

# ProKids

Standing Up for Foster Children Since 1981



A little boy named Anthony. A teenage girl named Sofia. A tiny baby named Olivia.

All of them innocent.

Fragile.

Adrift.

Each one of them was removed from his or her home. All of them are among the 2,700 children in the Hamilton County child protection system.

Still vulnerable to abuse and neglect, often moving from home to home and school to school, they grow up with a singular dream: a safe, secure home.

ProKids speaks for a growing number of these children.

With a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and a dedicated team of ProKids staff members, Olivia and Anthony and Sophia all have a chance at something different: A safe, permanent and nurturing home.

## OUR VISION

A safe, permanent and nurturing home for every child.

## OUR MISSION

**WHAT:** ProKids mobilizes our community to break the vicious cycle of child abuse and neglect.

**How:** ProKids helps our community discover the power of investing in the promise of our children.

We recruit, train, and support community volunteers to speak up for children who have been abused and neglected and help guide them into safe environments where they can thrive. ProKids creates alliances within the child protection system to maximize outcomes for our children.

**WHY:** To create a new cycle of growing up safe and secure, fundamentally changing the future for our children and our entire community.

## IT TAKES A COMMITTED COMMUNITY

Years ago, I was on a path of building my family and my career when I found a different world within our community. I had never seen children with broken bodies and spirits. I didn't understand the trauma of abuse and neglect.



But I also had never seen the power of a community working together to make sure children were safe.

What I now know, to the core of my being, is that we have to save the children.

And we can.

We cannot look away from the tragedy of the 2,700+ in Hamilton County under the court's jurisdiction due to maltreatment. We cannot ignore that children in foster care are 10 times more likely to be abused than other children. We cannot look away from the fact that half of all foster children fall behind in school and are less likely to complete high school. We cannot hide from the reality that when these children grow up, they are more likely to be homeless, to go to prison and to suffer PTSD – at a higher rate than returning war veterans.

What we **can** do is mobilize our community to not only **see** these children, but to **take action** today. We can make things different for these children and our entire Greater Cincinnati region.

Because everything that breaks kids also puts them on a path to become broken men, broken women and broken parents.

Everything that we do right now to change things for one child creates a different future for us all.

It is not an agency or a system that cares for our children. It is a committed community.

A community that I am privileged to be a part of.

Since we began telling our story and asking for your help, you have shown us what is possible. With the support of our Friends of Children Society members, other individual donors and foundation partners, ProKids' dedicated volunteers and passionate staff work every day to break the cycle of abuse and neglect and to create a new cycle of growing up safe and confident.

There is a lot more to do. Whether you help spread the word about our children, support ProKids or speak up for a child directly as a CASA volunteer, the ProKids difference can be *you*.

— Tracy Cook, ProKids Executive Director

PROKIDS ADVOCACY TEAMS, INCLUDING **185** TRAINED CASA VOLUNTEERS,  
WITH STAFF CASA MANAGERS AND ATTORNEYS, ADVOCATED FOR  
**605** GREATER CINCINNATI CHILDREN IN 2014.

Children are **10 times** more likely to be abused in foster care than children in the general population.



**98%** of ProKids' children were free from abuse and neglect.

More than **20%** of aging-out foster children become homeless.



**93%** of our children lived in a safe, permanent family home when their case closed.

**50%** of all abused and/or neglected children fall behind in school; only 58% of children who have been in foster care graduate from high school.



**98%** of our children received appropriate educational placement or achieved developmental milestones.

Many foster children move at least **1 time** each year.



**85%** of ProKids' children experience stability during their case.

Nationally, only **24%** of children are placed with their siblings.



**77%** of ProKids' children were placed with their brothers and sisters.

**21%** of abused and/or neglected children suffer from PTSD - a greater rate than U.S. war veterans.



**99%** of our children have access to the interventions and services they need.

## SAMANTHA'S STORY

BY SAMANTHA, MOTHER OF A PROKIDS CHILD

When I was growing up here in Cincinnati, I didn't know that other children grew up safe and secure.

I thought my life was normal, even though it was so chaotic. My father had sexually abused me and then he was gone. My mom would come and go in my life. My aunt would hit me. And my grandmother – who everyone thought was the best person to take care of me – was using drugs. When I was about 12, she started giving me pills. They were like a reward for helping with laundry or doing chores.

School was meaningless. By high school, I only went so I could be around other people who did drugs. I dropped out. I went into foster care for a little while, but I ran away. I moved in with a man who was 12 years older than me. He treated me badly, but I didn't know any different. And he kept me supplied with drugs.

By 16, I was pregnant and alone. I didn't know what to do.

A little while after my little girl was born, she was removed from my care by the child protection system. I knew it was for her own good. But just when I thought I would sign over my rights to her, I took a good look at her and knew I needed to change my life.

But how? Although it's hard for me to believe now, it was a hard choice: heroin, or my Renee?

I went into rehab. I would cry myself to sleep, praying for a guardian angel for my little girl. What was her life like in foster care? Would I ever be with her again?

Then I got a visitor, the only person who came to see me in rehab. She was the angel I had been praying for: a ProKids CASA Volunteer named Miss Lori.

She brought me pictures of Renee. She told me that she was making sure Renee was safe. She brought me hope.

And I knew that if Miss Lori was going to make sure that Renee was going to be OK, then I needed to be OK. I could not be like my mother or my grandmother.

I worked hard. Got clean. And I broke the cycle. Thanks to Miss Lori, I am able to make sure my little girl is growing up safe and secure.

“The CASA Volunteer looked out for my little girl. She made sure she was safe. It made me wonder: what would my life have been like if I had a CASA Volunteer when I was growing up?”

— Samantha, mother of a ProKids child



## RENEE'S STORY

By LORI FELDMAN, COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA)

At ProKids, when we are trained to be CASA Volunteers, we learn that the best place for a child is with their own family *if* that family is safe and secure. But when I met Samantha, Renee's mother, I was pretty sure that couldn't happen. Samantha was in rehab and she was a shell of a person. She seemed to have no mothering instinct. She had no hope.

But she was just 17 and a child herself. She had been through so much.

I was amazed by her in one way: she was not angry. She never blamed anyone else.

As I continued to follow through with the court's instructions to see if reunification could work, I saw that Samantha was starting to come out of the fog she had been in. She began to show Renee that she was loved.

I was also watching over Renee. I was worried about her foster home. I didn't think she was safe there. And during those important months as a toddler, she was falling behind developmentally. So I worked with my ProKids Advocacy Team to move Renee to a different home. And I advocated for a home that would not only be safe and encourage Renee's development, but would also have foster parents who would help transition this little girl back to her mother.

Samantha began working on her GED, even though she tested originally at a fifth grade level. She began to focus on the future and how to get a job and housing.

In court, ProKids advocated for a plan that considered all these issues. A wonderful woman who had gotten to know Samantha when she was in treatment said she was willing to provide a stable home for both Samantha and Renee. Under her roof, they could find out what life could really be like.

Since then, Samantha completed her GED, got a job and traveled to Haiti with her church to spread her message of hope. She learned to drive, met a wonderful man, got married and welcomed a new baby.

Renee will be off to kindergarten this fall. She is having a very different childhood than her mother.

Samantha broke a generational chain of abuse and neglect so that Renee could grow up safe, secure and loved.

Renee is so happy and full of promise. I was privileged to be there when she needed someone to speak up for her.



"This was my first case as a CASA volunteer. It showed me how connected we are. It showed me how change is possible for someone when there is an advocate. How love can really conquer all."

— Lori, ProKids CASA Volunteer

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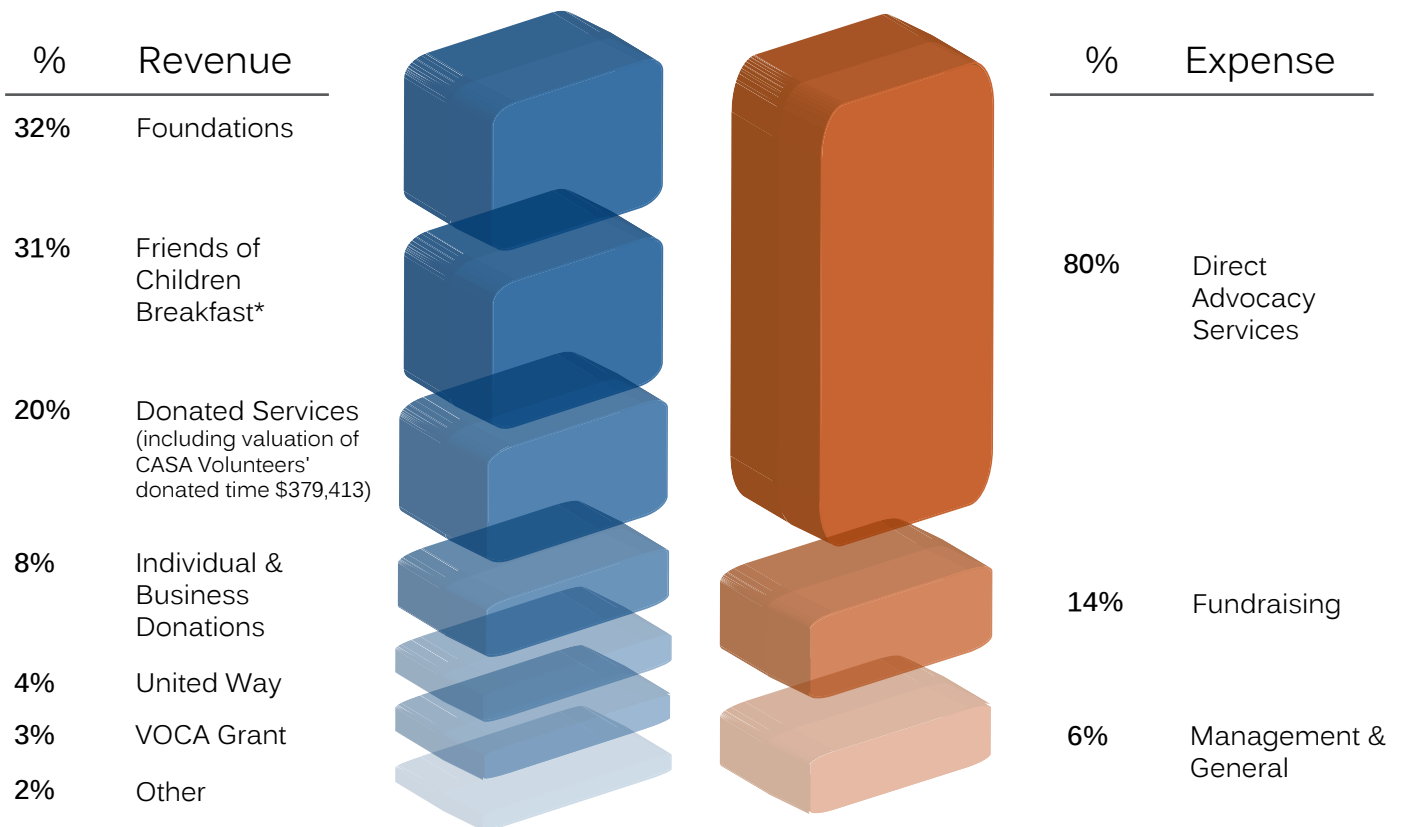
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## FINANCIALS

2014 REVENUES \$2,647,087

2014 EXPENSES \$2,034,088



\*Includes future promises to give.  
See facing page for Friends of Children Society members.

Change in Net Assets: \$612,863  
(includes Gain on Investments of \$898)  
End of Year Net Assets \$2,930,499

# The Friends of Children Society

Our multi-year giving program enables ProKids to have the stability we need to serve more waiting children. These Friends of Children members have committed to supporting ProKids for five years or more. Thank you!

## *Gift of Love (\$25,000+)*

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Keith & Debbie Jacobs  
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**ProKids  
speaks  
for  
Olivia.**



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Tim & Paula Murray

Olivia was only a few months old when her mother couldn't care for her anymore. Olivia was underweight and had developmental delays.



With your support, **99%** of children served by ProKids have access to needed services.

Stephen Nesbitt  
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# THANK YOU!

As a non-profit agency, ProKids depends on the generosity of our friends who support our advocacy. When you give to ProKids, you are investing in the promise of Greater Cincinnati's future. You are investing in the possibility of a safe, secure and nurturing home for all children. We are deeply grateful for your support.

## \$100,000+

The Austin E. Knowlton Foundation  
Marge & Charles J. Schott Foundation  
The United Way of Greater Cincinnati

## \$50,000+

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The Carol Ann & Ralph V. Haile, Jr./  
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## \$25,000+

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## \$10,000+

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Nicole & Tom Zistler

When Anthony was little,  
he and his brothers were  
removed from their parents.  
They had been physically and  
sexually abused, and had been  
surrounded by  
domestic violence.  
All they had was each other.



With your support,  
77% of children served by  
ProKids are placed  
with their siblings.



**\$500 - 999**

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**Sofia had been in foster care for several years after her mother died from a drug overdose and her dad went to jail. She was doing well in school but was rebelling against her foster mom.**



**With your support, 70% of children served by ProKids graduate from high school.**

**\$100 - \$249 (continued)**

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Eric & Courtney Ragland  
David & Linda Rechten  
Gareth Richards  
Rippe & Kingston Systems, Inc.  
Nancy Roberto  
James Robertson  
Catherine Rothfuss  
Thomas & Mary Jo Ruby  
Brenda Ruffner  
Brian Rupel  
Torie Russert  
Daniel D. & Kitty K. Salter  
Nancy D. Sauer  
Dr. Jim & Beth Schiff  
Frank H. Schilling  
Katherine Schmitt  
Amanda Schneider

Daniel K. Schneider  
Philip & Martha Schneider  
Harold & Theresa Schoen  
John & Mamie Schroder  
Michael Schwartz &  
Maria Palermo  
Robert & Karen Schwartz  
Carly Schweier  
Chelsea Scully  
Richard Seal  
Bill & Helene Sedwick  
Timothy & Joan Shafer  
Steven & Julie Shifman  
Murray & Robin Sinclair, Jr.  
David & Susan Smith

Robert & Marlene  
Westerkamp  
Ginny & Bruce Whitman  
Stanford & Kristi Williams  
John Williams  
Kimberly Williams  
Ian Wilt  
Jean A. Wisuri  
Ann & Stan Wong  
Sparkle Worley  
Alan & Diane Yaffe  
Chen Yang  
Pamela Yates  
Young Presidents Organization  
John Zembrodt  
Peggy Zink  
Bette Zwyayer

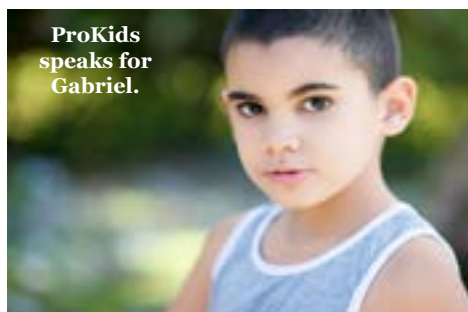
**By the time he was 2,  
Gabriel had lived in five  
different foster homes.**



**With your support,  
85% of children served  
by ProKids experience  
stability while assigned  
to ProKids.**

Councilman Chris  
Smitherman  
Nick Spadaccini  
Craig Spencer  
Springfield Township Police  
Association  
Eileen Stanisc  
Michael J. Suffern &  
Karen L. Imbus  
Heather J. Swob  
John Tafaro &  
Charlotte Caples  
Taft Stettinius & Holster LLP  
Stephon G. &  
Karen M. Thompson  
Frannie Thompson &  
Don Kunkel  
John & Deborah Tisdell  
Jodi Tobin  
Catharina & Robert Toltzis  
Elizabeth & Brian Tome  
Jesse Turner  
Thomas & Traci  
Vandorselaer  
Mike Vieth  
Sonya T. Wallace  
Louise Watts  
Robert RJ Weber  
Courtney Weber  
Erin Welch  
Miriam E. West

**Up to \$99**  
Anonymous (6)  
Alan Abes  
Aglamesis Brothers  
Gregory Aldrich  
Trevor & Leslie Allen  
Sarah E. Ambach  
Kaush Amin  
Daniel & Melinda Amrein  
Rita Armentrout  
Brian Augustine  
Leigh J. Bachman  
Christopher J. Bedell  
John & Robertta  
Benevengo  
Cherlyn Benningfield  
John & Debbie Bernloehr  
Beth & Jim Bextermueller  
Linda Bierley  
Christopher Bigham  
Lydia Bigner  
Stephen & Susan Black  
Kevin & Margaret Black  
Kendra Black  
Jillian & Paul Boertlein  
Deborah Brooks  
Steve Browne  
Charles & Jacquelyn  
Browning  
Jennifer Brunette  
Nancy A. Bruns  
Pamela S. Bryant  
Rebecca Bugos  
Steven Burns  
Barbara Bushman  
Tracey Byrd  
James F. Byrne  
Mark & Ann Caesar  
Louise & L.D. Camblin  
Rebecca J. Campbell  
Nathan Carlson  
Marilynne Chapman  
Tara Hogan Charles  
Pamela Chidester



**Up to \$99 (continued)**

Ernest & Jeanne  
Ciambarella  
Chris & Lisa Clark  
Clarence & Beverly Clark  
Kim Coleman  
Gene & Jean Conway  
Corri Doenecke  
Janice Dossman  
Judith Dowd  
Bill Dube  
John & Jane Duhan  
Michelle Edwards  
Tangela Edwards  
Sally Edwards  
Elizabeth Ernest  
Paulette Evans  
Sarah Fairweather  
Amy Foust & Eric Cheng  
Brandi S. Fristoe  
Dr. & Mrs. Richard Fulwiler  
Mike & Sally Gaburo  
Dawn Galvin  
Susan George  
Julie Gideon  
Amy Gilles  
Bob & Hallie Goldcamp  
Mildred Turner Gonzalez  
Dawn E. Grace  
Kathy Graeter  
Claudette Graumlich  
Olivia Greer-Brown  
David & Laura Groenke  
Peggy Gruenke  
Richard & Elaine Gutekunst  
Lydia Guiao  
Donald & Nancy Gurney  
Melissa Hailey  
Adriene Hairston  
Rodney W. Hall  
Connie Hanna & Leonard Glaser  
Matthew & Patricia Hannahan  
Colleen Harris  
Bruce & Susan Hartung  
Sharon Harvey  
Dale C. Hays  
Gary & Carol Hehemann  
Julie A. Hein  
Sophia Helms  
Steven Henkel  
Roy Herbst & Rae Reynolds  
Robert & Cynthia Hertz  
Jennifer Crawford Hilton  
Kathleen A. Hipple  
Barbara J. Hudson  
Paul Humphries  
Elizabeth Hunter  
Jacqueline & Daniel Hutchens  
Natalie Ibold  
Vickie Jackson

Kerry James  
Jessica Elaine Johnston  
Jennifer Jones  
Angel & Clyde Joseph  
Jack Jouett  
Ronnie Jurkowitz  
Molly Kelly-Elliott  
Stephen Kelly  
Shannon Kemen  
Jeanese N. Kemp (Polk)  
M.A. & D. Keslosky  
Adrienne Kessling  
Diana Klein  
Cheryl M. Klug  
Janice Knocius  
Knox Presbyterian Church  
Jay & Renee Krebs  
Frederick L. Kundrata  
Adam Kwiecinski  
Joseph & Rebecca  
Lambers  
Kenneth J. Lambers  
Joann Lambers  
Michael T. Lasonczyk  
Gary W. Lee  
Gerald T. & Carol S. Ling  
James Luebering  
William & Amy Luipold  
Molly Luken  
Charles & Malissa Lux  
Catherine Maichrye  
Jeffrey Martin  
Michael & Christa Mattis  
Manfred Maurer  
Bridgette L. Mcburrows  
Pat McCollum  
Valerie McEnroe  
Kristine McGilvray  
Henley & Diana McIntosh  
McMillan & Associates  
Robert P. Mecklenborg  
Mengs Martial Arts of  
Cincinnati  
Tom & Becki Meyer  
Jill & John Meyer  
Pastor Geneva Miller &  
The Way Community  
Church  
Michael Molony  
Lindsay Mongenas  
Toyia Montgomery  
Cadence Moore  
Karen & Kim Morgan  
Mark & Margaret  
Muething  
John & Maryanne Mulder  
Susan Neaman  
Kati Neff  
Sarah Nelson  
Joseph & Barbara Nickel

Lauren Nunn  
Marie O'Connell  
Roger & Judy Ortwein  
Jane Otten  
Paul Owen & Mary Jenkins  
Rachael Palermo  
Phillip Palicki &  
Gretta Herberth  
Donita Parrish  
Larry & Carol Parsons  
Geri Pass-Sowell  
Peggy Patalino  
Michael & Joyce Patterson  
Joy Patton  
Jeffery & Therese Paul  
Todd Pendleton  
Phillip D Penn Living Trust  
Lana M Piazza  
Michael J. Pitillo  
Mary Beth & Bill Price  
Linda Pruis  
John E. Pucke  
Brittany Reardon  
Bernard Reckseit  
Maureen Reis  
Nick & Caroline Renneker  
Fredric Robbins  
Eric Robbins  
Jenny Ross  
Joel Ross  
Michelle Rowland



John & Carole Ruschulte  
Jim & Marge Ryan  
Elizabeth & Dave Schirmer  
Stuart & Roselyn Schloss  
Donald & Joan Schmitt  
Paul W. Schuch  
Ted Schwartz  
Lori Selm  
Tim & Mary Senff  
Kevin & Jane Shea  
Kathryn J. Sheffield  
Christina Simon  
John & Mary Slauson  
Hilda L. Smith  
Kristen Smitherman  
Andrew & Julie Sonnek  
Wendy Spears

Mia was in third grade when her teacher found out what was going on with the tiny, quiet girl. She was taking food from the cafeteria because there was nothing to eat at home, where her mother spent most of her time getting high. And when that happened, her mother would beat her and yell at her.



With your support, **93%** of children served by ProKids are in a permanent, safe home when their case ends.

Lauren Stata  
James & Kathleen  
Stephens  
Carrie Stoudemire  
Brendan Sullivan  
Paul & Bev Swanson  
Daniel & Kathleen Taylor  
Elizabeth Thole  
Councilman Cecil Thomas &  
Pamula Thomas  
Three Rivers Local School  
District  
Elizabeth Tull  
Janine Varner  
Karen Vorio Veeneman  
JoAnn Vennemeyer  
Emily von Allmen  
Lindsay Wagner  
Phyllis Wahl  
Anthony Walch  
Dick Weiland  
Kim A. Westerkamp  
Mary Kay Whiston  
Kris Wickemeier  
Cleota P. Wilbekin  
Gwendolyn Wilder  
Alfred Williams  
Sandy Wilson  
T. Patrick & Tonja Wilson  
Keith Wilson  
Andrew Winters  
Nancy Wong  
Robert & Sharon Wyenandt  
Edward & Andrea Zumbiel

# WHO WILL SPEAK FOR OUR CHILDREN? MAKE IT YOU. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

There are many ways you can be an active part of ProKids.  
Make a difference not only for abused and neglected children,  
but for our entire community.

**LEARN.** Attend a special one-hour, in-person Snapshot, regularly presented at ProKids. Make a reservation at [www.prokids.org](http://www.prokids.org) or by contacting Stephanie at 513-487-4961 or reach her at [skuzma@prokids.org](mailto:skuzma@prokids.org).

**SERVE.** You can become a CASA Volunteer by starting with a Snapshot. Then you can begin the 30-hour flexible, supportive training to prepare you to work directly with the children ProKids serves. Find out more at [www.prokids.org](http://www.prokids.org) or by contacting Stephanie at 513-487-4961 or reach her at [skuzma@prokids.org](mailto:skuzma@prokids.org).

**CONTRIBUTE.** Your financial support enables ProKids staff and volunteers to speak up for abused and neglected children in Hamilton County. Donate online at [www.prokids.org](http://www.prokids.org) or find out more about giving, including planned giving through a bequest, by calling Jennifer at 513-487-6445 or reach her at [jmckettrick@prokids.org](mailto:jmckettrick@prokids.org). Visit [www.prokids.org](http://www.prokids.org) to find out more about helping ProKids with programs like Amazon Smile or Kroger Community Rewards.

**JOIN.** You can be a part of the ProKids Young Professionals and help raise awareness of child abuse and neglect and support ProKids. Find out more at [www.prokids.org/pkyp](http://www.prokids.org/pkyp) or by contacting Stephanie at [skuzma@prokids.org](mailto:skuzma@prokids.org). Or be a part of our Resource Team and help provide gently used items for our children. Learn more by contacting Carmen at 513-487-4962 or reach her at [clangenkamp@prokids.org](mailto:clangenkamp@prokids.org).

**SHARE.** Subscribe to our monthly eNews by visiting [www.prokids.org](http://www.prokids.org). Be a part of our social media outreach and help us build awareness throughout our community.



Looking for another way to help? Need more information?  
Visit [www.prokids.org](http://www.prokids.org) and click on "Connect" at the bottom of the home page.  
Or call us at 513-281-2000.