



# Ohio Summit on Children

## ACTION UPDATE ■ MAY 2009

### NEWS & NOTES

The 2009 Ohio Summit on Children planning committee in Columbus has been busy making preparations, lining up speakers and organizing breakout sessions to ensure the November gathering is as productive as the coming together in May 2008. As we work to finalize our plans, it's not too early to initialize yours. When you put your county team together, please remember that funds are limited to covering the registration, hotel, meal and parking costs for up to five participants only per county. Registration materials will be available in July. 

### COUNTY PROFILE | Ross



The old sports cliché “there’s no ‘I’ in team” appropriately applied to the March 4 Ross County Summit on Children, which hosted 150 participants.

Ross County Juvenile Court Judge Richard Ward said

the summit was built around team exercises with the goal of fostering increased collaborative efforts among participating county agencies. “The team exercises were the meat of the summit and were structured to examine, dissect and evaluate the way we serve our children,” Ward said.

“Participants were asked to explore ways to remove interagency barriers and submit recommendations to implement a local action plan.”

Attendees included representatives from the Family and Children First Council, Jobs and Family Services, the Juvenile Court, the Ross-Pike Educational Service Center and the Paint Valley ADAMH Board.

Ward said the input and information gathered at the summit will be distilled into a summary document that will be shared with participants. Additional meetings are scheduled to reduce reams of data into an organized local plan of action.

Beyond the data-driven work that lies ahead, Ward said the county benefited immediately just from all the various disciplines who serve the needs

of children coming together. “It was refreshing to see them put down the interagency barriers and work to problem solve,” he noted.

So successful was the first summit, Ward said, that the day concluded with requests for follow-up summits. He also recalled a 25-year veteran educator saying the summit was “by far the most meaningful” of the hundreds of seminars and meetings she’s attended.

As for areas of improvement, Ward said there’s always a need to better understand the roles and limitations of the various service providers in Ross County. He also said it never hurts to learn to appreciate the perspectives of others dedicated to the safety and welfare of the county’s youth.

Looking toward the state Summit in November, Ward said targeted presentations for similar-size counties would be welcome. “What works in the large counties may not be adaptable to the medium- and smaller-size counties,” he said. “I would recommend that presentations be customized to the particular populations and budgets of the various counties.” 

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—Judge Richard Ward  
Ross County Juvenile Court