



# NOAS ANNUAL REPORT

FY2021



## Northeast Ohio Adoption Services

Foster Care ♥ Adoption  
Mentoring ♥ Training

a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) agency



“We love working with NOAS and they are our go-to agency when we need an adoptive placement.”

— Agency Partner



# MESSAGE FROM THE **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**“Every Kid Is ONE Caring Adult Away from Being a Success Story.” — Josh Shipp**

This is such a powerful quote — **The Power of One Caring Adult! At NOAS, connection is at the heart of everything we do.**



**Fiscal Year 2021 challenged our TEAM to do more and to be better in many ways. Our staff rose to the occasion from finding creative ways to do and improve our work during an everchanging pandemic to completing the process to be accredited by the Council of Accreditation (COA).**

In July 2020, NOAS staff began a four-stage return back to the office and back to face-to-face contact with the youth, young adults, families and mentors we serve. After the first three months of isolation, we immediately began to see the effects of isolation and increased anxiety with those we guide. We found creative ways to touch base and show support. Often, it meant double the visits just to “be there”, even if it was via a screen or a text. We forged ahead with new programs such as “IGNITE Foster Youth: Mentor One Who Needs Someone,” a volunteer mentoring program to provide connection to our most vulnerable teens and young adults. We

doubled the amount of former foster youth we served through the Bridges program, offering support and guidance as the young adults dealt with COVID-19 and transitioned out of the system into adulthood. We pivoted to the virtual world with meetings, trainings and even fundraisers. But, we sure did miss seeing everyone’s faces.

Through the support of a PPP loan and many generous foundations and donors, we are proud to say we did not halt any program or service and we did not lay off any staff.

We remain firmly committed to walking alongside you through this journey with a renewed urgency that children need connections and permanency—people who deeply care about them and are willing to go the extra mile.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl Tarantino".

Cheryl Tarantino  
(Executive Director, NOAS)

# OUR TEAM'S *KEY TO SUCCESS*

## Our mission

From the beginning, we provided foster youth with lifelong permanency and positive connections.

**We exist to inspire, develop, and nurture enduring support and connections for current and former foster youth and those at risk of coming into care.**



## Our vision

Our work is focused on making tangible differences in the lives of the children and families we serve.

**We envision the day when every child and young adult has a safe and supportive family network.**



## Our values

We hold true to our core values that families, children, and young adults come first.

- **Connections**
- **Customer Service**
- **Diversity**
- **Integrity**
- **Fiscal Responsibility**
- **Teamwork**
- **Change**



**THERE ARE NO UNADOPTABLE CHILDREN,  
JUST FAMILIES WAITING TO BE FOUND.**

# FY2021

## AT A GLANCE

The NOAS team together had....

### NOAS TOTAL ADOPTIONS

# 31 Total

FACILITATED WITH NOAS AND NON-NOAS LICENSED FAMILIES

+14.8% ▲

NOAS is committed to meeting children and families where they are and to providing the necessary support for them to thrive.

### IGNITE FOSTER YOUTH MENTOR PROGRAM

# 1094 Hours

IGNITE MENTORING OUTINGS

+233.5% ▲

Outings resumed during 2021, our first full program year, and the number of matched mentees and mentors grew.

### WENDY'S WONDERFUL KIDS PROGRAM

# 168 Kids

KIDS ON REFERRAL WITH NOAS

+6.33% ▲

NOAS partners with 29 counties and works with families within a 90-minute radius area from Warren, Ohio.

### BRIDGES PROGRAM

# 101 Young Adults

RECEIVED CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

+46.4% ▲

NOAS has supported 101 young adults who aged out of foster care.

Our work is never done. NOAS will remain committed to meeting children, families and young adults where they are and providing the necessary support for them to make

permanent lifelong connections with adults who can guide these children, teens and young adults to be successful.

**CHERYL TARANTINO**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
NOAS



NOAS

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Determines policy and ensures the mission, vision and core values of NOAS are upheld.



**SHARON DEFRANCES**  
CHAIRMAN  
Farmers National Bank



**JOE VEROSTKO**  
VICE CHAIRMAN  
J.M. Verostko, Inc.



**OPEN POSITION**  
SECRETARY



**DENNIS LEWIS JR.**  
TREASURER  
Lewis Development Corp.

## MEMBERS

**Patrick Burgan**  
Burgan Real Estate

**Tara Treharn Keating**  
TC Law Library

**Deryck Toles**  
Inspiring Minds

**Kathy Cook**  
St. Joseph Hospital

**William Miner**  
Merrill Lynch

**Kelly Verostko**

**Kimberly Griffin**  
Real Living Volpini Group

**Stephanie Pullium**  
S. Jones & Associates

**Peter Verostko**  
J.M. Verostko, Inc.

**Cara Lewis Holko**  
Salon Mingle

**James Ritter**  
Kent State University

“NOAS staff is so passionate about their work with children and families. It shows in everything they do.”

NOAS  
— Board  
Member

# NOAS

## COMPANY STRUCTURE

Our staff is highly trained and strives for lifelong permanency for current and former foster youth by recruiting, preparing and supporting families and forming positive connections.

### MANAGEMENT TEAM



**JAMIE HETRICK**  
Wendy's Wonderful Kids  
Supervisor



**CARY SANDERS**  
PCC-S, LSW  
Director of Young  
Adult Programs



**KIM STEWART**  
LISW-S  
Director of Foster Care  
and Licensing



**ELIZABETH WARD**  
CPA (Inactive)  
Controller

### TEAM MEMBERS

**Gia Bagnoli-Brown, LMSW**  
Bridges Liaison and  
TBRI® Practitioner

**Kathy Evans**  
Director of Marketing  
and Recruitment

**Hannah Koran**  
Bridges Liaison

**James Margiotta**  
Wendy's Wonderful  
Kids Recruiter

**Laura Murry**  
Wendy's Wonderful  
Kids Recruiter

**Tom Uss**  
Wendy's Wonderful  
Kids Recruiter

**Terri Calautti**  
Executive Assistant

**Heather Garrett**  
Wendy's Wonderful  
Kids Recruiter

**Karissa Logan**  
Wendy's Wonderful  
Kids Recruiter

**Tiffany McFall**  
Accounting Clerk and  
Administrative Assistant

**Lei Solomon**  
Bridges Liaison

**Cindy Wallis, MA, CFLE**  
Family Recruitment and  
Training Coordinator

**Meghan Delaney**  
OhioKAN Navigator

**Olivia Gros**  
Permanency Planning  
Specialist

**Laura Holt**  
Wendy's Wonderful  
Kids Recruiter

**Sarah Moreton**  
OhioKAN Navigator

**Katy Sudol**  
Permanency Planning  
Specialist

**Chrishyra Whitfield**  
Bridges Liaison

**Kathryn DeMart**  
Permanency Planning  
Specialist

**Alicia Konopinski**  
Administrative Assistant

**Alana MacKenzie, LSW**  
TBRI® Practitioner and  
Network for Life Specialist

**Kim Morgan**  
IGNITE Program  
Coordinator

**Jennifer Thompson**  
Permanency Planning  
Specialist

**Michelle Wolcott**  
Training, CQI and  
Accreditation Coordinator

# ABOUT US

## WHAT MAKES NOAS TICK



NOAS is a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) agency

NOAS was founded in 1978 to serve children and families, with programs built on our mission to promote lifelong permanency for current and former foster youth by recruiting, preparing and supporting families and positive connections.

**NOAS has placed over 1,300 children into loving, adoptive homes throughout Northeast Ohio.**

While NOAS is perhaps best known for our work related to Adoption and Foster Care, we have grown into much more than a placement agency. While we hope every child finds their forever family, this is not always the case. NOAS is committed to serving children, families and young adults no matter the circumstance.

With the goal of supporting our clients every step of the way, NOAS has grown to include the following programs:

- **Wendy's Wonderful Kids®**
- **IGNITE Mentor Program**
- **Bridges Program**
- **TBRI® Coaching**
- **OhioKAN**
- **Parent Resource Group**

NOAS is committed to meeting children, families, and young adults where they are and providing the necessary support for them to thrive.

“Staff are professional, communicative, helpful and genuinely care about our kids! I can't say enough good things about them personally and professionally! Amazing professionals and people!”

— NOAS  
Family





Wendy's Wonderful Kids®



IGNITE Mentor Program



Bridges Program



TBRI® Coaching



OhioKAN



Parent Resource Group

## STATISTICS

**11**  
**ADOPTIONS**

children, teens and  
sibling groups

Who were legalized with NOAS  
licensed families.

**17**  
**FAMILY**

applications  
received

Families made application to  
NOAS to become foster and  
adoptive parent.

**135**  
**FAMILIES**

attended preplacement  
training classes

NOAS trained families  
across the state.

**79**  
**INTAKES**

individuals who  
contacted NOAS

To learn more about the foster  
care and adoption process.

# ABOUT OUR **SERVICE PROGRAMS**

NOAS offers a variety of different mission-driven programs to best support the children, young adults, and families we serve.



“NOAS’ work of creating permanent families continued through the pandemic. March 19, 2020 we adopted brothers, Alex & Leo. Thank you to our NOAS Family Worker for making this happen.”

— NOAS  
Family

### 01 Adoption and Foster Care Program

With a strong belief in the importance of permanent connections, the Adoption Program is at the heart of all of NOAS’ services. NOAS is dedicated to developing and supporting lifelong adoptive families for children who cannot be reunited with their families of origin. Each year, there are nearly 4,000 Ohio children waiting for a forever family. Our professional team provides preparation, assessment, and ongoing support to families who want to provide a lifelong connection to children and teens in foster care through adoption.

The NOAS Foster Care Program exists to meet the urgent need for temporary foster parents in this region. Our goal is to recruit, train, and support foster parents in Northeast Ohio to address the shortage of loving and safe temporary parents for Ohio’s foster children.



## GENDER

Boys 53% ■ Girls 47%



## THERE WERE 123 REFERRALS

from county partners to Wendy's Wonderful Kids



4 legalized with NOAS families  
 16 legalized with non-NOAS families  
 19 emancipated / learned of Bridges

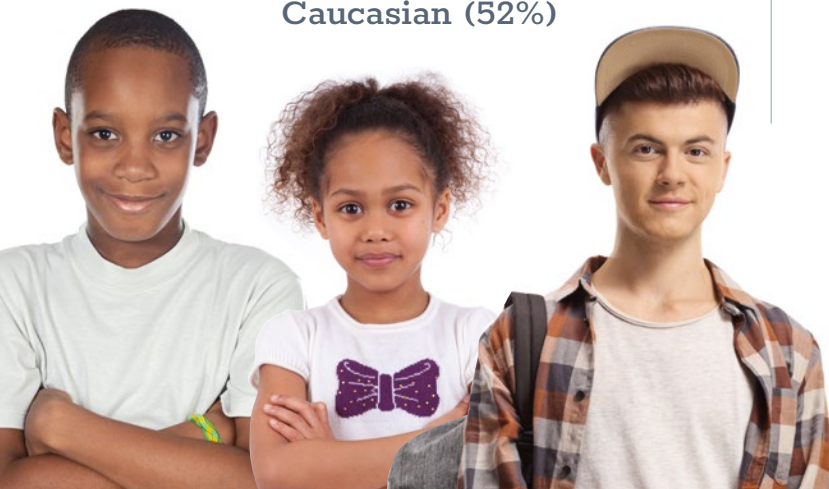


## AGES

0-4 (1%) ■ 5-9 (16%)  
 10-14 (30%) ■ 15-19 (53%)

## RACE

African American (24%) ■ Biracial (22%)  
 Hispanic (<1%) ■ Pacific Islander (0%)  
 Caucasian (52%)



## 02 Wendy's Wonderful Kids® Program

As a proud partner of the Wendy's Wonderful Kids® program, which is the signature program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and establishes innovative co-investment partnerships with states to support the hiring of adoption recruiters who implement an evidence-based, child-focused recruitment model. This model has been proven to be up to three times more effective at finding permanent homes for children who have been lingering in foster care the longest. Learn more at

[www.davethomasfoundation.org/our-programs/wendys-wonderful-kids](http://www.davethomasfoundation.org/our-programs/wendys-wonderful-kids).



Wendy's  
**Wonderful Kids®**

## 03 OhioKAN Program

OhioKAN is a flexible and responsive kinship and adoption navigator program designed to support children, youth and their families. Building on the premise that families are inherently capable of finding solutions to the circumstances and challenges they face, the OhioKAN program takes an inclusive, engaging, and genuine approach to strengthening families, their networks and their goals. NOAS staffs two OhioKAN navigators.

OhioKAN is a new statewide Kinship and Adoption Navigator Program that supports formal and informal kinship and adoptive families by providing information and referral services and assistance accessing support services. OhioKAN was developed in partnership with stakeholders throughout the state and is operated by Kinnect.



**04** **IGNITE Mentor Program**

After seeing the urgent need for supportive role models, NOAS developed the IGNITE Foster Youth Mentoring Program: MENTOR One Who Needs Someone.

The program matches both current foster youth ages 12-17 and former foster youth ages 18-21 with a healthy adult connection in their community.



**“My mentor helped me find a college and always helps me keep a positive mindset and more.” — Mentee SM**

NOAS serves at-risk youth who are in need of permanent connections due to being in foster care and who have been exposed to trauma that could hinder their adult life, socially and academically.

As a Mentor, you can make a difference by committing to six hours a month to be a wise and trusted guide to a current or former youth.

**27 MENTEES**

11 were ages 14-17  
16 were ages 18-21



8 identified as male  
19 identified as female



14 identified as Caucasian  
8 identified as African American  
0 identified as Hispanic  
5 identified as Multi-Racial

**24 MENTORS**

12 were ages 25-34  
7 were ages 35-44  
0 were ages 45-54  
5 were ages 55-64



5 identified as male  
19 identified as female



21 identified as Caucasian  
1 identified as Hispanic  
1 identified as Multi-Racial  
1 identified as Middle Eastern

**AS OF 9/30/21, THERE ARE 16 ACTIVE MATCHES.**

**MENTORS AND MENTEES BY LOCATION**

25 from Mahoning Valley  
10 from Cleveland area  
2 from Akron area  
3 from other NE Ohio locations

## 05 Bridges Program

The Bridges program at NOAS provides direct case management services to young adults who age out of foster care in Ohio. These services are provided by trained Bridges Liaisons and a Supervisor employed by NOAS. In partnership with ODJFS, the Bridges Collaborative (program overseer) and its statewide network of community provider agencies are committed to empowering Bridges participants on their path to independence.

## 101 YOUNG ADULTS ON REFERRAL



### GENDER

Young Men 36% ■ Young Women 64%

### RACE

African American 42% ■ Biracial 10%  
Caucasian 49%

Young adult participation in Bridges is voluntary, and young adults may apply to enroll (or re-enroll) in Bridges at any point before their 21st birthday. The Collaborative strives to ensure that potentially eligible young adults are aware of Bridges and understand how to apply. NOAS and the Collaborative are committed to the success of Bridges. Our commitment is demonstrated by our collective hard work toward achieving improvement in participant outcomes.

## 06 TBRI® Program

NOAS is committed to not only recruiting more foster and adoptive families but also to ensuring that the licensed NOAS families we serve are equipped to parent effectively. We provide evidence-based, trauma-informed training called Trust Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®).

TBRI® is a family-based intervention, designed for foster youth who have experienced relationship-based traumas such as institutionalization, multiple foster placements, maltreatment, abuse, and/or neglect.

NOAS is requiring TBRI® training for all licensed NOAS families to help families and foster youth work through real-life, problem-solving scenarios. Staff and mentors are also trained on TBRI®.

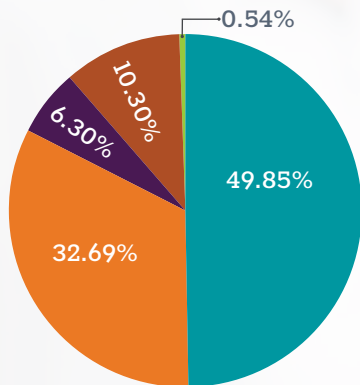
## 07 Parent Resource Group

There is stress involved in parenting a foster child with difficult behaviors, and we know that families who have access to supportive services are at less risk of disrupting their foster or adoptive placement. This resource group provides a place where foster and adoptive parents can meet with one another, discuss and problem-solve the parenting issues they face, share ideas and community resources, and develop a support network for respite. Families tend to bond and feel a sense of camaraderie with one another.

A NOAS team member leads the group and provides ongoing education credits necessary for the parents to maintain their foster care license. NOAS provides childcare and dinner so all families can attend if they wish. Families who do not have a child placed in their home are encouraged to attend as well.

# FINANCIAL RESULTS

## SUSTAINING OUR FUTURE



**\$2,306,845**

TOTAL REVENUE

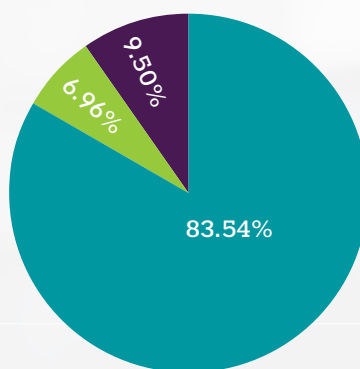
**PROGRAM SERVICE FEES & CONTRACTS: \$1,150,020**

**GRANTS: \$753,993**

**SPECIAL EVENTS: \$145,242**

**CONTRIBUTIONS: \$245,174**

**OTHER: \$12,416**



**\$2,129,491**

TOTAL EXPENSES

**PROGRAM SERVICES: \$1,778,935**

**DEVELOPMENT: \$148,163**

**ADMINISTRATIVE: \$202,393**

**A huge thank you to donors and community supporters.**

Your donation and every hour you spend volunteering go toward supporting finding permanent connections for children and young adults from foster care in NE Ohio. Because of your support we can continue creating connections, preparing specialized families, and getting the word out.

### CREATING CONNECTIONS:

Your support ensures that foster youth, unable to be placed with birth family, have a chance to meet as many prospective families and connections as possible through family finding, child-specific recruitment, special events and our mentoring program.

### PREPARING SPECIALIZED FAMILIES:

NOAS is committed to helping families who want to adopt, foster or mentor every step of the way and will provide lifelong support and assistance to families at no charge. Our highly educated team works to help families by offering parenting preparation through pre-placement education classes, home study services, ongoing training, and post-placement support. Our parent resource group and a variety of other services help to create lifelong connections for our foster youth.

### GETTING THE WORD OUT:

Your donation helps us spread the message throughout the community via website, print media, events, social media, speaking engagements and more.

### *Fiscal year ending 6/30/21*

\*Note: Revenue was affected by forgiveness of PPP loan.

**NOAS CQI 2021  
SURVEY RESULTS**

**+4.27**

2020 Staff  
Satisfaction Survey

+3.39% ▲

"I appreciate that NOAS has added a policy regarding education and licensure reimbursement."

**+4.86**

NOAS Pre-Placement  
Series Evaluation

+0.62% ▲

"Loved the breakout room activities; enjoyed the virtual learning setting, all of the trainers presented professionally with personality."

**+4.62**

NOAS COA

new survey

"Love working at NOAS and really enjoy the work environment that is created!"

**+4.82**

NOAS Assessment and  
Licensing Survey

+4.33% ▲

"Transparency on expectations and you are looking to match families and not fill beds, information, support, flexibility in scheduling."

**+4.89**

IGNITE Mentoring Survey

new survey

"My mentee told me I made his day and is excited to hang out. (I enjoy) watching the smile on his face every time I pick him up."

# ABOUT

# CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

CQI is a progressive incremental improvement of processes, safety, and program outcomes.

Northeast Ohio Adoption Services' Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Program is designed to review practices and outcomes for the programs and administration of the agency with the ultimate goal of providing the highest quality outcomes possible to those we serve. This work involves gathering data, reviewing and summarizing the data, forming and planning improvements as needed, testing and implementing these plans, and reporting back information to our stakeholders.

Program statistics reported throughout the Annual Report are collected as part of the Continuous Quality Improvement Program.

Noteworthy in fiscal year 2021, was the unforeseeable COVID-19

pandemic, which affected all programs, goals, and processes of the agency. NOAS was able to convert to working remotely very quickly and efficiently. Processes such as moving training and meeting with clients to a virtual platform were necessary and successfully achieved.

A highlight of the CQI program for the year was the achievement of accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA). Achieving this accreditation shows that NOAS performs with the highest standards and the best practices in our industry. COA standards dictate a clearly defined, data driven culture of continuous improvement for the agency.

\*Note: CQI surveys are based on a 1 to 5 point rating scale.

**NOAS IS PLEASED TO BE FULLY ACCREDITED  
BY THE COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION (COA).**





## Northeast Ohio Adoption Services

Foster Care ♥ Adoption  
Mentoring ♥ Training

## GET IN TOUCH

5000 E. Market Street, Suite 26 | Warren, Ohio 44484  
Phone: 330-856-5582 | Fax 330-856-5586  
contact@noas.com | www.noas.com