

Press Release

Rachel Koller, Communications Specialist
330-451-8882/ Rachel.Koller@jfs.ohio.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STARK JFS ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT AND PROJECT KARE COORDINATOR HONORED FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

Canton, Ohio - Stark County Job & Family Services (SCJFS) is proud to announce that Michelle Neisel, administrative assistant for the Division of Children Services and Project KARE coordinator, has received the Above and Beyond Award for Outstanding Leadership in Developing Innovative and Collaborative Practices on Behalf of Children and Families.

Neisel was recognized during the 48th Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner, hosted by Stark County Prosecutor Kyle L. Stone, and the Stark County Victims' Rights Coalition. The event celebrates individuals and organizations whose exceptional service strengthens families, uplifts communities, and improves the lives of others throughout Stark County.

"I am honored and touched to have received this award but truly could not do the work I do as Project KARE Coordinator without the support of our incredible Project KARE board members, the dedicated and hard-working staff at Children Services, and our generous donors," said Neisel.



Chelsea Fashbaugh, Angi Rosa, Michelle Neisel, and Kyle L. Stone.

Neisel began her career with Stark County Job & Family Services in 1989 and has been part of the Division of Children Services for more than three decades. She became involved with Project KARE—a 501(c)(3) charitable organization supporting children and families involved with SCJFS—36 years ago when she first began assisting with the Foster Parent Fund. Today, she serves as Project KARE Coordinator, managing communications, budgets, events, and day-to-day operations with exceptional organization, efficiency, and heart.

Her leadership has helped expand and sustain key Project KARE programs that bring hope, joy, and stability to local children and families. These include the Back to School Project, Birthday Buddies, Holiday Project, and Rising Up/Moving On, which celebrates youth aging out of foster care. Project KARE also honors foster families through events such as the Foster Parent Recognition Banquet and Fall Frolic, ensuring that caregivers feel supported and valued for the vital role they play.

Neisel credits her late mother as her greatest inspiration, describing her as "always helping others." She carries her mother's spirit of kindness and compassion into every aspect of her work. "Working in child welfare, I've witnessed many children face difficult circumstances," Neisel said. "Knowing that, in some small way, I might help brighten a child's life or make a lasting impact inspires me every single day. Seeing a smile on a child's face or hearing a heartfelt 'thank you' reminds me exactly why this work matters."

"Michelle's dedication, empathy, and unwavering commitment have touched countless lives and strengthened the very heart of Project KARE," said Angi Rosa, Children Services Training Supervisor. "Her work goes far beyond day-to-day operations – she brings warmth, hope and humanity to everything she does."

Through her tireless work and compassionate spirit, Michelle Neisel continues to make a lasting impact on the children, families, and community members of Stark County—going truly above and beyond in service to others.

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