



# Convening Partners

**United Way of Central Ohio, Our Mission: To improve the lives of others by mobilizing the caring power of our community.**

Founded in 1923, United Way of Central Ohio is working to improve lives and strengthen our community by providing pathways out of poverty through our focus on the building blocks of a good life: a quality education that leads to a productive career, enough income to support a family through retirement, good health, and a safe place to live. As one of the largest United Ways in the country, we bring together more than 80,000 donors, advocates and volunteers.

**Representative Valerie Ridgeway**, Assistant Vice President for Community Impact Operations.

Valerie began her career with United Way of Central Ohio in December 2007 as the organization's first full-time Public Policy Director. In that role she oversaw the development and implementation of United Way's public policy agenda and helped advance public policies that impacted early care and education, financial stability, safe and affordable housing, and access to healthcare. Her efforts helped establish United Way's presence among statewide coalitions that advocated on behalf of health and human services.

In April 2016 Valerie was promoted to Assistant Vice President for Public Policy & Government Relations where she worked to ensure the integration of public policy advocacy throughout United Way's work. In September 2017 Valerie transitioned to her current role of Assistant Vice President for Community Impact Operations. In this new role Valerie helps oversee the day-to-day operations of the Community Impact Department and works to ensure that strategies, investments, and policies align to ensure maximum success of department activities.

Valerie is a member of United Way's Key Club and a 2010 Graduate of Leadership Columbus. She's also a member of the African American Leadership Academy – Class of 2018. Valerie graduated from Miami University with a degree in Communications. Prior to relocating to Columbus, Valerie served as the Public Policy Coordinator for Hospice of the Western Reserve in Cleveland. She also managed the public policy activities of the Cleveland Area Alzheimer's Association for several years. Valerie enjoys gardening, music, theatre arts, swimming, pouring into the lives of others, and spoiling her 13 nieces and nephews.

**National Association of Mental Illness of Franklin County, Mission: NAMI Franklin County is dedicated to improving the lives of family members, friends**



## **and persons with mental illness through education, outreach, support, referral and advocacy.**

At NAMI Franklin County, we provide education on brain disorders to family members, friends and mental health professionals in Franklin County:

- Raise awareness and enlightens the community.
- Offer support and referral to families, friends and persons with mental illness; and,
- Advocate for individuals with mental illness and their family members to improve the system, remove stigma, ensure system accountability and strengthen our local grassroots network.

**Representative** Rachelle A. Martin, Executive Director, possesses over 30 years of public service experience in the health care field, including coordination of health care systems nationally and internationally. Currently she is the Executive Directors of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Franklin County and Columbus Black Catholic Ministries. She recently became a certified Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Instructor.

Rachelle has been the Director of Training and Prevention Network Services Manager for the ADAMH Board of Franklin County and the co-founding partner of the Suicide Prevention Advisory Committee and the Suicide Prevention Foundation and where she chaired the Advisory Committee for over four years.

**Franklin County Children Services, Mission: 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.**

**We are committed to our Guiding Principles:**

- We are child welfare professionals
- We honor families
- We value every child
- We value partnerships

**Children Services is the public agency mandated by federal and state law to ensure that our community's children are safe and well cared for. We provide protection, care and permanency for children who are abused, neglected or dependent. By being in partnership with more than 100 agencies and organizations, and with the help of over 700 employees, 500 kinship families, 200 adoptive families, 500 volunteers and mentors and hundreds of community foster parents, the agency is committed to making sure that every child has a safe and stable home. Children Services social workers and support staff work to build stable and**

supportive living settings for young people, strengthen family life and assist parents in meeting their responsibilities to their children. FCCS receives approximately 30,000 referrals annually through our 24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline — (614) 229-7000.

**Representative** *Alison Rodger* has worked with FCCS for 25 years. Having started as an intern, then working as a caseworker, casework supervisor, trainer and most recently as the director of professional development and the Central Ohio Regional Training Center, helping coordinate training for 12 central Ohio counties.

Her background in casework, supervision, adoption, substitute care, training and staff development embodies the Guiding Principles of We are Child Welfare Professionals and We Value Partnerships. Her work has assisted staff in developing their skills to become stronger advocates in serving the children and families of Franklin County.

In October 2019 Alison was promoted to Director of Communications and began a new leadership journey. She currently oversees Franklin County Children Services Professional Development Department, and Community Outreach Department, and the Volunteers Department. She is a partner and a liaison for several groups in her new role, including the Franklin County Youth Council.

She holds an undergraduate degree in psychology and sociology from Hampton University and a Master of Social Work degree from the Ohio State University.

**Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services (Franklin County Board of Commissioners Agency), Mission: The Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services provides workforce development and family support programs that improve the quality of life for Franklin County residents.**

We provide the following services:

- Food Assistance
- Emergency Assistance
- Child Care Program
- Medical Assistance / Medicaid / Healthy Start
- Ohio Works First
- OhioMeansJobs Center

The Franklin Department of Job and Family Services (FCDJFS) is a county, state and federally supported agency responsible for basic financial, medical and social services programs. These programs are made available to ensure that no one is forced to go without the basic essentials of food, clothing, shelter, medical care and necessary life sustaining services because of a lack of resources. FCDJFS ensures that many eligible children and adults receive assistance each month through in-house or contracted services.



**Franklin County also provides education and training for public assistance customers along with the necessary support services to help them find quality jobs and move from welfare to independence. This opens doors to employment by improving participants' job seeking skills, building self-confidence and providing on-the-job training. The goal of our agency is to place job-ready participants in unsubsidized employment in the shortest possible time. Emphasis is placed on job placement activities, remedial education and vocational training. These activities are coordinated with other available employment and training programs within the community.**

**Representative** Joy Bivens is Director of the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services (FCDJFS), the largest agency under the Board of Commissioners, with a budget of more than \$72 million and approximately 630 employees. The Department serves over 350,000 individuals receiving public assistance and Medicaid: and contracts for approximately \$16.2 million in early childhood, youth, adult and senior and disabled services. Prior to being named the Director, she held the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO) with the agency. Before joining FCDJFS, Bivens was co-owner of a home care agency from 2006-2015. During that time her company provided home care services to nearly three thousand (3000) patients throughout the State of Ohio. Bivens has served on the Whitehall School Board for the past 2 years and is the past Vice President of the Whitehall Area Chamber of Commerce. Bivens is the past board chair of The Ohio Means Jobs-Franklin County/COWIC.

Bivens obtained a Bachelor's Degree from Capital University and in February 2015, she received the African American of Excellence Award from Central Ohio Youth Advocacy Program. In addition, she was named the 2015 Whitehall Citizen of the Year and was recognized by Governor John Kasich as a Business Leader.

Bivens has been married to her husband Attorney Michael Bivens for eighteen (18) years. They have two (2) children, a daughter Mikayla and son Michael. Both Bivens and her husband believe in giving back to the community; evidenced by not only committing their time but also opening their home to young adults who are in transition.

**Representative** Tori Darden is the Social Program Developer of the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services (FCDJFS), the largest agency under the Board of Commissioners, with a budget of more than \$72 million. As the Social Program Director Tori is responsible for the following:

- Develop/implement plans and projects to increase community organization linkages
- Monitor contract compliance, services, and program outcomes.
- Collaborate with community groups to identify and recommend new contracted services to support agency objectives.
- Provide technical assistance, consultation, and inform community groups of programs, policies and procedures governing service provision.
- Serve on informational and/or advisory groups and organizations.

Tori holds Bachelor's Degrees in Human Resources Management and Business Management from Franklin University.

Also, a Master's in Business Administration from Ohio Dominican University.

While employed at FCDJFS Tori successfully completed the Emerging Leaders Program.

Activities and Societies: Tori is also a fitness instructor with the YMCA and has an AFAA certification in Group Exercise. She is also a member of Sigma Gamma Rho, Sorority Incorporated.

## Rise Sister Rise, Fran Frazier

**Rise Sister Rise: Evaluating the African American Girls' Experience of Trauma and Resilience in Ohio's Communities** is a journey towards academic success and positive socialization for African American girls. There are approximately 201,000 African American girls living in Ohio; the majority residing in metropolitan areas. Research suggests that urban African American girls are significantly exposed to more traumatic stressors than children of other racial groups. The Rise Sister Rise Research Project is designed to explore the ways in which urban adolescent African American girls experience their world and the ways in which they are affected by those experiences. Frances Curtis Frazier, M.A. is the principal investigator and research partner with the Ohio Department of Mental Health which provided original funding for the research project.

**Representative** Frances Curtis Frazier is the Principal Investigator of "Rise Sister Rise: Placing Black Girls at Promise" a participatory action research study on the lives of 409 African American girls in four Ohio cities. The ground-breaking research identified specific determinants of health affected by traumatic stressors in addition to the journey towards resiliency experienced by these girls. The gift of this research is that currently community leaders, educators, mental health practitioners, gateway providers in all four cities in addition to state, county and local government are actively involved in using the data towards more culturally competent services, policies and programs for girls and their families.

Fran is also a Senior Associate with the Paul J. Aicher Foundation/Everyday Democracy and works nationally on issues of structural racism and racial equity. Fran Frazier holds a MA in Learning Disabilities and Behavioral Disorders from The Ohio State University and a B.S. cum laude in Special Education from Norfolk State University. She is the recipient of many local, state and national awards and recognitions, especially the Sharon Burks Soar Award from Franklin County Children Services and the History Makers, a national organization that recognizes lifetime achievements of African Americans.

**Community for New Direction.** CND is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping kids and their families build a bridge to a brighter tomorrow. Our innovative prevention and leadership programs empower youth to be the force for change in themselves, their families,



their schools and their communities – – now and in the future. CND is building a bridge to a brighter tomorrow by empowering tomorrow’s leaders today.

CND believes in giving youth the best chance at a healthy and bright future by preparing our youth to be future leaders. As our children prepare for the future, CND helps them to understand the importance of being a role model who leads with integrity by making healthy choices to be safe and drug-free. Helps youth to make a successful transition to adulthood by educating youth on decision making, refusal skills and decorum, as well as providing recreational activities that exclude the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

**Mission:** Through innovative programs and positive relationships, CND empowers individuals to achieve their potential.

**Purpose:** Our primary purpose is to prevent the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, as well as violence (ATOD-V) in youth served by our programs.

**Vision Statement:** CND envisions a day when our community is drug and violence free.

**Values Statements**

**Empowerment:** We believe our interventions can empower youth to overcome barriers and choose a path to reach their full potential.

**Leadership:** We believe that children can be leaders in their communities, now and in the future.

**Character:** We believe that building character in children and youth is the foundation of a healthy and productive life.

**Recovery:** We believe that with focus and the right treatment, those facing addiction can experience a full life in recovery.

**Representative** Martha “Susie” Shipley-Norwood has dedicated most of her life to helping children and their families. Susie has over 35 years of experience working with youth and families. Director AOD Prevention Services, her position has offered her the opportunity to create and implement several successful programs that benefit residents in Columbus OH. Among the many programs offered:

- Afterschool programs
- Free Spring break and summer drug camps
- Free violence-free leadership camps and school-based personal development groups
- Community-based parenting programs

Susie is currently working part time as the Director of the Franklin County Youth Council.

Susie has a Bachelor of Science degree in special education from Ohio University and a Master’s in social work with a specialty in planning and community development from Ohio State University and is a licensed social worker. Susie’s passion and commitment are the Empowerment of Women and Youth.

Susie is the recipient of the 1995 YWCA Women of Achievement Racial Justice Award, the 1992 Warren H. Jennings Award, and the 1990 Robert O. Washington Award.



**ADAMH – Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board of Central Ohio - Our mission is to improve the well-being of our community by reducing the incidence of mental health problems and eliminating the abuse of alcohol and other drugs in Franklin County.**

Citizens in need of care will receive the most progressive and effective mental health and addiction treatment and prevention services available. The unique cultural and individual needs of each client will guide how the services are provided, and treatment will always be provided in a timely manner. ADAMH’s commitment to these goals establishes its role as a vital partner in Franklin County’s healthcare network and will help to de-stigmatize mental illness.

