

New Resource Available to Families in Need

Kettering has a well-established reputation as a collaborative community that is both innovative and eager to help those in need. That can-do spirit has led to a new — and much-needed resource for families who could use a little extra help.

For more than a year, the Partners for Healthy Youth Board, the City of Kettering, and the Kettering City School District have collaborated on ways to address the growing number of families in our community who need assistance. Those efforts culminated in the creation of the new Youth and Family Community Resource Coordinator, a position that works with both the City and schools to gather resources for those in need.

Since being hired in July 2017, Jonelle Carroll has embraced the role as community advocate.

"For many years the City of Kettering has had a Senior Services Coordinator to address the needs and provide resources for seniors living in our community," explained Carroll. "But Kettering didn't have a central point of contact for youth or families. My current focus is improving quality of life for Kettering families by addressing short-term needs for assistance, with my long-term goal being the development of plans and

- programs to help families achieve self-sufficiency.'
- Depending on the type of need, Carroll works with a number of agencies, including the City of Kettering, Department of Job and Family Services, The Ohio Benefit Bank, Hannah's Treasure Chest, Epiphany Lutheran Church, the Kettering Backpack Program and Kettering Clean Care.

One parent wrote to me and said "What an amazing resource. You are bringing me so much hope."

— Jonelle Carroll, Youth and Family Community Resource Coordinator

- These could include issues with housing, food and nutrition, clothing, job search assistance, counseling—basically any need a family may have that impacts the quality of life and the ability of children to learn, grow and live in a stable home environment. The position is jointly funded by the City of Kettering and the Kettering City School District, with additional sponsorship from the Dor-Wood Optimist Club.
- While still in the process of meeting face-to-face with the various stakeholders, Carroll has been able to provide one-on-one guidance to 53 families to-date.

Carroll says the most common issues facing Kettering families are finding affordable housing, options for affordable child care, furniture for displaced families and transportation assistance. Also commonly needed are options for health insurance, assistance with food and nutrition, and substance abuse and/or family counseling.

During September, four displaced families, who did not have any furniture including beds, received assistance from a pilot program launched in the Kettering City School District. A **Kettering Family in Need** bulletin was emailed to school staff containing a furniture wish list for each family. Within an hour, staff members volunteered to donate and deliver all of the requested furniture.

"The pilot program proved to be a win-win, with many staff members who were happy to find a loving home for the furniture and with families who were so grateful and appreciative to receive it," stated Carroll. "One parent wrote to me and said 'What an amazing resource. You are bringing me so much hope.'"

Carroll is developing a program with local business owners and organizations who are interested in collaborating and finding unique ways to share their experiences, knowledge and services with families in our community.

Need Help?

Don't be afraid to ask for help! A tragedy or misfortune can happen to anyone. There are resources to help with just about any need, but we can't help if we are not aware of the issue.

If your family is experiencing a quality of life issue expected to last more than 6 months—identify goals or ways you can address those needs. It could mean taking online classes or returning to school, starting a business or changing careers, looking for a new residence or method of transportation, working with credit/budget counselors or taking a cooking or exercise class.

A temporary setback does not have to be a life sentence. If you need help with these or any other quality of life issues, reach out to the school counselor in the school your child attends or contact Jonelle Carroll, Youth and Family Community Resource Coordinator at 937-499-1496.

