing up consistently, and helping someone see their own potential. And in that process, many mentors discover a renewed sense of purpose themselves.

For those who have been thinking about giving back or looking for a meaningful way to engage with their community, now is the time.

To learn more about the JUMP Juvenile Mentoring Program or to sign up as a mentor, visit [www.mcysb.org](http://www.mcysb.org) or contact [Sara@mcysb.org](mailto:Sara@mcysb.org).

## Middle School Classroom Has Great Start

By: Sara Clapp

The new school year is off to a strong start in the Middle School Alternative Classroom, where students are welcomed each day by a sign that reads, "I'm So Glad You're Here."

That message sets the tone for a classroom built on connection, support, and the belief that every student deserves a fresh start—and this year, students are embracing that opportunity.

The classroom is designed for students who benefit from a smaller,

more structured setting. With an emphasis on consistent routines, strong relationships, and personal growth, it provides a space where students can feel safe, supported, and ready to succeed.

Already, there are signs of positive momentum. Students are showing increased engagement, building confidence, and improving their attendance. The focus on accountability and individualized attention helps each student move forward at their own pace, while goal-setting activities encourage

them to take ownership of their progress.

As students settle into new routines and begin to "lock in" to the year ahead, the classroom is buzzing with a sense of purpose. The foundation is in place for what promises to be a productive and rewarding school year.

Looking ahead, the mission remains the same: to support growth, celebrate progress, and reinforce the belief that every student can thrive when given the right tools and a chance to start again.

## Drug Free Montgomery County Annual Mini Grants

By: Diamond Justus

Did you know that the Drug Free Montgomery County (DFMC) Coalition broke a record this year? In July, DFMC awarded a grand total of \$55,968.48 to several agencies to support programs in Montgomery County that are addressing substance use issues. This is the largest amount of funding distributed back into the community since the coalition began in 1990! As mentioned in a previous newsletter, there are four different categories: Prevention/Education, Treatment/Intervention, Criminal Justice Services, and Administrative.

Prevention/Education includes education/awareness programs, activities, services, or materials aimed at deterring individuals from the use or abuse of alcohol or other drugs and the prevention of related problems. This year, the coalition awarded six mini-grants to the following organizations and projects:

Crawfordsville Police Department received \$4,018.92 for detectives to attend the National Crimes Against Children Conference.

City of Crawfordsville - Mobile Integrated Health received \$460.00 for medication management and safety.

Montgomery County Probation received \$2,000.00 for drug and alcohol education/intervention programs.

Montgomery County Probation received \$2,240.00 for drug testing for youth and young adults.

Montgomery County Probation received \$3,000.00 for the Juvenile Cognitive Behavioral

programs.

Quest for Balance Wellness received \$3,750.00 to provide Community-Focused Grief Education.

Montgomery County Youth Service Bureau received \$2,000.00 for National Night Out.

Montgomery County Youth Service Bureau received \$1,000.00 for Positive Youth Programming.

Intervention/Treatment includes services for those who are identified as in need of recovery from problems associated with excessive or inappropriate use of alcohol and or other drugs. Services in this area cover a spectrum of activities such as referral and assessment, a continuum of treatment services ranging from outpatient programs to residential settings. This year, the coalition awarded seven mini-grants to the following organizations and projects:

InWell received \$500.00 for an emergency needs fund for transportation and housing.

InWell received \$4,000.00 to support the Rock Out Recovery event.

City of Crawfordsville - Mobile Integrated Health received \$2,678.00 for the Quick Response Team Hotline.

Montgomery County Probation received \$3,500.00 for emergency/transitional housing.

The Recovery Coalition received \$5,000.00 for director's pay.

The Recovery Coalition received \$571.78 to fund the Float for Recovery event.

The Recovery Coalition received \$2,500.00 for the special events & programs.

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement

includes efforts that deal with the legal consequences of substance abuse and includes crime prevention, law enforcement, prosecution, probation, court and correctional services. This year, the coalition awarded three mini-grants to the following organizations and projects:

Crawfordsville Police Department received \$10,749.78 to fund the Mental Health Initiative 2.0.

Montgomery County Probation received \$5,000.00 for Drug Court Incentives.

Montgomery County Probation received \$3,000.00 for Veteran's Court Incentives.

Congratulations to all of our grant recipients and the work they are doing to help Montgomery County become a healthy community free from substance use.





YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU		
<b>Over \$5,000</b>		
Anonymous Donor	Sara Drury	Herm & Kitty Haffner
B&L Engineering	Heather Hites	Roger Hildebrand
Banjo/Idex Corporation	John Hudson Farms	Sam & Jacki Horn
Christ Lutheran Church	J. Taylor Properties	Marcus & Helen Hudson
Crawfordsville School Corp	Justus Family Electric	Indiana Specialty Group
Deer Projects	Lakeside Books	Paul & Marilyn Janzaruk
Franciscan Health Crawfordsville	Crawfordsville/Montgomery County	Barbara Johnson
Hoosier Heartland State Bank	Chamber of Commerce	Elizabeth Johnson
Indiana Criminal Justice Inst.	Montgomery County	Andy & Coleen Karle
Indiana Youth Service Assoc.	Health Department	Dennis Krause
Lowecon LLC	New Hope Chapel of Wingate	Steven Loy
Montgomery County	Dale & Linda Petrie	Minnette Family
Montgomery County Community	Megan Purcell	James & Virginia Servies
Foundation	Preston Shaw	John Taylor
John & Robyn Morgan	Puritan Water	Kelly Taylor
North Montgomery School Corp	Oremus Accounting	Byron & Karen Thada
Nucor Steel	Ripco	Mark & Carolyn Truax
South Montgomery School Corp	Rusk Legacy Group	Turning Leaves Farm
Sommer Elementary Backpack Program	Smartsburg Christian Church	Mel Vance
United Way of	Kathy Steele	Charles & Leslie Warren
Montgomery County	Sugar Creek Lawn &	Frank & Gina Williams
	Hardscapes	<b>Up to \$99</b>
<b>Up to \$4,999</b>	Ryan VanScoyoc	James & Patience Barnes
Gary & Ronna Bohlander	<b>Up to \$499</b>	Brian & Deneen Bartlett
Matt Cairns	Pat Branch	Linda Brady
Edge IT	Dirk & Catherine Caldwell	Joan Collier
Firefly Children & Family Alliance	Canal Dentistry	Durham Home
First Christian Church	Crawfordsville Work Force	Samuel & Carolyn Fisher
Barbara Frye	Family & Friends Funeral Home	Cheryl Green
Gary & Judy Hamand	William Fell	Monty & Sherry Harris
Rex Henthorn	Donald & Diana Gould	Sally Hensley
Howden/McBee Family	Jack & Joyce Grimble	Darrell & Deborah Howard
Jessica's on Main	Bobby & Naomi Horton	Indiana Federation of Business
Joshi Pediatrics	Tacos El Pampano LLC	of Professional Women of Cville
Thomas & Dr. Sharon O'Dell Keedy	Tony & Janet Johnson	Donald & Mary Livingston
Terry Lawrence	Kappa Kappa Kappa, Inc.	Gayle & Deborah Lough
Liberty Chapel	Liberty Chapel Men's Group	Patrick & Karen McDowell
McClamroch Ag	Loyal Order of Moose Lodge #6	Darrell & Tresha Meadows
Mishler Dental	Michael McKinney	Judy Michal
Pace Dairy	Mesa Waa Gii Therapy	Dalton Milikin Family
Penguin Random House	Murphy Trailer Sales	Megan Oppy Family
Smith Family Warehouse	Scott & Karin Odle	Marty Pool
Stevensons Hardware	Josh & Melissa Patton	Nancy Rater
Tri-County Bank	Pinnacle Ag Solutions	Norman & Patricia Reimondo
Valero	John & Christy Swick Family	Daniel & Shirley Ross
W. Enterprises LLC	Walt Hamilton	Dixie Ruggles
Wabash Avenue	Waynetown United	Amy Sanders
Presbyterian Church	Methodist Church	Nancy Sennett
Wesley Thrift Shop	<b>Up to \$249</b>	Nancy Smith
Sue West	All Smiles Dental	Bob & Carolyn Snyder
York Chrysler Dodge Jeep, Inc	Altschul Orthodontics	Charles Sommer
<b>Up to \$999</b>	Dental	Sheila Sowers
American Legion Post #72	B & R Fire	George & Judith Spencer
Arnis	Martha Bell	Tyler Truelock
Frank & Tracey Barr	Tom & Candace Budd	Peter & Bronna Utterback
Louisa Blaich	Patrick & Joyce Burnette	Richard & Barbara Vanarsdel
Austin & Lucille Brooks	Gerry & Donna Coats	Bonnie Yund
Chad Budreau State Farm Insurance	Kashawndra Cooper	
C & F Fabricating	John & Betty Culley	<b>Gifts in Memory of</b>
C & M Trucking	Brian & Laura Donaldson	<i>Emily</i>
Campbell Ag Services	John & Carol Doyel	Kathleen Gary
Carol Cook	Larry & Pamela Furnas	<i>Sherry Barr</i>
Crawfordsville Kiwanis	James & Kathleen Gary	Frank & Tracey Barr
D Patrick Crawfordsville	David & Sheridan Hadley	<i>Austin Brooks</i>
Everwise	Les Hearson	Jim & Chris Amidon
Wiliam Doemel	Henthorn, Harris, & Weliever	<i>Austin Brooks</i>

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William Doemel
<i>Austin Brooks</i>
Roger & Judith Hildbrand
<i>Austin Brooks</i>
Nancy Sennett
<i>Austin Brooks</i>
Frank & Gina Williams
<i>Austin Brooks</i>
Marty Pool
<i>Logan Deckard</i>
Ray & Bonnie Yund
<i>Randy Deneau</i>
Matt Cairns
<i>D.O Dulin</i>
Rex & Sandy Henthorn
<i>Jerry Grabman</i>
Patrick McDowell
<i>Scott Kegley</i>
Barbara Johnson
<i>Ada Morris</i>
John & Carolyn Doyel
<i>Barry Pool</i>
Marty Pool
<i>Bob Snyder</i>
James & Carolyn Snyder
<i>George Venis</i>
Roger & Judy Hildebrand
<i>Jan Whitecotton</i>
Daniel & Shirley Ross
<i>Jan Whitecotton</i>
John Taylor
<b>Gifts in Honor of</b>
<i>Mike Reidy</i>
John & Betty Culley
<i>Mike Reidy</i>
Herman & Kitty Haffner
<i>Liam Venus</i>
Roger & Judy Hildebrand
<i>Thomas Milligan</i>
Betty Johnson
Denise Walker
Mesa Waa Gii Therapy
<b>In Kind Donations</b>
Banjo Volunteers
CASA Volunteers
Crawfordsville Kiwanis
Crawfordsville Park & Rec.
Dept.
Hoosier Heartland Bank
Employees
Jessica's on Main
David Maharry
Mentor Volunteers
Nourish Partners and
Volunteers
Teen Court and YAR
Volunteers
The Teen Court Judges
YSB Board of Directors

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<b>A Special Thank you to all of the Dancers for</b>
<b>Dancing with the Montgomery County Stars:</b>
<b>Dancers:</b> Alli Coleman & Georgia Taylor, Megan Ewoldt & Skylar Stevenson, Ryan VanScoyoc & Heidi Gambrel, Cody Hargis & Ashley Kight, Jessica McClamroch & Matt Allen, Jeremy Lemus & Kaylynn Keedy Ranspach, Jessica Bradley & Ashley Clute, Katie Wallace & Bryan Biddle, Steve Frees & Andra Storms, and Andrew Traylor & Kashawndra Cooper.
Alumni Dancers: Jeff Ehrlich, Donna Wilson, Glenda Frees, and Guillermo Rodriguez
Choreographer: Glenda Frees
Master of Ceremonies: Leann Parish & Jim Amidon
Judges: Honorable Daniel Petrie, Honorable Heather Barajas & Scott Voliva.
Crawfordsville Academy of Dance
Sophana Studios

## Nourish Continues to Pack

By: Cathy Kruse

The older I get, the quicker these years are flying by. I really believe I blinked and summer break was over. And here we are starting another school year, sending out Nourish bags to the Montgomery County schools for our 12<sup>th</sup> year. Once again our community has come out in full force supporting our kiddos not only with donations, but with volunteering their time. This year, we have some new faces helping to pack and deliver the food bags to the schools. Welcome ladies and as always, thank you to ALL of the business's, organizations, donors and volunteers who make the Nourish program possible. We could not do it without you.



## A New School Year with New Opportunities

By: Carlee McClure

As the new school year begins, opportunity fills the classroom of our high school program. Looking back on the previous year, it's clear that success has become a defining trait of this program. From record-setting academic achievements to inspiring personal milestones, students are proving every day that hard work and determination pay off. Last year, students earned a record number of academic credits, a testament to their perseverance and commitment. Eight students proudly graduated, stepping confidently into new chapters that include college and careers. Their accomplishments have not only marked a personal triumph but have also ignited a sense of possibility among their peers. This year, 17 students are enrolled in

the program, with three on track to graduate in the coming months. Each time a student crosses the finish line to receive their diploma, it serves as a powerful reminder to others of what's possible. These moments spark motivation and reinforce the belief that with effort, their dreams can become reality. Our classroom is more than four walls. It's a space filled with opportunity, a second chance for many students to see themselves in a new light. It's a place where confidence is built, where mistakes are embraced as learning moments, and where goals like returning to their original school or graduating are within reach. More than just a place for academics, the high school program offers students a supportive environment where they can redefine their futures. As this new school year unfolds, the

energy and determination among the students suggest that the best is yet to come.

