

Community Advisory Network (CAN) Meeting

March 12, 2026

9 am-11 am Virtual Meeting

1. Welcome

Kristen opened the meeting by thanking everyone for joining and welcoming all in attendance. Kristen shared that previous CAN Meetings have been hosted by Patti Jo Burntnett who retired last August. Kristen introduced Emma Morris, Public Relations & Special Events Coordinator, who joined LCCS last June and will be hosting the CAN Meetings moving forward. Emma greeted attendees and thanked Kristen for the introduction. Kristen went over the agenda for today's meeting and introduced Mike Brummitt and Dana Santo from Riveon who would be sharing information about the Crisis Recovery Center.

2. Riveon – Crisis Recovery Center

Mike and Dana shared a PowerPoint with a program overview of the crisis services Riveon offers.

Crisis Services include:

- 988 – Suicide Prevention and Behavioral Health Crisis Hotline
 - 24/7 service, calls are answered by trained behavioral health professionals
- Mobile Crisis
 - In-person response to individuals experiencing behavioral health crisis in Lorain County
- Warm Line
 - Peer-led line for individuals who are not experiencing acute mental health crisis
 - Accessed by 988
 - Available 7 days a week 1pm-11pm
- Crisis Recover Center
 - Located at 6130 Broadway Ave, Lorain
 - Opened October 1, 2025

- Accessible 24/7 for walk-ins
- Offering crisis intervention, observation, evaluation, treatment, safety planning, and referral/linkage for ongoing services
- Able to assist those in crisis for up to 23 hours
- Primarily serving 18 and older, will contact MRSS for minors
- Detox services available 24/7, will take anyone withdrawing from any substance other than Methadone

Dana also noted that Riveon offers Primary Care Services, which are accessible by their main line, and are available to anyone, not just behavioral health clients.

3. Kinnect – KinFirst

Stephanie Beleal and Kristi Burre shared information about Kinnect, an organization that has been partnering with LCCS for several years. Kinnect is a Cleveland based nonprofit organization that serves Ohio and several other states focusing on kinship, building connections for youth, and sustainable caregiving. Stephanie and Kristi shared that there are several programs Kinnect offers which are:

- Kinnect to Family – solely focused on intensive family finding for children who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing foster care.
- Youth Centered Permanency Round Tables – targeted for older youth approaching adulthood, works to secure social network as youth enter adulthood. These round tables are meetings that put youth at the center to find out what they need as they transition to adulthood and ensure support is established.
- OhioKAN – Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator program, this program serves all 88 counties and is set up regionally so that navigators are rooted in their communities. This service is available for free for any kinship caregivers.
- Youth Navigator Network – A navigation system for youth to help connect youth to services and resources

- KinnectU – The training and consulting branch of Kinnect, there are courses available on the Kinnect website to all

Kristi noted that Kinnect is hosting a KinFirst 2026 Convening on March 27 in Newark, OH, Kristi gave information about what would be discussed at the event and who the keynote speakers would be.

Kristi discussed what the KinFirst approach is, stating that there is a KinFirst Advisory Council that comes together to advance the development of KinFirst strategies and approaches. The KinFirst approach at Kinnect is an approach to building purpose, policies, and partnerships that prioritize family and kin across collective systems. Discussion about the KinFirst approach and the importance of keeping youth with relatives and in their communities.

4. Lorain County Children Services – Kinship Unit

Nicole Schindler gave an update on the Kinship program at LCCS. Nicole shared a PowerPoint presentation on kinship care with the agency and licensing kinship caregivers through LCCS. An overview of the agenda was given, and a video was played that showed 2 families who completed the kinship licensing process with LCCS. Nicole discussed the different types of kinship care which are:

- Informal – where children live with grandparents or other relatives and are not in the custody of a public child welfare agency
- Formal – where children are in the care of a relative or non-related extended family member or close family friend and in the custody of a public child welfare agency

Both levels of kinship care require an initial homestudy, and kinship caregivers can become licensed like a foster parent, but only for the specific children they care for. Nicole discussed the benefits of kinship care such as minimizing trauma, maintaining family connections, staying in their communities and schools, and sibling unity and connectedness.

Nicole shared the primary differences between kinship and foster care licensing, and the number of children in care through kinship

homes, foster homes, and congregate care. The Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KGAP) was discussed, with Nicole outlining the benefits and requirements of the program.

5. Lorain County Children Services – 2025 Annual Report

Andrea Hall-Miller shared the Lorain County Children Services 2025 Annual Report. This report is not completed, but Andrea expects it will be completed and distributed by May. Andrea shared the following information from the report:

- Referral Sources – there were 5,575 referrals in 2025, 75% of these referrals came from mandated reporters
- Types of Allegations – the majority of allegations were categorized under neglect, making up 47.6% of referrals
- Intakes – total intakes received in 2025 were 5,466 and 1,805 of these calls were screened in
- Almost 75% of children who had referrals that were screened in live in Lorain and Elyria
- Cases Transferring from Intake to Ongoing – in 2025, 302 cases transferred from intake to ongoing, which is a 16% decrease from 2024
- Placement Types – there were 248 children in care at the end of 2025, 66 of those children were in kinship care, 28 were placed in congregate care, and 154 were in family foster care which includes traditional foster homes as well as licensed kinship homes
- Median time in Foster Care - median length of time for 2025 was 9.3 months

Emma gave an update on community partnership and engagement, and discussed events and efforts that occurred in 2025, which were as follows:

- LCCS Connections Center officially opened October 2025, this center is where supervised visits take place
- Keep Lorain County Beautiful hosted a landscaping day in July 2025 at the Connections Center

- There was record breaking attendance at the 2025 Princess Ball, there were over 300 children and families present
- More than 600 children received holiday gifts through donations from community partners
- Krya, a therapy dog from Pet Partners, has visited both LCCS locations to boost morale and offer pet therapy to staff and families
- There were 105 total foster parent recruitment events and community engagement activities in 2025

6. Updates and Announcements

Kris Ross from LCCS shared that the agency is always looking for new foster families, and that there is a foster care open house on April 7 which will be a panel style event with young adults who were in foster care through LCCS.

Mildred Gonzalez from Lorain County Juvenile Court shared that the Coalition for Hispanic Leadership Conference in Lorain County will take place on April 25 at Lorain County Community College and there is a gala the same evening at Emerald Valley.

Trinity Salvo from Beyond Healthcare shared program updates including an expansion of PHP and IOP services at the Westlake location for ages 11-18 and will extend to ages 6-11 for summer youth programs. There are also virtual services available for IOP services for ages 11-18 and 18 and up, and psychiatric medication management services for ages 5 and up.

Hannah Gates from Lorain County Public Health shared that LCPH/Bright Beginnings will be a part of the second wave of Family Connects Ohio, offering Newborn Home Visits. The program is universal, so all residents of Lorain County with newborns are eligible for the service. We are working on training/credentialing currently, so this will be available in the next couple of months once completed.

Wendy Kacmarcik from Ohio Guidestone shared that Ohio Guidestone is offering primary care Monday-Thursday 8:30-5:00 at

the Lorain County office, and a new program, Fathers Feelings Project, is in the works. This is a small group for new fathers that Kelly Williams is leading. Lastly, Ohio Guidestone will be at the Connecting for Kids Resource Fair.

Emma announced that the agency is always open to having presenters during the CAN Meetings, and she can be contacted to arrange presenting at a future meeting.

Minutes taken by: Rebekah Moon, Confidential Data Analyst