



**KNOX COUNTY
HEAD START, INC.**



2023-2024 Annual Report

Serving Knox County since 1965.

From Our Director

As we celebrate the end of our 59th year of service, Knox County Head Start continues to strive to meet the needs of our children and families, and the Knox County community. We believe that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children, we connect with each child and family wherever they are on their journey, and we work together to lay the foundation for a healthy future. We are strengthened by strong collaborations and special Knox County community partners who recognize we are at our best when we work together. I hope you will take time to consider the work of our KCHS School Family, our place in the community, and the accomplishments outlined in this Annual Report. I am thankful for Knox County and its people – our committed employees, Board and Policy Council members who unselfishly share their time and wisdom, community members who support our work, the courageous Head Start parents who seek what is best for their children, and the beautiful children we serve who represent our best hope for the future.

*I wish you well,
Peg Tazewell, Executive Director*

Our Mission & Guiding Values

Committed to the future of Knox County, KCHS works in partnership with the community to provide quality early education, child care, and family services. Our purpose is to engage children, families, and staff in reaching their full potential.

Educating Children. Empowering Families. Building Community.

- A. We value families, fathers, mothers, and primary caregivers as the first and most important teachers and advocates for their children.
- B. We strive to make a difference through the education, care, and support of our children, families, and staff by:
 - Committing to provide quality services.
 - Hiring, training, and retaining competent staff.
 - Providing opportunities for personal and professional growth.
 - Developing and nurturing personal and professional, trusting relationships built on honesty and open communication.
 - Acknowledging and seeking diversity through our program design.
 - Creating and maintaining healthy and productive community partnerships.

Board of Directors

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Attorney, Zelkowitz, Barry & Cullers

Debbie Ruggles* **

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New Hope Parent Representative

Caitlin Sheets

Northgate Parent Representatives

Jamie Shoemaker

Home-Based Program Parent Representative

Timothy Ewing

Community Representatives

Ian Ernsberger

Kim Wallace

*former Head Start parent

**Board representative to the Policy Council

About Knox County Head Start

- Founded in April 1965 as Kokosing Day Care Centers, Inc.
- Funded enrollment from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families: Head Start (HS) slots: 149 funded slots and Early Head Start (EHS): 64 funded slots.
- Serving 394 children in 2023-2024
 - 190 children served in Head Start
 - 111 children served in Early Head Start
 - 93 children served in child care, including school-age programs.
- KCHS' Community Assessment data estimates 471 eligible EHS children and 284 eligible HS children live in Knox County. Total enrollment in 2023-2024 shows KCHS serving approximately 24% of EHS eligible children and 67% of HS eligible children. Most HS eligible children not served by KCHS are served in state funded preschool programs, and some EHS eligible children are served in Early Intervention and Help Me Grow. Knox County continues to lack sufficient service options for most infants, toddlers, and their families.

Our Children

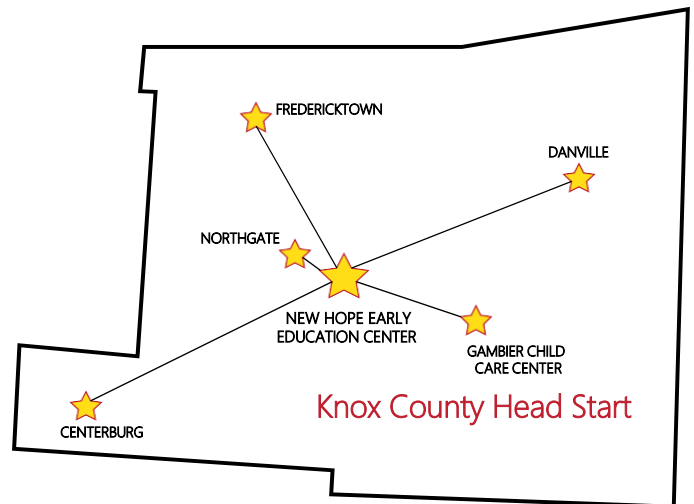
Average Monthly Enrollment

Average monthly enrollment for KCHS was at 97.7% in Head Start and 95% in Early Head Start. Head Start enrollment was reduced in September with the grant approval. 3 Early Head Start slots were moved from home-based to child care. Head Start home-based slots were reduced by 12.

Services to Children Identified with Disabilities

KCHS collaborated with the three local education agencies, Knox County Educational Service Center, Mount Vernon City Schools, and Danville Local Schools to provide special education services:

- 29 preschool children received services under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), representing 19.5% of children.
 - 15 of those children's primarily identified disability was speech or language impairment.
 - 11 children's primary disability was a non-categorical developmental delay or specific learning disability.
 - 2 children's primary disability was health impairment.
 - 1 child's primary disability was autism.
 - 2 children received an IEP at the end of the year with services scheduled to begin in Fall 2024 as they enter kindergarten.
 - 1 preschool child received services under a 504 Plan due to a hearing impairment.
- 8 infants and toddlers received services under an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP), representing 12.5% of enrolled children.



Children Served (8/1/23-7/31/24)

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Head Start | 190 |
| Early Head Start | 111 |
| EHS Pregnant Moms | 1 |
| Child Care | 90 |
| Total | 392 |

97,248 meals/snacks served under the USDA/CACFP food program during the program year.



Child Health Services



Medical Screenings (Physicals)

- 230 (83.6%) children received an annual physical and all medical screenings, including hearing, vision, lead, and hemoglobin.
- 112 (49%) children needed medical follow up.
- 100 (89%) children received follow up.



Immunizations

- 239 (87%) children up to date on required immunizations.
- 4 children in progress (but received all shots possible).
- 15 children meet Ohio's guidelines for exemption from immunization.



Dental Services

- 214 (78%) preschool children received a dental exam.
- 28 (13%) needed dental follow-up.
- 25 (89%) received follow-up.



Mental Health Services

- 53 children in Head Start/Early Head Start received direct services from The Village Network.
- 1283 sessions of direct children intervention services were provided, totaling 721 hours of services.
- On average each child received 24 sessions (13.5 hours of service).



Developmental Screenings

- 293/339 children (86%) received all developmental screenings within 45-days of enrollment (please note that school age children do not receive developmental screenings).
- 36 children were referred for further evaluation (31 Head Start, 5 Early Head Start).
- 29 preschool aged children received services under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- 8 infants and toddlers received services under an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).



Nutrition

- 97,248 meals and snacks were served under the USDA/CACFP food program.
- Several publications focused on nutrition/physical activity are sent home with all families monthly: "Nubites," "Color Me Healthy News," "Get Moving" calendar.

Child Health Services are designed to ensure children receive age-appropriate screenings, follow up for health and dental concerns when needed, and are healthy and ready for success in school.

Working With Our Families

***Knox County Head Start believes that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children~
We are here to support children, parents, and families in achieving goals!***

Family Partnerships

- 244 families were served in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- 171 families participated in the family goal-setting process which resulted in an individualized family partnership agreement.

Referrals

- 456 referrals for community supports were documented.
- 158/158 Head Start families received a referral for service.
- 79/86 Early Head Start families received a referral for service.

Demographics

- 11 families enrolled experienced homelessness, with 8 (72.7%) of the families acquiring housing.
- 16 children experiencing homelessness were served during the year.
- 104 families received WIC services through Knox Public Health.
- 34 children qualified for enrollment via foster care at any point during the program year.
- 141 families received SNAP benefits.

Family Involvement and Parent Education Opportunities

Parents are encouraged to serve on Policy Council, participate in School Family Roundtable (parent center committee) meetings and events, and family fun nights. Typically, events include the Fall Harvest, Shawn Kelly Holiday Event in collaboration with Kenyon College, Winter Fun Fest, the Annual Art Show, and the End of the Year Family Picnics.

KCHS leads the Parent Support Initiative (PSI), coordinating parent education open to Knox County caregivers of children birth to 18. Supported by generous funding from the Ariel Foundation and the United Way of Knox County, education includes Conscious Discipline® for Parents and Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) with multi-level interventions delivered one-on-one, in small and large groups. During 2023-2024, 13 parents attended Conscious Discipline education sessions, and 403 parents participated in Triple P.

Two Generational Approach= Hidden Success

Head Start works closely with parents in developing goals and encouraging parents to identify strengths and opportunities for self-reliance, for themselves and their families. In 2023-2024, 27 of 96 employees were current or former Head Start parents. Nineteen, or 70% of those parents, attained a degree or certification while employed and seven were in the process of doing so.

Knox County Head Start's two-generational approach opens doors for child and family successes - concurrently supporting children's school readiness and providing opportunities for family stability and success.



Our Staff

KCHS meets the requirement of the Head Start Act of 2007 that 50% of preschool teachers have bachelor's degrees. In 2023-2024, 50% of Head Start preschool teachers had a bachelor's degree and 30% had an associate degree in early childhood education (ECE). 20% of Head Start preschool teachers had a CDA and were in school to obtain a degree.

In EHS, teachers are required to hold a CDA, but 44% of infant and toddler teachers held two or four-year degrees, with the remainder holding CDAs.

KCHS encourages continuous learning, and in 2023-2024 eight teachers, assistant teachers, and teacher aide floaters obtained their CDA.



Encouraging Literacy



Partnering with United Way of Knox County's Imagination Library

The United Way of Knox County, in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Foundation, continues to provide a literacy program wherein each child in Knox County up to age five is eligible to receive a FREE age-appropriate book delivered to his/her home each month (up to 60 books over 5 years).

KCHS' staff make referrals, with parent permission, beginning as early as recruitment and through enrollment. Knox County Head Start has 71 documented referrals to the Imagination Library program during the 2023-24 school year.

Preparing Children for Success in Kindergarten

KCHS classrooms implement *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* and *The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos*, along with a variety of supplemental curricula. Teachers use the Creative Curriculum's Objectives for Development and Learning to track individual child progress and to plan lessons for large and small groups as well as individualized activities specific to the child's developmental level. Children are assessed quarterly. The spring assessment showed that the goal of 85% of transitioning Kindergarten children meeting or exceed widely held expectations was reached in physical, language and cognitive development, but was missed in social-emotional (83.1%), Literacy (81.4%) and math (81.4%). Gains were identified in all areas, with the domains of cognitive development (+35.6%), literacy (+37.3%) and math (+59.4%) most significant, with full results shown below:

TS GOLD data reported on Transitioning Kindergartners

| Domain of Learning | % of children meeting or exceeding widely held expectations, Fall 2023 | % of children meeting or exceeding widely held expectations, Spring 2024 | Percent (%) increase |
|--------------------|--|--|----------------------|
| Social-Emotional | 78% | 83.1% | +5.1% |
| Physical | 66.1% | 89.8% | +23.7% |
| Language | 78% | 88.1% | +10.1% |
| Cognitive | 54.2% | 89.8% | +35.6% |
| Literacy | 44.1% | 81.4% | +37.3% |
| Mathematics | 22% | 81.4% | +59.4% |

Promoting Excellence

Professional development can help to bolster employees' confidence in their work. Greater confidence can, in turn, translate into higher overall job satisfaction, employee performance, productivity, and overall morale. Throughout the 2023-2024 program year, Knox County Head Start staff logged a cumulative total of **4334.25** professional development hours.

Parent Gauge Comments

- "The absolute most important thing is that they gave us childcare. And we have been provided with fantastic, loving care for our children."
- "I am elated over our experience with the program and also the adult interaction has been nice since I do not have much of that elsewhere."
- "We love it here. I don't worry when I drop my kids off here. We are very pleased with the progress our children are making here at Northgate."
- "The program helped me to be able to communicate with my child more and to become more open and receptive to my child's needs and emotions. Head Start provides a foundation for communication not only with me but the family as a whole. Me and my ex-husband are finally being able to communicate effectively to together regarding our child."
- "The program has helped me to engage more with my child at home through various activities and homework. When spending time with my child I have more opportunities to teach him and allow him to learn."
- "The program provides a healthy balanced diet. The program also encourages healthy dietary choices. Even when my child is not in the program my child prefers healthy food options."

Federal Monitoring

Results of KCHS' most recent federal monitoring, from the Office of Head Start, March 29, 2023:

From March 6, 2023, to March 10, 2023, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted an onsite Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review of the Knox County Head Start, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

This report contains information about the grantee's performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) or Public Law 110-134, Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. The Office of Head Start (OHS) would like to thank your governing body, policy council, parents, and staff for their engagement in the review process.

Through the FA2, performance is evaluated in two ways:

- Determining whether a grant recipient is compliant with the Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).
- Understanding strong practices that the grant recipient may be implementing to further promote quality services for children and families.

KCHS was found to meet program expectations in all areas monitoring:

- Program Management and Quality Improvement
- Quality Education and Child Development Program Services
- Quality Health Program Services
- Quality Family and Community Engagement Services
- Fiscal Infrastructure
- Developing Effective Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance (ERSEA) Strategies



BARNES DENNIG
Accounting • Tax • Business Insight

Results of most recent Financial Audit

In a letter dated January 31, 2025 to the KCHS Board of Directors, Barnes Dennig Independent Auditors wrote that they had audited the financial position of Knox County Head Start as of July 31, 2024. The audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the basic financial statements of KCHS taken as a whole. This included identifying any significant deficiencies in internal control reported at the financial statement level (Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards), along with identifying any material weakness conditions at the financial statement level, any material reported noncompliance at the financial statement level, significant deficiencies in internal control for any major federal programs, or material weaknesses reported for major federal programs.

Barnes Dennig reported no findings or reportable matters and returned an unmodified opinion related to financial statements and major programs' compliance. There were no findings related to internal control over major programs, nor were material weaknesses identified, nor significant deficiencies identified or reported.

Step Up to Quality

Since 2009-10, Knox County Head Start Centers have been annually recognized with Step Up to Quality awards by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services – Bureau of Child Care and Development for exceeding state licensing standards and providing high-quality early childhood services. During 2023-24, all 6 centers maintained their 5-star rating.

Summer Camp

School agers enjoyed 11 weeks of summer camp at the Gambier Child Care Center with 33 children participating in 936 units of camp. The camp schedule included a variety of weekly themes such as "Welcome to the Jungle" which focused on nature, "Chasin' That Neon Rainbow" which focused on art, and "Cheeseburgers in Paradise", which was cooking week! Field trips were taken to Top Golf, Lego Land, The Columbus Zoo, Skate Zone 71, The Alcove, and many parks! The camp focused on physical activity, health, and wellness, as well as literacy.

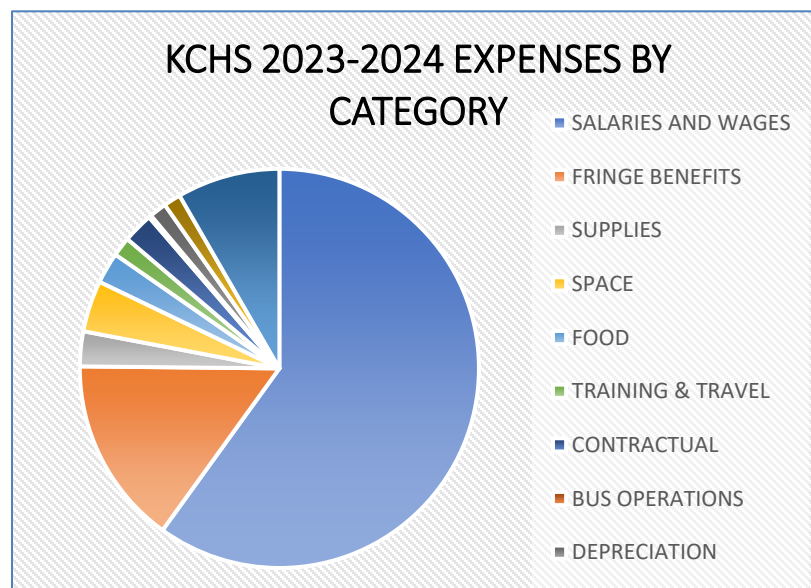
Our Financials

2023-2024 Funding by Revenue Source: \$6,360,405

| | |
|--|-------------|
| FEDERAL HEAD START & EHS | \$3,574,369 |
| STATE AND LOCAL GRANTS | \$484,502 |
| FEDERAL TANF | \$18,234 |
| FEDERAL USDA/CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP) | \$199,306 |
| CHILD CARE REVENUE | \$1,347,401 |
| UNITED WAY OF KNOX COUNTY | \$133,538 |
| IN-KIND | \$520,835 |
| | |
| MISC REVENUE | \$82,220 |
| | |
| TOTAL FUNDING | \$6,360,405 |

KCHS 2023-2024 EXPENSES BY CATEGORY

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| SALARIES AND WAGES | \$3,744,040 |
| FRINGE BENEFITS | \$949,700 |
| SUPPLIES | \$176,161 |
| SPACE | \$259,854 |
| FOOD | \$156,986 |
| TRAINING & TRAVEL | \$97,538 |
| CONTRACTUAL | \$153,191 |
| BUS OPERATIONS | \$13,209 |
| | |
| DEPRECIATION | \$86,720 |
| OTHER | \$86,535 |
| IN-KIND (Local match funds) | \$520,835 |
| | |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | <u>\$6,244,769</u> |



Federal Budget Explanation for 2024-2025 Program Year

Knox County Head Start and our local community benefit from federal funds to support Head Start (HS) preschool services to 149 children and families, and Early Head Start (EHS) services for 64 pregnant moms, infants, toddlers, and their families. KCHS is funded for 213 Head Start and Early Head Start slots; the actual number of children and pregnant moms served will be higher.

The majority of budgeted funds support salary and fringe costs for direct services, as KCHS works to increase wages and provide full benefits to employees and their families. KCHS has dedicated all funding increases from the Office of Head Start to employee salaries and benefits, including the award of two retention awards, for the purpose of increasing staff hiring, retention, well-being, and the quality of services in our program.

In 2024-25, KCHS requested a partial waiver to reduce the amount of federal match requirements. Like many communities, Knox County is experiencing a reduction in philanthropic giving, and a reduction in volunteerism. KCHS has relied heavily on cash match from the United Way OF Knox County and other state and local foundations, as well as volunteer commitments, and any funding reductions or changes to volunteer patterns will create challenges in meeting the cash match. KCHS accessed a partial waiver that provided a reduction in the local match requirements for the current budget year due to continuing concerns around the ability to access full match requirements with increases in operational costs and reduction in volunteer hours. The 2024-25 budget year's local match requirement is \$792,965.

| <i>Federal Budgets 2024-2025</i> | <i>Head Start</i> | <i>Early Head Start</i> | <i>Total Head Start/ Early Head Start Budgets</i> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Salaries and Wages | \$1,484,641 | \$953,989 | \$2,438,630 |
| Fringe Benefits | \$417,759 | \$280,312 | \$698,071 |
| Equipment | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Supplies | \$73,079 | \$40,232 | \$113,311 |
| Travel | \$0 | \$400 | \$400 |
| Contractual | \$49,215 | \$21,380 | \$70,595 |
| Occupancy | \$140,386 | \$54,750 | \$195,136 |
| Other* | \$62,707 | \$29,802 | \$92,509 |
| Total Approved Budget | \$2,227,787 | \$1,380,865 | \$3,608,652 |

**The Other category includes staff training; local mileage reimbursement; and expenses related to volunteers; parent meetings costs; legal, accounting and audits; publications, printing and advertising; payroll fees; insurances (directors' and officers' liability, bonding and general liability) and subscriptions, dues and membership fees.*



KCHS staff at the Conscious Discipline Institute, Birth to Five in Pennsylvania.

Our Thanks!

...to the individuals, businesses, and organizations who have contributed cash, goods, and talents, enabling KCHS to offer quality child care programs to the community and to the nearly 500 children and families we serve annually.

thank you

Individuals

Anonymous Donors
Kelly Bailey, RD, LD, NPI
Tanner Cooper-Risser
Linda Davis
Jerry Kelly
KCHS Board Members
KCHS Policy Council
KCHS Staff
Halle Krajenski
Keith Leaning
Pamela Martin-Diaz
Anna Marie Mager, RDH
Lisa McCutcheon
Dr. Amy Murnen, MD
Nancy Omahan
Chelsea Perkins
Erin Salva
Diane Shiffler
Dr. Margaret Somple, DO
Scott Swingle
Lori Totman

*"The broadest, and
maybe the most
meaningful definition of
volunteering: Doing
more than you have to
because you want to, in
a cause you consider
good."
-Ivan Scheier*

Educational & Partner Agencies/Businesses

Amazing Eyes
Amazon Smile
American Electric Power
American Legion of Danville
Behavioral Healthcare Partners of Central Ohio, Inc.
Bottoms Up Diaper Bank
Brandon United Methodist Church
Centerburg Church of Christ
Centerburg Fire Department
Centerburg Local Schools
Centerburg Pointe
Central Ohio Technical College
ComDoc
Community Mental Health and Recovery Board of Licking and Knox Counties
Conway Pharmacy
Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development
Craftsmen for Kids
Danville Family Dental
Danville Local Schools
Directec Corporation
Discount School Supply
Diversity Coalition of Knox County
Divine Remodeling, LLC
Dolly Parton Imagination Library
East Knox Local Schools
Eastern Knox County Joint Fire District
Energy Cooperative
Fredericktown Community Fire District
Fredericktown Local Schools
Harcourt Parish Episcopal Church
Interchurch Social Services
Kenyon College
Kenyon College-Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternity

Kenyon College-Environmental Studies Department
Kenyon College-Epsilon Delta Mu Sorority
Kenyon College-Kokosingers
Kenyon College Men's Basketball Team
Kenyon College Men's Football Team
Kenyon College-Men's Lacrosse Team
Kenyon College-Owl Creeks
Kenyon College-Theta Delta Phi Sorority
Kiwanis Club of Mt. Vernon
Knox Area Transit
Knox Community Hospital
Knox County Board of Developmental Disabilities
Knox County Career Center
Knox County Chamber of Commerce
Knox County Dept. of Job and Family Services
Knox County Educational Service Center
Knox County Family and Children First Council
Knox County Foundation
Knox County Juvenile Courts
Knox County Properties, Inc.
Knox Public Health
Lakeholm Church of the Nazarene
Lakeshore
Mid-Ohio Food Bank
Mt. Vernon Arts Consortium
Mt. Vernon City Schools
Mt. Vernon Fire Department
Mt. Vernon Nazarene University
Mt. Vernon Shade Tree and Beautification Commission
National Head Start Association
Nationwide Children's Hospital
New Directions
New Life Church of the Nazarene
Ohio Association of Child Care Providers
Ohio Dept of Children & Youth-Ohio Children's Trust Fund
Ohio Dept of Children & Youth-Help Me Grow

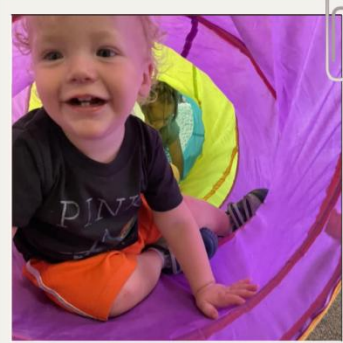
Ohio Department of Education & Workforce-Children & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
Ohio Dept. of Health-Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources-Division of Wildlife
Ohio Department of Education
Ohio Head Start Association, Inc.
Park National Bank
Parent Support Initiative of Knox County, Ohio
Pathways of Central Ohio
Place 4 Grace
Prescription Turf Care
Public Library of Mt. Vernon and Knox County
Riverside Recovery Services, LLC
Salvation Army of Mt. Vernon
St. Vincent de Paul School
The Ariel Foundation
The Freedom Center
The Glenn A. Gallagher Centre
The Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association
The OSU Extension Office of Knox County-SNAP-Ed Program
The Sanctuary (Danville)
The Winter Sanctuary Emergency Homeless Shelter
TouchPointe Marriage and Family Resources
United Way of Knox County
Village of Gambier
YMCA of Mt. Vernon

Volunteer Services

A total of 44 Kenyon students operated the 33rd annual Shawn Kelly Memorial Holiday Party, which was organized and fundraised by the Theta Alpha Kappa sorority and the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity. This event was held on December 13th and was attended by 302 KCHS children and adults.

Bottoms Up Diaper Drive

KCHS participated in the annual Bottoms Up Diaper Drive, collecting packs of diapers to be distributed to KCHS families. In the 2023-2024 program year we distributed a total of 532 packages of diapers, 121 packages of wipes, and 38 changing pads to enrolled families, including families referred by community partners such as Knox Community Hospital or WIC.



790 Fairgrounds Road, Suite 200
Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050
(740) 397-1344

www.knoxheadstart.org

Follow us on social media!

