

## About Pathways of Central Ohio

Pathways of Central Ohio can trace its roots back to 1967 when growing concerns about drug use in Newark brought together the following well-known Newark civic leaders: Attorney (and later Juvenile Judge) Virginia Weiss; Dick Cotrell, Newark City Schools; Sister Barbara Jenks, St. Francis School; local mental health advocate Eve Elliott; and, Rev. Wayne Fowler of Wright Memorial Methodist Church,

Together, they raised \$2000 to bring in an expert to facilitate a series of weekend seminars in 1968 to explore alternatives and search for local solutions to drug abuse problems in Newark. The Newark Drug Forum, as the agency was first known, was established to provide services to people with drug abuse concerns who were unlikely to utilize the established mental health system for assistance. In 1971, the Newark Drug Forum became a United Way agency and a Community Mental Health agency. In 1984, the agency changed its name to the Center for Alternative Resources. In 2001, it became Pathways of Licking County and in 2008, Pathways of Central Ohio, Serving Licking and Knox Counties.

Over the years, the agency has been located over Maybold Shoes, in the Alford Building, and at 35 S. Park Place in Downtown Newark. The administrative offices have been at the current location, 1627 Bryn Mawr Drive, Newark, Ohio since 2001. The 2-1-1 Crisis/Hotline is housed at an undisclosed location.

### **2-1-1 Crisis Hotline and Information Center**

In 1970, the Crisis Center was the first service organized and operated by the Newark Drug Forum, and to this day is most often referred to as the Crisis Center! For over two years the hotline and walk-in center (coffee house) were staffed entirely by volunteers. It was their dedication and creativity and their commitment to the service and to each other that kept the Crisis Center open, even when it was not clear how the bills would be paid. The Crisis Center was located in the basement of an old building at 112-114 Union St., provided rent-free by Virginia Weiss. Father Frank Schaefer (Blessed Sacrament Church) was a very active volunteer.

In the summer of 1975, the Newark Drug Forum received a grant from the Area Agency on Aging to provide information and referral services to senior citizens. In the following year information and referral services were expanded to serve the general population with United Way and Title XX funding.

In 1977, the addition of a telephone diversion allowed the Crisis Center to provide 24-hour access for the community. In 1980, with the installation of a fourth line, the Crisis Center became available to the western Licking County population on a toll-free basis. In the mid-2000's, Pathways began providing Crisis/Hotline and Information Center services to Knox County. In 2007 and 2008, the Crisis/Hotline and Information Center, as it is now known, was designated by the PUCO as the 2-1-1 provider for Licking and Knox Counties respectively.

Today, the 2-1-1 Crisis Hotline handles over 28,000 calls per year. All staff positions are paid and new staff receives 50 hours of training before going solo on the phones. All staff pursues the Certified Information and Referral Specialist credential. Two staff members are on each shift 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days per year. Staff has access to a comprehensive database that is constantly updated with local resources.

The 2-1-1 Crisis Hotline and Information Center is certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health as a Behavioral Health Hotline and is a participating center of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK).

### **Center for Prevention Services**

Pathways has been providing alcohol and other drug abuse prevention and education services to the Licking County community since 1973. In the beginning, Prevention Specialists provided drug and alcohol abuse prevention programming in area schools. The Junior Youth to Youth program began in the spring of 1987 and Youth to Youth camps were offered each year in either the spring or summer until 2009.

In March of 1991, Pathways began a program called Project Power (later known as Kid Power Plus), which took prevention presentations to local preschools and daycares. In 1998, The Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Grant enabled us to encompass service for middle and high school youth, allowing for the addition of year round Youth to Youth programming.

In response to the 1997 Licking County Needs Assessment, Pathways wrote and was awarded a grant through ODADAS for the newly created Wellness Partnership Program, placing Prevention Specialists in pediatricians' offices to work on wellness issues with parents and children. The program began operations in February 1998 and ended in 2011.

In the early 2000s, Pathways introduced the evidenced-based curriculums LifeSkills and Project ALERT to local school

districts, which continue to be delivered today. In 2007, Pathways contracted with the Granville Exempted Village School District to place a substance abuse prevention specialist on-site 20 hours per week. Pathways staff also serve on the Operations and other subcommittees of the "Our Futures Licking County" community coalition.

In 2008, Pathways was approached by local school districts to consider delivering a substance abuse prevention/education program for youth that were in the very beginning stages of alcohol and other drug use. UTurn, an Early Intervention program (based on the evidence-based program Prime for Life) was developed to meet this community need and continues to be offered as a five hour class to youth ages 12-21.

In 2011, Pathways received a grant from Denison University's Venture Philanthropy Club to establish the "Licking County Prescription Drug Abuse Initiative." The primary purpose of the initiative is to raise awareness of the problem of prescription drug misuse and abuse in Licking County and to offer a safe disposal process to eliminate unwanted medications from the community. The initiative was awarded additional support from the Cardinal Health Foundation in 2012 and 2013 to maintain the efforts of the Licking County Prescription Drug Task Force the community collaborative which coordinates the efforts of the initiative.

Pathways established the [Youth Leadership Council](#) (YLC) of Licking County, an award-winning youth-led prevention project comprised of youth from across the county who commit a year of service in an effort to educate and inform parents, professionals and their peers of the harmful effects of substance use/abuse and violence. To date, the YLC has presented over 600 hours of classroom presentations, produced multiple prevention programs/events and received both local and state-wide recognition as an effective youth-led program.

In 2013, with support from Mental Health & Recovery for Licking & Knox Counties, Pathways began addressing problem gambling concerns in Licking and Knox Counties. The [Play It Safe](#) Initiative was created as an educational marketing campaign designed to inform residents in both counties about the hazards associated with problem gambling. A traditional and social media campaign was initiated including the creation of [playitsafeohio.org](#) and prevention staff began talking about problem gambling with elementary and middle school students through evidence-based classroom presentations. Pathways staff participated in the planning of and preseted at the inaugural state-wide problem gambling conference sponsored by the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.

Pathways received the Start Talking Grant from the Office of Ohio First Lady Karen Kasich in 2014 to increase evidence-based prevention services to more than 1700 elementary, middle and high school students throughout Licking County. The grant allowed Pathways to maintain and grow partnerships with area school districts and begin services to buildings that had not been served in years.

Pathways provides comprehensive prevention and wellness services, consultation and technical assistance (covering topics including substance abuse, bullying, suicide, problem gambling and prescription drug misuse) to the community and now serves nearly every school district in the county at all grade levels. Pathways is certified as a prevention agency and all staff are individually certified as prevention specialists by the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). The Center for Prevention Services continues to be recognized as "the prevention agency" in Licking County.

### **Professional Development Center for Early Learning**

In 1988, Pathways responded to the growing need for childcare for working parents by creating a countywide childcare resource and referral program called Child Care Connections. Since January 1990, Child Care Connections, now the Professional Development Center for Early Learning has offered child care referrals for working parents, a resource and toy lending library, background checks, child care provider training, newsletters, and other resource materials. It has recruited family child care home providers and has coordinated Licking County training events.

While continuing to assist parents in securing child care for their children, the Professional Development Center (PDC) has greatly expanded its training and technical assistance to child care providers over the years. In 2001, Pathways began the only comprehensive Child Development Associate (CDA) program in Licking County. The CDA National Credentialing Program is a major national effort initiated in 1971. The purpose of the program is to enhance the quality of child care by defining; evaluating and recognizing the competence of child care professionals. The CDA Credential is awarded to child care professionals who have demonstrated their skill in working with young children and their families by successfully completing the CDA assessment process. This process includes 120 clock hours of training, development of a professional portfolio, meeting specific criteria during an observation and completion of a standardized test. Almost 200 child care professionals have earned their CDA credential through the program since 2001.

Pathways began offering background checks in 2003 through a grant from EcoLab and expanded to include FBI checks in 2008. A toy lending library was added in 2009.

The Director's Network was started in 2007 in response to requests from child care center administrators to have a forum for networking. The "Pathways to Quality" Conference (first held in 2008) and "Learning to Live Healthy" (also started in 2008) were born out of this group. The two-day conference hosted over 145 participants in 2009. "Learning to Live Healthy" is a series of six trainings sessions that teaches child care professionals to integrate nutrition, fitness and wellness education into their existing curriculum.

Professional Development Center also provides support for "Step Up to Quality" by offering specialized training and technical assistance to all early care and education programs. "Step Up To Quality" is Ohio's voluntary quality rating system established in 2007 for Ohio Department of Job and Family Services licensed child care programs and Type A family child care homes. "Step Up To Quality" recognizes early care and education programs that exceed quality benchmarks over and above Ohio's licensing standards. Programs can achieve ratings of one, two or three stars.

The Professional Development Center for Early Learning, is affiliated with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA), the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) and is a member of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

In 2016, the Pathways' Board of Directors voted to close the Professional Development Center for Early Learning.

### **Parent Education Center**

Capable Parents began serving the community in 1990. It started with one part-time prevention specialist and offered one curriculum, "Parent to Parent" a parent education program targeted to parents of middle and high school youth. Capable Parents also provided information of the effects of ATOD use during pregnancy to clinics and doctors' offices.

In response to community need, Pathways added a curriculum for the parents of young children and home-based parent education for those unable to attend a class.

The Licking County Children and Families First Council (LCCFC) awarded Pathways several grants. The Capable Parents program received two two-year grants, the first for a home-based child development program including education, mentoring and referrals, and the second for Parenting with Humor workshops. Staff expanded to 2.5 FTEs.

In collaboration with the Woodlands the Capable Parents Program provided the Families and Schools Together Program (FAST) to Head Start parents and children. The FAST program then moved to Flying Colors Public Preschool.

In 2003 the Capable Parents Program began using the evidenced-based "Parents as Teachers" for the home-based services. During this time, staff was also trained to work with the parents of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome children.

Then, the Community Mental Health and Recovery Board of Licking and Knox Counties (CMHRB) asked Pathways to consider providing the Incredible Years curriculum, in collaboration with Flying Colors Public Preschool and Moundbuilders Guidance Center. The Incredible Years Program received a three-year grant from the Ohio Children Trust Fund to continue the program. The CMHRB also provided funding for this program. The Incredible Years program continues to collaborate with Flying Colors to provide programs for children and parents.

Pathways also began the Clean and Sober Parenting Program at Courage House, a residential program for women recovering from substance abuse. The "Active Parenting Now" program was added to address the needs of parents with children 5 through 12 years of age.

Early funding came from the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) Women's Set Aside grant, which continues today. The Capable Parents Program, with their new name, the Parent Education Center, also receives funding from United Way of Licking County and the CMHRB. The Parent Education Center is certified by ODADAS and ODMH as a prevention program.