

## **Review of the History of AHEAD Foundation**

**In 1993, Dean Jollay**, Businessman looked around the community and took notice that there was a “huge gap between the economic development that was going on and the lack of impact it was having on lives of kids”. As he began to take a closer look, the problems he found were hardly surprising. Mr. Jollay found that amidst the economic growth and development of society many young people were being left behind. Teen age pregnancy, drug abuse, and the breakdown of the traditional family were leaving youth without many of the tools necessary to become successful in the classroom. As he began to ask questions and look for solutions he found several other business men and women that shared his concerns. Wilbur Arnold and Gene Boerner were among the first community members to get onboard with a willingness to help make a difference in the lives of at-risk children.

On March 10, 1994, the three organized a community meeting with the help of the Massillon Chamber of Commerce and the grassroots organization began. They invited Educational, Civic, Non-Profits and Business leaders, asking: “Are you interested in joining a collaborative effort to address the issues that prevent at-risk kids from being successful in the classroom?” Many organizations and businesses from the Massillon Community and across Stark County were interested in the idea helping families with supportive programming that help families to help themselves.

Some of the individuals that became involved with the project were:

Dean Jollay, Ohio Packaging  
Gene Boerner, Massillon Area Chamber of Commerce  
Wilbur Arnold, Community Businessman, Board of Education  
Kathy Kalleker, Massillon City Schools  
Eddie Elum, Attorney and Judge  
Merele Kinsey, Kent State University, Stark Branch  
Gayle Gamble, Neighborhood Housing Development  
Cynthia Hopkins, Massillon City Schools  
Rick Fetzl, United Way of Western Stark County  
Dennis Gray, The Education Enhancement Partnership TEEP  
Diane Daniels, Catholic Community Services of Stark County  
Greg Pringle, Massillon Urban League  
Carol Lichtenwalter, Stark County Family Council  
Ed Frankovich, Stark Metro Housing Authority  
Camille Leslie, Massillon Public Library  
Mary Anne Kling, Franklin Elementary  
Joe Rochford, Stark Education Partnership  
Mickey Workman, Westark Family Services  
Barb Bartley, Westark Family Services  
Teri Piekarski, Massillon Community Hospital Foundation  
Mel Herncane, United Way of Western Stark County  
Ralph Ware, Massillon City Schools  
Kitty Burgett, FACES of Stark County

Additionally, many organizations were involved and supported the efforts and deserve mention:

Honorable Francis Cicchinelli, Jr. and City of Massillon  
Massillon Area Chamber of Commerce  
Massillon Municipal Court  
YM/YWCA of Western Stark County  
Stark County Community Action  
East Ohio Gas Company  
Family Counseling of Western Stark County  
Stark County Educational Service Center  
Massillon Boys and Girls Club  
Stark County Family Council  
Massillon Commission to Advocacy for Literacy  
Massillon Rotary  
Stark Community Foundation

Very early into the initial meetings the group of organizers determined that it would be helpful and necessary to complete a needs assessment to identify the shortfall in support for families at risk. Over the summer of 1994, with the help of Merele Kinsey and The Kent State University, Stark Branch, a survey was sent to families, completed and recommendations made about the development of support services to families in need. The assessment utilized questionnaires which were distributed to the target population. Of 123 respondents, more than 71% had an income of less than \$10,000 a year. 78% had children eighteen and younger and almost 60% expressed a need for affordable housing. More than 85% said they would participate in family development programs including counseling and parenting classes. Many indicated the educational components of the program were important to them. It was made clear to the group of organizers that a true need for enriched educational opportunities and family support was not only necessary, but would be welcomed by those who would be involved.

So in **1995**, the group organized and officially became: The **Affordable Housing Education Advancement Developers Foundation**. ( **A.H.E.A.D.** Foundation).  
On **March 6, 1995** the Articles of Incorporation were approved by the State of Ohio. AHEAD established as a 501c (3), nonprofit organization run by a Board of Trustees.

Over the next year Mission and Vision statements were cultivated and a plan on how to proceed was developed. The mission statement: “The Affordable Housing Educational Advancement Developers (A.H.E.A.D.) provides low income Stark County families with affordable housing incorporating on site educational, social and recreational services consistent with their needs and interests. The association goal is to provide a residential environment and program which will enable families to reach their full potential. The AHEAD program is a bridge from an assisted educational and living environment to self-sufficiency.” The AHEAD program wishes to serve as a model of exemplary programming for the development of housing educational communities throughout Stark County.

Three phases to the project were identified and the group began to proceed in implantation.

- Phase I - Establish neighborhood –based family resources. Recruit and package several “gypsy” programs which can be planted into the community. Bringing established organizations that have their own materials, supplies and funding sources.
- Phase II- This phase included the consideration of building 32 - two and three bedroom transitional housing units along with the construction of a Learning Center. The Learning Center will house the intensive after school program and social service supports to foster an environment of growth and development for the student and the family.
- Phase III –consisted of finding sustainable funding for the project through Federal and State reimbursements, fee for service and operational endowments. Goal to help families transition to independence.

**In Early 1995**, Kathy Kallekar, became involved with the project through the Massillon City Schools. Kathy embraced the project, became the Educational Program Director and began to help develop the path the organization would follow in the development and implementation of a quality after school enrichment program with a strong parental component.

A.H.E.A.D. finds itself receiving strong community support and is receiving both financial support and in-kind donations from multiple agencies and organizations. From 1996 through 1999, AHEAD receives dollars from:

- Dean Jollay
- Ohio Packaging Corporation
- Massillon City Schools
- The Education Enhancement Partnership
- Kent State University
- The Savings Bank
- Massillon Rotary
- The Timken Family Charitable Trust
- East Ohio Gas Company
- Stark Community Foundation
- United Way of Western Stark County
- Massillon Chamber of Commerce
- Stark County Family Council
- FACES of Stark County
- Massillon Public Library
- Kent State University, Stark Branch
- Mr. and Mrs. Peter Schurman Trust
- IBM
- Krugliak, Wilkin, Griffiths & Dougherty Co. LPA

- Harris-Day Architects, Inc.
- Massillon Community Hospital Foundation
- Catholic Community Services
- Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Neighborhood Housing Services
- Westark Family Services Inc.
- Pyramid Career Services
- United Way Supporters – designate AHEAD to receive their donations directly

**On September 23, 1996**, Dean Jollay went before the Massillon Board of Education and received support for AHEAD to become a partner organization to the Massillon City School District. AHEAD formed a coalition of Community organizations in an effort provide opportunity to families to remove the obstacles that are interfering with a child's success in school. The idea is to provide education, information, and opportunity to families to with the intent to eventually create at "campus" of support to families. The first step is with the Opening of the Afterschool program targeted at low income children and families.

**On November 4, 1996** the AHEAD Foundation began the 1<sup>st</sup> Afterschool Project at Franklin Elementary. Twenty five children were initially served in a unique after-school educational program and family development project, with academic support and enrichment activities. A strong family development component was part of the project in an effort to increase family participation in their child's school experience.

AHEAD's purpose is to develop and run programs to assist low income, at-risk children amid their parents to be successful contributing members of society. Phase I of the AHEAD implementation plan began November 4, 1996 at Franklin Elementary School in the Massillon City School District. It consists of an after-school enrichment program currently serving 25 students in grades 3 to 5. Additionally, the family development component involves the parents of the children and addresses issues impeding self-sufficiency and interfering with their child's educational progress. The goal is to improve each child's family environment and engage parents in their child's educational experience.

Franklin School, which is currently housing the after-school program and family development components, is located in the poorest area of Massillon near low income housing projects operated by the Stark County Metropolitan housing Authority. However, students from low income families are also drawn to the program from throughout the community. The educational program operates from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 pm. each school day and for a six-week period during the summer vacation. A specially designed enrichment curriculum is taught by a certificated teacher with the assistance of pre-service teachers from Kent State University. Parents of participating children are required to volunteer their time each month as well.

The parent coordinator who leads the family development component is funded through the FACES program of the Stark County Family Council. Rather than duplicate existing social services, AHEAD attempts to link families with existing agencies which can address their needs.

Catholic Community Services is providing a caseworker for AHEAD families. Home ownership opportunities will be available through Neighborhood Housing Services of Massillon. Adult literacy services are offered through the Massillon Public Library. AHEAD is truly a collaborative effort.

**Throughout 1997**, Extensive research is done by Gene Boerner and Dean Jollay into the purchase and development of the implementation of Phase II. This phase included the consideration of building 32 - two and three bedroom transitional housing units along with the construction of a Learning Center. The Learning Center will house the intensive after school program and social service supports to foster an environment of growth and development for the student and the family. It would involve broadening the scope of the after-school program to cover grades K-2, encouraging greater participation throughout the City of Massillon and providing other strategies aimed at fostering family self-sufficiency. The Center will be built in partnership with the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority amid the other participating community organizations. AHEAD begins seeking financial commitments for the project. Land is negotiated at the former site of Jones Jr. High School, off Erie in the southeast quadrant of town and at the Joe Sparma community Center with the option to purchase under a lease agreement.

A number of issues surface in bringing this phase into realization, slowing then shifting development of the housing component. As the program develops it seemed that duplication of services, funding and cost requirements, management of the program and community commitment all arise leading to the conclusion that development of the living quarters are better served through existing organizations and a shift toward coordinating social service organizations into a “one stop shopping” center becomes more of the focus of the next phase.

This shift finds A.H.E.A.D. looking to develop programs and supports with a goal to foster an environment of growth and development for the student and the family and ease the burden of obtaining services. The Learning Center concept was pursued to enhance the coordinate the social service components into the Massillon Community.

**In the Fall of 1998**, the Franklin After school program was increased to two classes with 50 students served and they were able to show an increase in participating student’s proficiency scores along with an increase parental involvement.

During this period, Dean Jollay, Kathy Kallekar, Wilbur Arnold and others extensively promote the development of the AHEAD project to the Massillon Community Organizations, Stark County Organizations and Foundations, State Legislators and Government Departments, including Education, HUD, Human Services and the members of the Governors’ office.

**In early 1999**, the AHEAD Foundation had applied for a number of large grants to help fund and increase the Afterschool projects, build the Learning Center and further the programs that were experiencing much success in the Massillon City School system.

**In April of 1999**, the district was awarded one of the nations first federally supported: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center grants receiving \$482, 216 dollars each year for a three year period beginning with the Summer Program for 1999, for a total of over 1.5 million dollars. As a result of this grant, AHEAD withdrew its grant request from Sisters of Charity and changed its role to act as the Advisory Board to support the Board of Education in carrying out the requirements of the Federal grant. In the summer of 1999, AHEAD was approved by the Board of Education in its additional role as Advisory Board as outlined in the Federal grant.

AHEAD established its role as Advisory Council and also continued to explore its role as facilitating agency in the Social Service component to the district and community.

**In Early 2000**, AHEAD revised its Code of Regulations. One point of concern was establishing that with its new role to the Board of Education that members of the Board of Trustees for AHEAD are now in a conflict of interest as school employees. The wording was revised to have Massillon School Employees now serve as “ex-officio”, non-voting members to the AHEAD Board.

The organization begins looking for funding and support for the AHEAD proposed “Neighborhood Services Center” Medical and Social Services Building. The plan outlined the need for a “one stop Social Services shopping” center. Many social services and agencies do not have a presence in Massillon or have a very limited presence; the hope is to reach true collaboration in the sharing resources and providing services jointly to meet the needs of at-risk families in our community.

**In the Fall of 2000**, AHEAD began to look for services and enrichment programs it could bring to the Afterschool program. One of these programs was the Counseling services from Community Services of Stark County to provide children and families access to clinical counselors and mental health supports in the afterschool program right on site. AHEAD also began to look at other grants to fund services and programs to the Afterschool programs.

**February of 2001**, As AHEAD is moving forward with the potential to develop the Neighborhood Social and Medical Services Center and considering a building project as well as larger funding efforts, AHEAD and the Board of Education jointly agree that it would be best for AHEAD relieve the school district as its fiscal agent and manage its own funds.

**In May of 2001** several large grant requests are made to the Stark County local Foundations to support the building of a Community Service Center.

**In Sept. and October of 2001**, the AHEAD Board engaged in some Strategic Planning sessions to develop and formalize a plan for its future. Recommendations to the Code of Regulations were considered, more structured format of the Board of Trustees and terms of officers were established.

**In November of 2001**, the AHEAD board received notice from the Stark Community Foundation that an Anonymous Donor had placed \$300,000 dollars in a Challenge Grant. This meant that the AHEAD Foundation must raise \$300,000 over the next two years in order to receive the money as placed by the donor. A fund was established for dollars raised to be placed into at Stark Community Foundation to meet this challenge.

**As of January 2002**, the revised Code of Regulations was adapted, 8 Board of Trustees were named and approved, an nomination committee was established, the Board would proceed with finding a temporary place to work out of and begin housing the services needed for families. The Board begins to consider a director or coordinator of services as an employee or contract consultant to help the Board with bringing services to the building.

**In February of 2002**, the AHEAD Board signed a lease agreement with the Massillon City School District Board of Education to have office space in the Old Federal Post Office, School owned building located at 22 Federal Ave. NE, Massillon, Ohio for \$10.00.

**In April 2002**, AHEAD hired Mickey Workman, L.S.W. as “interim director” for social service organization and services. Mickey worked part time and focused on getting organizations to join AHEAD in serving families in our community. Mickey spent the next few months attending community and school meetings, meeting with other organizations and trying to see what services might be able to see families at the AHEAD office. Mickey began to work with families from the ABLE program (Adult Basic Literacy Education) also housed at the Old Post Office, as well as work with families referred from the Afterschool program who were in need of social service assistance.

**In August of 2003**, AHEAD asked The Sisters of Charity Foundation to support successful afterschool project as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century dollars are coming to an end. However before a decision could be made by Sisters the program is approved again for another 21<sup>st</sup> Century Federal Grant. The district received five years of funding for this program available to enhance and increase the afterschool program to students throughout the district.

**October 19, 2002**, AHEAD co-sponsors with The Massillon Parks and Recreation Department and the Massillon Senior Center Activity Club a Community Services Fair. The event is all afternoon program inviting families and community members to discover the valuable services and agencies available in our community. Participating agencies in the highly successful event were:

AHEAD Foundation	Adult Basic Literacy & Education	Community Services
Boys and Girls Club	FACES of Stark County	Families First
Family Services of Canton	Jobs & Family Services	Legal Aid
Massillon City Schools	Massillon City Health Department	Parks and Recreation
Massillon Public Library	Massillon Urban League	Red Cross
Neighborhood Housing	Salvation Army	SARTA
Westark Family Services	Massillon Commission to Advance Literacy	

**December of 2002**, AHEAD coordinates an Open House at the Social Service Coordination Center at the Old Post Office Building at 22 Federal Avenue NE. Massillon. The event is help to help the community see that AHEAD is moving forward with its plan to bring services and supports into the community.

**In Early 2003**, Mel Herncane, United Way of Western Stark County really helped shepherd the organization through the United Way process and provided support and guidance to enable AHEAD to increase its United Way support to a more significant amount of its budget.

**In May of 2003**, Families First, a parent support organization begins holding their weekly meetings at the AHEAD office.

**Throughout 2003**, AHEAD writes several grants looking to raise the money to reach the Matching Grant, unsuccessful in securing the \$295,000 for the Matching grant. AHEAD was approved for \$10,000 from Hoover Foundation, \$3,000 from Timken Foundation for operational expenses. AHEAD also becomes significantly supported by United Way of Massillon.

**October 9, 2003**, AHEAD receives funds for “Light On!” program from Stark Community Foundation to help promote “Awareness” to the community of the needs and benefits of quality afterschool programming. AHEAD collaborates with the Afterschool Program to present a program at Lion Lincoln Theater where the children and staff present songs, skits and cheers about their involvement in the AHEAD 21<sup>st</sup> Century Afterschool Program.

**In November of 2003**, AHEAD was awarded a grant from the Community Health Foundation for Afterschool Social and Emotional support through counseling programs.

**In 2004**, AHEAD asked The Paul and Carol David Foundation and they agreed to support after school programming at the middle school level in a project called Kaleidoscope Kids Program. This project established a working relationship with the David Foundation and Representatives from the organization joined the AHEAD Board of Trustees. We have maintained this relationship with the foundation despite the Kaleidoscope Kids Program being funded through a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Federal Grant, instead of through the David Foundation. The district received five years of funding for this program available to Middle school students throughout the district.

**In May of 2004**, AHEAD was awarded an additional grant from the Community Health Foundation for Afterschool Social and Emotional support through counseling programs to offset the cost of this project.

**In October and December of 2004**, AHEAD entered into Strategic Planning to reevaluate its progress and future. It has continued to provide social service support to the after school programs and to the ABLE program. The Social Service Director is considering retirement in the coming year. The Medical Social Service Center is struggling to find significant dollars to consider construction and AHEAD needs to re-determine its direction and future.

**Strategic Plan set forth in January 2005.** Attached.

**Spring of 2005**, Needs assessment to determine level of need for Social Service Coordination and replacement of Mickey Workman, especially full time vs. part time and qualifications of provider.

**May 2005** - Alan Edie presents Care Team ideas to AHEAD Board and sees a fit for us as CARE TEAM's move into more schools. United Way's Vision Council seems to be interested in supporting these programs and the school community link.

**July 2005** – search Committee established and active.

**September 2005** – Board of Trustees hire as Part time Executive Director, Vanessa Stergios. Role established to continue social service support to after school programs, and assess potential community partners for social service center. Keep active and tied to CARE TEAM development in the Massillon Schools and develop and support where able.

**Fall of 2005**, Vanessa Stergios begins to work closely with Judy Kenny, MCS administrator and MMS (Massillon Middle School) staff. Project includes the development of supports and positions as identified in the ODE/ODJFS grant for CARE TEAM development in the Massillon Middle School. AHEAD was also awarded grant from the Community Health Foundation for Afterschool Social and Emotional support through counseling programs and Lights On! Grant from Stark Community Foundation.

**January 2006**, revisit the Strategic Plan for guidance in program development, “plan to the plan” outlined.

**Since January of 2006 and Ongoing** AHEAD is providing social service support to families and staff within the district. This includes assessments and links to clothing, food, medical resources and services. Additionally, AHEAD provides emotional and mental support to families and referral to additional programs or supports within the community. AHEAD has purchased bulk quantities of Lice Kits to help eliminate absenteeism, due to this health risk. AHEAD has been involved with and attended endless meetings on implementation and development of CARE TEAM for both the district and county wide efforts. Played a large role in reimbursements to district for

services through TANF funds and continued to developed supports for school personnel to help tap into community programs and supports.

**February 2006**, AHEAD relocates from the Old Post Office Building into the Educational Complex. This move increased the interaction with administrator, Judy Kenny and Afterschool Coordinators, Donna Fisher and Jason Zupp. AHEAD was awarded Arts in Stark grant to implement Creativity Café, in collaboration with the Afterschool program.

**Spring 2006**, AHEAD increases role in grant writing with the school district, for ODE/ODJFS, community partnerships with Massillon Schools, look to Federal earmarks and for Matching grant opportunities.

**March and April 2006**, begin to work closely with the Western Stark Homeless Taskforce to evaluate social service and clergy supported programs in Western Stark County. Develop and Participate in Survey of services and help evaluate results.

**May 2006**, with the support of the Salvation Army, started the Community Collaborative Network, a community meeting for Massillon based social service organizations to increase communication, information sharing, partnering and referrals. Develop community calendar to share important social service information such as programs, food banks, to identify what days service providers are in Massillon, etc.

**Summer 2006**, AHEAD coordinated and assists MMS staff in evaluation and reflection of data from CARE TEAM students, review future planning, provide support services to students and families. Begin to look at increase community involvement and dollars to support ongoing Care Team efforts. Network with larger social service agencies and advocate for programs and services for the Massillon School District. Collaborative efforts with Stark County Mental Health Board bring Mental Health Provider to Massillon Middle School to bring Teen Screen assessment and increased mental health services to the district.

**Throughout the Summer of 2006**, AHEAD participates in its first fundraising effort, outside of grant writing. The agency was invited to participate in the “Birdies for Charity” fundraiser, sponsored by the Northern Ohio Golf Charities Organization. This organization sponsored an event which allowed not-for-profit organizations to gather pledges based on the number of birdies the professionals at the Bridgestone Golf Invitational would hit over the four days of the golf tournament, August 22-26, 2006. AHEAD was able to solicit \$7,741.52 in support from community members and business leaders.

**Fall of 2006**, AHEAD continues to serve as social service support and coordinate services to the district. TANF programs are approved for Afterschool programming for the District October through December. Teen Screen implementation is progressing and CARE TEAM continues to develop. AHEAD becomes involved with the Massillon Academic Achievement Committee, Data committee and Crisis Response Team.

**January 2007**, AHEAD updates Code of Regulations, officially changes name to AHEAD and drops the acronym. Completes historical view of past and begins to look toward the future.

**March 2007**, efforts of Collaboration and Social Service Coordination acknowledged by United Way and invited to be one of several featured agencies at the United Way of Greater Stark County annual meeting.