

NEWS RELEASE



Mahoning County
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2021 Community Spotlight Award Winners Announced

[YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO] Each year, Mahoning County Children Services and the Child Advocacy Center at Akron Children's Hospital, Boardman, award a community organization(s) or individual(s) with the *Community Spotlight Award* at their annual "Pinwheels for Child Abuse Prevention" community/public event.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on in-person events, the public event has been cancelled. However, the Annual Community Spotlight Award Recipients have been selected.

The Annual *Community Spotlight Award* recognizes community organizations or individuals who demonstrate generosity, commitment, and on-going community service to the Children of Mahoning County. Each organization is awarded with a signature "Blue Award." Blue is significant as it is the official color for Child Abuse PREVENTION.

Mahoning County Children Services and Akron Children's Hospital proudly announce **2021 Community Spotlight Award** is presented to:

Boardman High School Jazz Ensemble 2

Boardman High School Jazz Ensemble 2 has entertained audiences at the "Pinwheels for Prevention Event" nine out of the 14 years consecutive years. We are so honored to be able to showcase and recognize the highly talented students from Boardman High School and their Music Director Tom Ruggieri. Mr. Ruggieri shows up hours before the event to set up the equipment and prepare for the students' arrival. The students play 3 to 4 times thought-out the event entertaining all those in attendance. We have always received numerous positive and comments raving about the Jazz Ensemble and their awesome and energetic performances. We are so grateful for the Jazz Ensemble, Mr. Ruggieri and Boardman High School Administration for allowing them to join us for the Pinwheels for Prevention Events.

Wanda Marland is a cherished Donor and Friend to Mahoning County Children Services. Since early in 2018, Wanda has become one of Mahoning County Children Services most cherished partners as well as a true friend to the Agency and the many, many children served. Each month and throughout the year, Wanda ensures that each child in Mahoning County Children Services Foster and Kinship Care Program receives a specially created Birthday Gift Bag on their birthday. Each Birthday Gift Bag is filled with a comfort blanket and other age-appropriate items or toys. The children and teens range in age from infant to 18 years of old. These are our County's most vulnerable and at-risk children who are in the Agency's protective custody due to child abuse and neglect. Wanda has created Birthday Gift Bags for hundreds of Mahoning County Children. As the number of children and families we serve on our caseloads continues to grow, so does the number of birthdays each month. In order for Wanda's Birthday Bag Program to continue to be successful and to keep up with increased demand, she needs to find others to help. A majority of Wanda's tremendous hard work, rather--labor of love—is done 'behind-the-scenes.' Wanda successfully obtains donors and donations, purchases items/materials/supplies, coordinates other interested donors, and ultimately creates and delivers the beautiful gift bags created with love!

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Mahoning County Children Services: [\[www.mahoningkids.com\]](http://www.mahoningkids.com) Mahoning County Children Services is the public agency responsible for providing child protective services helping abused, neglected and dependent children in Mahoning County. The Agency is committed to providing a healthy, stable, safe and secure environment for each child in our care. **Mission:** Mahoning County Children Services, in partnership with the community, is a committed leader protecting children while helping to preserve families.