

# Belmont County Court of Common Pleas, Juvenile Division 2025 Annual Report

Honorable Albert E. Davies  
Court of Common Pleas  
Juvenile and Probate Division  
Courthouse  
101 W. Main Street  
St. Clairsville, Ohio 43950

## From the Judge

To the Citizens of Belmont County,


We are pleased to present the 2025 Annual Report of the Court of Common Pleas of Belmont County, Ohio, Probate/Juvenile Division. As is typical for this court, the past year presented many challenges and some difficult situations, but with those challenges and situations came opportunities to assist vulnerable children and families here in our community. And, once again, with the support of an experienced, dedicated, and skilled staff, and a range of evidence-based programs, we were able to meet those challenges and have several successful outcomes. But rest assured, our focus on justice remains our highest priority and is central to all that we do.



The Belmont County Juvenile Court is proud to share the continued success of its Community Service and Restitution Programs. In 2025, the Restitution Program returned \$4,484.53 to crime victims, a 3% increase from the previous year. Meanwhile, 71 juveniles completed 3,978 hours of community service—a remarkable 385% increase in hours compared to 2023. These efforts supported local entities such as the Belmont County Fairgrounds, food pantries in St. Clairsville and Flushing, the St. Clairsville Recreation Center, Shadyside Village, St. Mary’s Martins Ferry, and more. These programs embody the court’s commitment to accountability and community improvement while helping youth take responsibility for their actions and make meaningful contributions to the community.

Once again, your Belmont County Juvenile Court applied for and received a \$7,000 grant from the Community Foundation of the Ohio Valley, specifically through the River Valley Health Fund. The grant provided 65 juveniles on probation with backpacks containing hygiene items before the start of school. These backpacks were distributed at a picnic featuring a healthy meal and a motivational speaker. The response from the juveniles and their families was overwhelmingly positive.

Belmont County is a special place and there are many service organizations, corporations, individuals, and clubs who recognize that our children represent the future of our county and no matter what their social or economic background is, they all deserve the opportunity to live in a safe, sober, and caring home environment. To that end, we have several programs for children and families that we offer in the Belmont County Juvenile Court and a substantial portion of the funding for these programs comes from charitable donations that are made to the Friends of the Belmont County Juvenile Court, a 501(C)(3) organization. The list of donors is impressive and every donation, no matter how much, is greatly appreciated and put to good use. All donations are used for the operation of Court’s programs and the benefit of the children and families we serve. To all the donors to the Friends of the Belmont County Juvenile Court, thank you, thank you, thank you!



And thank you all so much for allowing me the privilege of serving as the Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Belmont County, Ohio, Probate/Juvenile Division. Your continued support and trust inspire me to remain steadfast in my commitment to justice, guided by honesty, integrity, responsibility, faith in God, and genuine care for those we serve.

Very Truly Yours,

**Albert E. Davies**

Judge of the Court of Common Pleas  
Of Belmont County, Ohio,  
Probate/Juvenile Division

## Juvenile Court Staff

### ***The Honorable Albert E. Davies***

Amy Basic  
Dave Carter  
Jim Langford  
Andrea Brueggemeier

### ***Juvenile Judge***

Magistrate  
Court Administrator  
Bailiff  
Fiscal Officer

### **Clerks**

Amy Tonkovich (Chief Deputy Clerk)  
Michelle Lindsey (Assistant Chief Deputy Clerk)  
Gina Walker  
Kara Baker

Linda Timko  
Mary Lyle  
Amy Bilyeu

### **Probation Officers**

Kelly Carter (Chief Probation Officer)  
Allison Powell  
Aaron Walker  
Courtney Cook  
Kara Mowery

### **Truant Officer**

Jonell Tolzda

### **Alternative School/CCAP Program/Community Service**

Noah Atkinson (Coordinator/Probation Officer)  
Melanie Haswell (Teacher)

### **Diversion Program**

Mary Lyle (Program Coordinator)

### **Assigned to Juvenile Court**

Rhonda Greenwood (Asst. Prosecuting Attorney)  
Ted Tsoras (Asst. Public Defender)  
Elizabeth Glick (Mediator)



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## Judge Albert E. Davies

The Honorable Albert E. Davies took the Oath of Office as the Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Belmont County, Probate/Juvenile Division, on August 6, 2018. Governor John R. Kasich appointed him. Judge Davies was elected to the bench on November 6, 2018, to complete the remainder of the unexpired term ending February 8, 2021. Judge Davies was then elected to a full term (six years) beginning in February 2021. Serving as a judge for the Belmont County Court, Eastern Division, from January 1, 2015, until August 6, 2018, Judge Davies is honored to serve the judiciary as the Belmont County Juvenile and Probate Judge.



After receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business from Miami University and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Toledo College of Law, Judge Davies began his career as a lawyer and was admitted to practice in the state courts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and the Southern District of Ohio, Federal Court. Judge Davies was a partner in the law firm of Myser & Davies for over 25 years, practicing criminal law, family law, school law, municipal law, corporate law, and personal injury. He has represented several school districts in Belmont County and served as the Law Director for the City of St. Clairsville.

Judge Davies is a member of the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges, the Ohio Association of Probate Court Judges, the Juvenile Law and Procedure Committee with the Ohio Judicial Conference, the National Association of Juvenile Court Judges, the National Association of Probate Court Judges and the Belmont County Bar Association. He previously served as president of the Belmont County Bar Association. Judge Davies is a St. Clairsville Chamber of Commerce member and the St. Clairsville Sunrise Rotary Club member. He has served on the Board of Directors for Belco Works and the Belmont County Special Olympics. Judge Davies is currently the lead Judge for the Oakview Juvenile Rehabilitation Center and is on the Board of Trustees for the Belmont Harrison Juvenile District.

Judge Davies attends the Harbor of Hope church and resides in St. Clairsville with his wife, Lenora Davies. They have two children.

## Mission and Purpose of the Juvenile Court

Juvenile Court is a division of the Court of Common Pleas. The Common Pleas has three divisions, each with a specific jurisdiction: Probate, Juvenile, and General.

The Belmont County Juvenile Court is mandated to handle cases of children who are delinquent, unruly, neglected, dependent, or abused. The Court also has the authority to take appropriate action deemed to be in the children's best interests while considering what is necessary for the protection of the community. Juvenile Courts have jurisdiction in juvenile traffic cases as well as adult cases involving paternity, custody, and/or child support, contributing to the delinquency of minors and failure to send children to school.

The mission of the Juvenile Court is stated in Sections 2151 and 2152 of the Ohio Revised Code and the Rules of Juvenile Procedure as promulgated by the Supreme Court of Ohio. The guidelines are as follows:

- To Provide for the care, protection, mental and physical development of the children subject to the Ohio Revised Code.
- To protect the public interest in removing the consequences of criminal behavior and the tarnish of criminality from children committing delinquent acts and to substitute therefore a program of supervision, care, and rehabilitation.
- To achieve the foregoing purposes, whenever possible, in a family environment, separating the child from parents only when necessary for the welfare of the child or in the interests of public safety.
- To provide judicial procedure through which the parties are assured a fair hearing and where constitutional and other legal rights are recognized and enforced.
- To (1) protect the public interest and safety, (2) hold offenders accountable, (3) to restore victims, (4) rehabilitate offenders, (5) provide for the care, protection, and mental and physical development of children. These purposes are to be achieved through a system of graduated sanctions and services.

## CASE PROCEDURES

### 1. COMPLAINT

The complainant must go to the Prosecutor's Office and fill out a statement of facts about the case. A complaint may be filed by the police, probation officer, school officials, parents, victims, or any adult who has knowledge of an offense. The Intake Clerk at the Prosecutor's Office then obtains approval from the Assistant Prosecuting Attorney assigned to the Juvenile Court as to the proper charge to be filed. The complaint is typed by the clerk, signed by the complainant, and sent to the Juvenile Court's Chief Deputy Clerk. The complaint is then filed with the Court and scheduled for a plea hearing. (In some cases of first-time offenders, the complaint may be passed on to the Diversion Program Coordinator for unofficial handling.) The complaint file is then processed, and a deputy clerk issues proper notices to the parties.

### 2. PLEA HEARING

The initial Court appearance is the plea hearing. During this hearing, an individual is apprised of their right to counsel, and other constitutional and procedural rights, and is made aware of the allegations regarding the charge. If an individual denies the charge, the matter is set for pretrial. If a person admits the charge or the juvenile denies and is subsequently found to be delinquent or unruly, the matter may then be continued for disposition or the Court may immediately follow with the adjudicatory and dispositional hearings.

### 3. PRETRIAL

A pretrial is held in cases when a denial has been entered. The prosecutor and the defendant, along with any representative the defendant may have, discuss the case informally. During this process, the participants in the case gain information to formulate planning for further proceedings. The case is discussed off the record with all parties involved. If an agreement can be reached the case is presented to the Judge.

### 4. ADJUDICATORY HEARING

This hearing is to determine whether a child is a juvenile traffic offender, delinquent, unruly, abused, neglected, or dependent child, or otherwise within the jurisdiction of the Court upon a finding or admission of guilt.

### 5. DISPOSITIONAL HEARING

The dispositional hearing determines what action shall be taken or the sentence given. The Court considers many factors, such as previous records, relationship with family members, employment, counseling reports, school reports, and/or mental and physical development. Considerations are given to victims, the protection of the community, and the rehabilitation of the individual while ensuring accountability for unruly and criminal actions.

## DISPOSITIONS

Disposition in Belmont County Juvenile Court can be any one or more of the following depending on case type in addition to any other orders the Judge chooses to impose:

- Detention
- Fines/Court Costs
- Curfew
- Restitution
- Community Service
- Probation
- Driver's License Suspension
- Dismissal
- Custody with Children Services
- CCAP (Concentrated Conduct Adjustment Program)
- House Arrest/GPS Monitoring
- Referrals to outside agency services
- Family/Individual Counseling
- Family Dependency Treatment Court
- Referrals to Court programs
- Residential Treatment
- Parenting Classes
- Commitment to the Department of Youth Services
- Drug Screening
- CrossFit Program
- Ready Assess Driving Program

## COURT PROGRAMS

The Belmont County Juvenile Court uses a wide range of treatment services and programs to support rehabilitation and provide alternatives to incarceration. Each youth's case is carefully reviewed through assessments, one-on-one interactions, and collaboration with other county agencies and service providers when determining appropriate sentencing and case planning options.

The Court is committed to offering programming that reflects current national research and best practices in juvenile justice. As society continues to change, the Court recognizes the influence of technology, social media, and evolving family dynamics on today's youth. These factors are thoughtfully considered to ensure a full understanding of each youth's circumstances and to provide fair, effective case evaluations aimed at reducing future court involvement.

Court staff participate in ongoing training throughout the year to stay informed on updated treatment approaches, available community resources, changes to state law, and emerging trends in juvenile justice. Staying current with research and best practices at both the state and national levels is essential to the Court's operations. This continued education allows staff to improve and expand services while carefully considering program types, treatment length, and effective behavioral intervention strategies.

## PROBATION

The Probation Department is led by Chief Probation Officer Kelly Carter, a graduate of West Liberty University with a degree in Criminal Justice. The Court employs one bailiff and six probation officers, including one officer who specializes in substance abuse cases.

Each probation officer manages a caseload and closely monitors juveniles through regular face-to-face contact, including unannounced home and school visits. These visits allow probation officers to build relationships with youth and their families while encouraging positive behavior and accountability. Probation terms and case plans outline clear expectations and goals for each juvenile, such as curfews, drug testing, stay-away orders, academic requirements, behavior improvement goals, and strengthening family relationships.

The Probation Department has staff trained in evidence-based practices, including Carey Guides and Motivational Interviewing. Probation officers conduct random drug testing and have arrest authority when necessary. Officers provide regular reports to the Belmont County Juvenile Court on each youth's progress and compliance with court-ordered case plans. While officers may file violations, motions to impose, or request warrants, they also focus on connecting youth to community agencies and Court-based programs that support rehabilitation.



In addition, the Probation Department meets routinely with juveniles under court supervision to provide guidance, structure, and support. Probation officers also engage with the community by speaking publicly and maintaining regular communication with local schools and law enforcement agencies

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE INTERVENTION DOCKET (SAID)**



Established in 2009, the Substance Abuse Intervention Docket (SAID) is operated by the Drug Court Program staff and serves as a diversion program that typically lasts about ninety (90) days. The program is designed to provide education and early intervention services for youth who may need substance abuse treatment. By addressing drug and alcohol use—including vaping—as well as related discipline issues, criminal behavior, absenteeism, and truancy, SAID plays an important role in reducing further involvement of youth in the juvenile justice system.

Eligibility for participation in the SAID program is limited to juveniles charged with a first offense involving drug or alcohol use, including tobacco, that qualifies as a misdemeanor or tobacco offense under the Ohio Revised Code. To enter the program, the juvenile must admit that

the charges outlined in the complaint are substantially true. In addition, both the juvenile and their parent(s) or guardian(s) must agree to cooperate fully and comply with the terms and conditions set forth in an Agreed Order.

When a juvenile and their family successfully participate in SAID and follow all program requirements, the case is not formally filed with the Belmont County Juvenile Court and does not result in a juvenile record. While the program generally lasts ninety (90) days, participation may be extended based on the youth's progress and compliance with program expectations.

If, during the period of court supervision, the juvenile or parent(s) fail to comply with the Agreed Order, incur additional charges, refuse or fail drug, alcohol, or nicotine testing, show little effort toward completing the program, or voluntarily withdraw, the case will then be filed with the Belmont County Juvenile Court. During the reporting period, the program served thirteen juveniles.

## **FAMILY DEPENDENCY TREATMENT COURT**

The Belmont County Family Dependency Treatment Court is currently suspended due to low enrollment. If the need arises, the program can be restarted with certification from the Ohio Supreme Court.

## C-CAP (CONCENTRATED CONDUCT ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM)

In its thirty-first year of operation, C-CAP (Concentrated Conduct Adjustment Program) is under the direction of Noah Atkinson, a graduate of Muskingum University with a degree in Business and West Liberty University with an Education Certification. Under Mr. Atkinson's guidance, the C-CAP program continues to provide dedicated service to youth under the supervision of the Court.

Through the years, C-CAP has been successful in making a difference in the lives of youth by providing an alternative to incarceration with an educational and social skills-building approach to working with youth. Juveniles referred to this program participate in group sessions, community service projects, educational work, and independent living skills. Transportation is often provided for youth throughout the county to attend.



The C-CAP program entails the following:

### Summer C-CAP Program

Juveniles have charges filed against them and appear in Court. The Judge sentences the juvenile to the C-CAP Program, or the probation department makes a referral. The youth participate in a 10-week program, four days per week. Two of the four days are dedicated to community service throughout the county, and transportation is provided by the probation staff. The remaining programming entails a holistic approach of mental/social, physical, and emotional programming designed to equip the youth with the necessary tools to be successful.

### Wednesday C-CAP Program

The program during the school year operates two Wednesdays per month. Youth are picked up from their home school by probation staff and transported to a community site where they will participate in life-skill-building activities and perform community service at the designated site. Youth are referred to the program through the Court/Probation. The amount of time youth will spend in the Wednesday C-CAP Program is determined by the Court/Probation.

## ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL/VIRTUAL LEARNING PROGRAM



The Alternative School consists of two programs that provide different classroom experiences for students in grades five through twelve. All school districts in Belmont County participate in and provide financial support for the Alternative School programs.

The Alternative School Classroom is designed for short-term placement of students who have been suspended from their home school districts. This program supports existing school discipline plans and serves as an alternative to out-of-school suspensions. The Virtual Learning Program (VLP) is intended for students who are credit deficient, at risk of dropping out, or who need a non-traditional learning environment to be successful.

The VLP was established in 2011 as an expansion of the Alternative School curriculum. It assists students enrolled in homeschooling or online programs who are having difficulty completing coursework in their home environments. Schools may also refer students for credit recovery or for support when they struggle in a traditional classroom setting. In 2025, 48 youth participated in the VLP, with 14 students successfully earning enough credits to graduate from high school. Youth may be referred to the Alternative School by the Court or school personnel to receive assistance with completing online assignments. Through structure, encouragement, and academic support, students are able to recover lost instructional time and make progress toward graduation. The VLP also offers credit recovery services that align with the Summer C-CAP Program for students enrolled in Belmont County schools.

The goals of the Alternative School include providing a structured environment during suspensions, supporting school districts in addressing non-compliance, helping students better understand their academic and behavioral challenges, offering an alternative to the traditional classroom, and reducing dropout rates by allowing students to remain on track with their grade level. In 2025, the Alternative School served a total of 439 students, with vaping accounting for approximately 50 percent of all placements.

### School Guidelines

1. Students suspended from their home schools are required to attend the C-CAP Alternative School for the duration of their suspension, as referred by their school district.
2. If a student is suspended three (3) times, the Alternative School will request that the home school district file charges to be handled by the Belmont County Juvenile Court.
3. Home school districts provide class assignments, which students complete with teacher assistance at the Alternative School. Students are responsible for returning completed work to their home school teachers. Students who refuse to complete assignments or do not complete them correctly will not receive academic credit.
4. Counseling agencies and guest speakers regularly visit classrooms to provide educational presentations and support services.

5. Schools may refer students to complete online coursework during the summer months for credit recovery.

## DIVERSION PROGRAM

Now in its twenty-fifth year of operation, the Diversion Program is directed by Diversion Program Coordinator Mary Lyle, a graduate of West Liberty University with a degree in Criminal Justice. The Diversion Program provides an efficient and effective alternative for youth with a first offense, allowing them to avoid formal involvement in the juvenile justice system.

The Belmont County Juvenile Court receives referrals to the Diversion Program through complaints filed by the Belmont County Prosecuting Attorney. Eligibility is limited to youth charged with a first offense that is unrelated to traffic violations or illegal substance use and qualifies as a misdemeanor under the Ohio Revised Code. Participation is subject to the discretion of the Court.

After a complaint is reviewed, the youth and their parent(s) or guardian(s) are notified in writing by the Diversion Program Coordinator of the scheduled conference date and time. To participate, the youth must admit that the charges in the complaint are substantially true, pay a \$75.00 program fee, and agree—along with their parent(s)—to comply with the terms of an Agreed Order. Through the Agreed Order, the Diversion Program Coordinator may impose appropriate consequences, including curfews, informal driver’s license suspensions, counseling, no-contact orders with co-defendants or victims, writing assignments or reports, verification of school attendance, community service, electronically monitored house arrest, and drug screening.

When the youth and parent(s) successfully follow all program requirements, the complaint is not formally filed with the Belmont County Juvenile Court and does not result in a permanent juvenile record. Participation in the Diversion Program typically lasts ninety (90) days, though the length of involvement may vary based on the youth’s compliance and progress.

Upon successful completion of the program, all Diversion records are sealed immediately, leaving the juvenile with no permanent record in the juvenile justice system. If a youth denies or disputes the charges, the scheduled conference is canceled and the complaint is filed, requiring the youth to appear before the Judge to respond to the allegations.

Since its inception, the Diversion Program has proven effective in reducing repeat offenses among participating youth. In 2025, 93 youth were referred to the program by the Belmont County Prosecuting Attorney, with 84 choosing to participate. Five youth were dismissed from the program for failing to comply with program requirements, and three additional cases were dismissed by the Prosecutor. As a result, nine youth who declined participation, along with the five removed from the program, had their cases formally filed and appeared before the Judge.

In 2025, the Diversion Program collected a total of \$4,675.00 in program fees.

## RESTITUTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

The Restitution and Community Service Program is a two-part program that serves not only victims of crime but also holds youth accountable for their negative actions. The Restitution portion of the program allows youth to compensate victims for their financial loss. The Court may order the juvenile to reimburse the victim to the original state of their out-of-pocket loss. In the case of co-defendant (s), the



restitution is divided by the number of juveniles involved. Each juvenile is required to make monthly payments to the Court and the victims will receive reimbursement checks as payments are received. If a co-defendant is incarcerated, has absconded from the area, or otherwise is not capable of paying their portion of restitution, the other juvenile(s) involved in the case is required to fulfill the prorated share of the restitution, allowing the victim to be reimbursed to their full loss amount.

The victim's losses are verified by the Belmont County Juvenile Prosecutor. The Court orders restitution based on the recommendations and findings of the Prosecutor's office. If a juvenile fails to make their restitution payments promptly, a "review hearing" may be set. Once the juvenile has satisfied the requirements of the Court, a completion form is sent to the juvenile and the victim will receive compensation for their loss.

The second part of the program, the Community Service Program, allows youth to perform court-ordered community service hours. Most of these cases involve minor infractions such as curfew violations, underage consumption, and probation violations. There are numerous acceptable community service sites available such as parks and recreation centers, schools, libraries, churches, and local animal shelters. The program coordinator works with the site supervisor to monitor the child and track the hours completed.

Youth may be involved with both the Restitution and Community Service portions of this program. In 2025, 71 youths were involved with the program, accounting for approximately 3,964 hours of court-ordered community service completed. A total of \$4,484.53 was collected in restitution for victims.

## CARTEENS

In 1999, the Court began the Carteens program in cooperation with The Ohio State University Extension Office. “Car” stands for “caution and responsibility,” while “teens” stands for teenagers who help prepare and present the program. Carteens is a diversion program in which the Belmont County Juvenile Court refers first-time traffic offenders for moving violations such as speeding (if under 21 miles per hour over the limit), stop sign violations, and failure to control without injury. The Court determines which cases are to be diverted to the Carteens Program.



By attending this three-hour program with a parent, custodian, or guardian, the juvenile may be able to avoid having their traffic offense reported to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Classes are held approximately twice monthly at The Ohio State University Extension office. A \$75.00 fee is required to be paid at the time of attendance. The Ohio State University Extension office retains all monies collected to operate the program. Successful attendance and cooperation with the program, if referred through diversion, will result in the dismissal of the juvenile traffic case. For traffic offenses not eligible for diversion the Judge can refer the youth to Carteens as part of the sentencing for educational purposes.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol and local law enforcement are supportive of this program and often provide speakers. Films, pictures, and night vision goggles are part of the program to educate teens on the risks of driving irresponsibly. The Carteens' goal is to reduce the number of repeat traffic offenders by increasing awareness of traffic safety issues. This program is self-funded with 109 juveniles referred in 2025.

## GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM

The Belmont County Juvenile Court Guardian Ad Litem (G.A.L.) advocates for young people who are involved in the juvenile justice system. G.A.L. are court-appointed volunteers who do not act as an attorney, but serve as an advisor to the Court regarding the child's best interests. The Chief Deputy Clerk is appointed to maintain and oversee this program ensuring appropriate training is received by all volunteers. G.A.L.'s hold discussions with the child and other interested parties relevant to the case and prepare a written report for the Court. The responsibility of the G.A.L. continues until the completion of the case. A G.A.L. may be appointed for any youth involved with the Juvenile Court who are delinquent, dependent, neglected, or abused children. Training programs are required annually for court-appointed G.A.L.

## **INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

Local college students are placed in various Court programs as interns through formal agreements between the Court, the educational institution, and the student. These internships provide students with hands-on experience in the daily operations of the Court and its programs, offering valuable insight into the juvenile justice system.

Through this experience, interns can observe the work of the Court, the Probation Department, and related programs firsthand. Court staff welcome the opportunity to mentor and support college students as they gain practical knowledge and prepare for future careers in the justice system.

## **PARENT PROJECT**

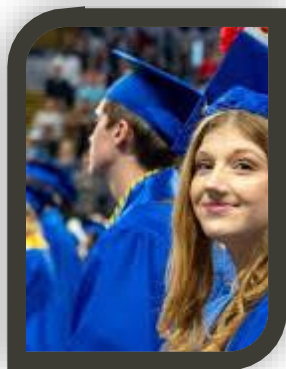
The Parent Project was implemented in 2019 to provide support to parents of youth involved with the juvenile system. A nationally recognized program, Parent Project can assist parents in dealing with the destructive, negative behaviors of teens. Certified instructors, CCAP Director Noah Atkinson, and Chief Probation Officer Kelly Carter, oversee the program. Parent Project classes are held virtually via Zoom. The curriculum consists of 10 weeks of courses for parents to achieve successful completion. Classes are held one day per week typically from 6:00-8:00 pm. Parents are expected to attend all classes. As the focus is to offer support to parents in learning new skills in parenting through discussions and class work, children are not permitted to attend. Parent Project offers guidance in the everyday interactions between children and parents to improve the relationships within the family. Classes are offered twice per year. In 2025, during the spring session, 16 parents participated with an additional 13 parents participating in the fall session.

## **Teen Recharge Program**

The Teen Recharge Program is a new initiative designed to equip strong-willed teens with the tools they need to foster accountability, personal growth, and positive decision-making. The program is modeled after and aligned with the Parent Project—a nationally recognized, evidence-based program Belmont County Juvenile Court has offered to parents since 2019. Like the Parent Project, the Teen Recharge Program follows a 10-week format and provides practical skills, strategies, and real-world tools for improving behavior, strengthening relationships, and creating lasting change.

This groundbreaking program is the result of a collaborative effort between Belmont County Court staff and the following partner agencies: Harrison County Juvenile Court, Kendall Behavioral Solutions, NAMI, Belmont County Health Department, Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Belmont County Mental Health and Recovery Board, Tri-County, and Belmont County Student Services.

## TRUANCY PROGRAM



The Truancy Program, created in 2009, works closely in partnership with school districts throughout Belmont County. Truant officer, Jonell Tolzda, a graduate of Kent State University, works diligently with school officials to improve the attendance of youth to utilize diversion techniques to avoid court involvement.

The Truancy Program is designed to prevent and eliminate truancy or unexcused absences among the students of Belmont County. The Truant Officer works directly with schools for early intervention with students who have attendance problems. The truant officer also works with families to help resolve any obstacles that can lead to truancy. The truant officer holds Parent Intervention Meetings (PIM) as a diversion to truancy charges being filed. Students and parents must both attend this one-time meeting.

Students and parents failing to participate or cooperate with the truant officers and/or continue not following the school's attendance policies will face sanctions and sentencing through the Belmont County Juvenile Court as described in the Ohio Revised Code regarding truancy. In 2025, 102 new youth were referred to truancy diversion programming, 10 complaints were filed against parents for failure to send, and 37 truant charges were filed against juveniles who had failed to comply with attempts to work with truancy diversion programming. In total, 11 youths were adjudicated of the truant filings.

## CROSSFIT PROGRAM

The "CrossFit for Change" Program began in 2022 under the probation department, with Probation Officer Courtney Cook overseeing and organizing operations. Designed to help probationers improve their mental and physical well-being, the program involves probation officers working alongside the youth participants. Probation officers mentor teens through group participation, offering support and encouragement.

The program was created in Mercer County, Ohio, and has spread to other courts nationwide. CrossFit has developed a training curriculum for their staff to work with delinquent/unruly youth and Juvenile Court Probation Officers to offer programming for youth to gain self-esteem, become physically fit, and learn healthy lifestyle options.



The program had an 8.6% recidivism rate, with a total participation of 82 youth in 2025. Thirty-five youths completed, and 21 were removed from probation upon completing the CrossFit program. Youths are transported to and from the program by probation officers after school twice weekly to participate. Healthy snacks are provided along with any necessary clothing, including shoes and gym bags. Referrals are also made to local mental health providers so that each youth can participate in counseling. Youth learn to overcome obstacles and set goals through encouragement by both peers and

adults around them. The program receives funding from the Belmont County Mental Health and Recovery Board.

## MOCK TRIAL PROGRAM

The Belmont County Juvenile Court travels throughout the county to present mock court proceedings in partnership with public and private schools. These mock hearings are based on real cases previously handled by the Court and are presented as dramatized courtroom proceedings. Juvenile probationers



voluntarily participate in the mock trials and take part in open discussions following the presentation, where they share their personal experiences. This allows youth to tell their stories and connect with peers in a meaningful way.

The program involves multiple Court and community partners, including Judge Davies, several probation officers, Juvenile Prosecutor Rhonda Greenwood, Belmont County Coroner Dr. Amanda K. Fisher, and staff from Sargus. Cases are discussed and rulings are presented in a format that closely mirrors an actual courtroom setting, giving students a realistic view of the judicial process.

The goal of the program is to educate youth about how the juvenile justice system works, explain the role of the Juvenile Court in the lives of Belmont County youth, promote abstinence from drugs and alcohol, and strengthen collaboration with local schools. These components are critical to the program's overall effectiveness and impact.

The Mock Trial Program offers an opportunity for middle school-aged youth to learn about the judicial branch and procedures. The program also provides an opportunity for the Court to educate youth as to the consequences they may face for poor decisions made in the future from vaping to inappropriate use of cell phones. It is the Court's goal that educators and parents build upon this experience to communicate with our youth about the important role of the judiciary.

## SARGUS DETENTION CENTER (BELMONT HARRISON JUVENILE DISTRICT)

The Sargus Juvenile Center, located at 68131 Hammond Road in St. Clairsville, is one of several detention facilities in Ohio and provides detention space to both Belmont and Harrison Counties. The center is operated by a seven-member board, three members from Harrison County and four from Belmont County. Sargus Detention Center was established in 1973 and was named after Judge Edmund A. Sargus, a former Juvenile Court Judge for Belmont County. The detention facility is under the operation of Director DJ Watson.

The Sargus Juvenile Center has a maximum bed capacity of 30. During 2025, total admissions for Belmont County were 220, of which 114 were female and 106 were male. The total number of bed days utilized was 5,208, of which 2,902 were in Belmont County, or 56% of the total population. Belmont

County's average daily population was 8.5 youth per day of the 14.5 total daily youth average. The Sargus Juvenile Center is an invaluable tool for the Court. Not only does Sargus provide protections for the county's citizens, but it also allows youth to receive immediate consequences for their actions and provides a safe, stable, structured environment.



Through a dedicated internet connection, Video Court hearings are transmitted, allowing for a live feed between the Juvenile Courtroom and the detention center. This feature provides significant time and cost savings to the county. No detainees are transported from the detention center to the Court for detention hearings, thus avoiding transportation costs. Transportation security issues have been eliminated and cases are processed quickly as parents report directly to the detention center for participation in the video hearings with their children.

## **OAKVIEW JUVENILE RESIDENTIAL CENTER**

The Oakview Juvenile Residential Center, located at 67701 Oakview Road in St. Clairsville, is one of the Ohio Department of Youth Services' (DYS) community corrections facilities (CCF). The program began in 1994 as a ten-bed group home and was expanded in 2005 to a 24-bed facility. The facility is under the direction of John Rowan.



The program serves adjudicated male juvenile felony offenders from Ohio's 88 counties. Offenders may be placed at Oakview instead of committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services (Ohio's Juvenile Penitentiary System) to complete a comprehensive behavioral modification program.

The Oakview program has been a positive alternative for Belmont County youth by enabling youth to remain in their local community and maintain regular contact with family members. The program is overseen by a six-member board of Juvenile Judges from Guernsey, Jefferson, Harrison, Monroe, Noble, and Belmont, with Judge Albert E. Davies presiding as the lead Judge.



## BELMONT COUNTY SCHOOLS STAYING CLEAN PROGRAM

The Juvenile Court is a proud supporter of the Belmont County Schools Staying Clean (BCSSC) program, a non-profit program promoting drug-free lifestyles for middle and high school students. The Juvenile Court works in cooperation as a partner to support the program with Chief Murphy of the Martins Ferry Police Department. Positive relationships have been established with businesses and community members to offer the program in schools throughout Belmont County, including presentations by nationally recognized guest speakers to students in Belmont County. A significant credit for the funding success of this program is due to the support of the Classy Chassis Car Club. They work annually to raise funds by organizing the Belmont County Schools Staying Clean Car Show.

BCSSC completes random drug testing for middle and high school youth who join the program. The goals are to promote abstinence, provide education on substance abuse, and promote healthy lifestyles. Through support of student activities in the community and school setting, with scheduled events for members such as picnics and extra school activities such as taco bars and pizza parties, the program has proven to be highly effective, with over 1,600 Belmont County school students participating. Tax-deductible donations may be sent to **BCSSC, P.O. Box 516, St. Clairsville, Ohio 43950**.

# STATISTICS



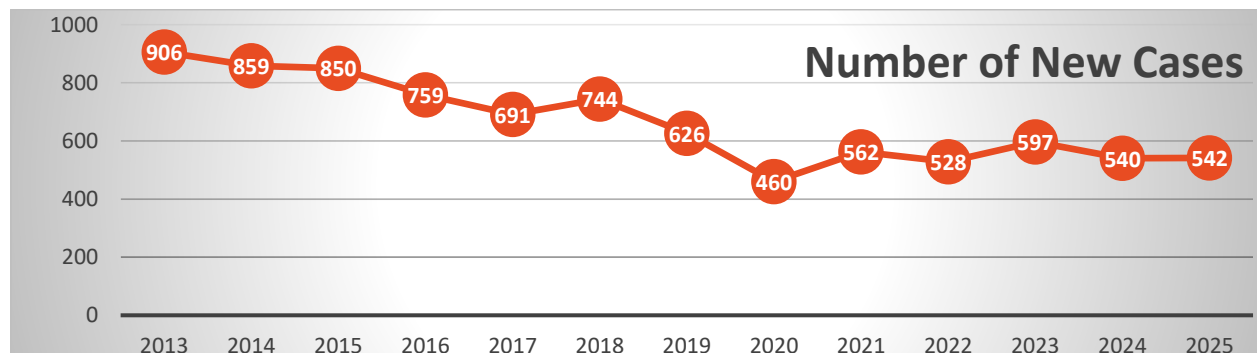
**"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."**

**Frederick Douglas**

**"Discipline is helping a child solve a problem. Punishment is making a child suffer for having a problem. To raise problem solvers, focus on solutions, not retribution." — L.R. Knost**

## The Juvenile Court New Case filings...

- \* Overall case filings increased .4% over 2024
- \* Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse filing have decreased 26.9% since last year.
- \* Delinquency filings have increased by 26% since 2019.



## New Cases Heard by Case Type


| Year                       | 2014       | 2015       | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019       | 2020       | 2021       | 2022       | 2023       | 2025       | 2025       |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Delinquent                 | 298        | 279        | 279        | 235        | 236        | 193        | 127        | 171        | 178        | 222        | 207        | 243        |
| Dependency, Neglect, Abuse | 45         | 59         | 54         | 31         | 66         | 66         | 25         | 63         | 75         | 65         | 78         | 57         |
| Parentage                  | 5          | 9          | 15         | 9          | 1          | 9          | 7          | 7          | 22         | 7          | 1          | 5          |
| Support                    | 136        | 189        | 139        | 129        | 108        | 38         | 34         | 33         | 38         | 44         | 27         | 23         |
| Custody, Visitation        | 162        | 128        | 100        | 123        | 100        | 89         | 95         | 103        | 75         | 73         | 68         | 65         |
| Traffic                    | 148        | 120        | 124        | 108        | 141        | 143        | 113        | 109        | 80         | 116        | 104        | 99         |
| Unruly                     | 174        | 29         | 18         | 27         | 69         | 72         | 50         | 55         | 40         | 41         | 33         | 26         |
| Adult Cases                | 46         | 27         | 21         | 23         | 19         | 13         | 4          | 15         | 14         | 15         | 14         | 13         |
| Contributing               | 4          | 7          | 2          | 4          | 4          | 2          | 3          | 6          | 6          | 14         | 8          | 11         |
| URESAs                     | 1          | 3          | 7          | 2          | 0          | 1          | 2          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>Total New Cases</b>     | <b>859</b> | <b>850</b> | <b>759</b> | <b>691</b> | <b>744</b> | <b>626</b> | <b>460</b> | <b>562</b> | <b>528</b> | <b>597</b> | <b>540</b> | <b>542</b> |

## New Admissions into Programs

*Note: Numbers do not reflect the actual number of youths in programs but only **new** referrals.*

| Year  | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Restitution &amp; Community Service</b>        | 55   | 58   | 53   | 43   | 73   | 106  | 45   | 58   | 37   | 43   | 92   | 71   |
| <b>Alternative School/VLP</b>                     | 266  | 267  | 285  | 275  | 241  | 309  | 239  | 376  | 412  | 439  | 436  | 405  |
| <b>CCAP</b>                                       | 12   | 14   | 17   | 9    | 19   | 21   | 6    | 14   | 18   | 20   | 24   | 21   |
| <b>Carteens</b>                                   | 150  | 124  | 111  | 67   | 135  | 115  | 115  | 106  | 82   | 112  | 106  | 109  |
| <b>Family Dependency Treatment Court</b>          | 7    | 8    | 10   | 5    | 8    | 7    | 4    | 8    | 8    | 3    | 3    | 2    |
| <b>Diversion Program</b>                          | 90   | 99   | 96   | 70   | 73   | 50   | 45   | 75   | 75   | 79   | 76   | 84   |
| <b>Probation</b>                                  | 73   | 84   | 76   | 79   | 95   | 95   | 73   | 71   | 76   | 88   | 99   | 91   |
| <b>Truancy Diversion Program</b>                  | 503  | 475  | 486  | 312  | 208  | 199  | 220  | 141  | 142  | 135  | 173  | 102  |
| <b>SAID (Substance Abuse Intervention Docket)</b> | 24   | 16   | 5    | 11   | 11   | 9    | 6    | 7    | 12   | 34*  | 19   | 11   |
| <b>CrossFit</b>                                   | -    | -    | -    | -    | -    | -    | -    | -    | 13   | 34   | 37   | 42   |
| <b>Parent Project</b>                             |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 29   |
| <b>Teen Recharge</b>                              |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 8    |

\*Vaping (tobacco) complaints were added to the SAID program in 2023.



For more information about the Belmont County Juvenile  
Court go to [www.BelmontCountyOhioCourts.com](http://www.BelmontCountyOhioCourts.com) or call  
(740)699-2141