

Children Services cares

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As Summit County's Juvenile Court judge, I am more cognizant than most of the challenges that face those who work every day with children who are in desperate circumstances. If we want these children to succeed, we must continue to work as a community to meet these challenges head-on.

I can say without hesitation that the Summit County Children Services employees continually work to meet these challenges. The court witnesses their diligence and their sense of purpose on a daily basis. While the responsibilities of each agency in this process are different, there is a common mission that each embraces, and that is to make the best decisions in the best interests of the children we serve.

The headlines often scream in outrage and concern for those children who have suffered and whose desperate needs were not addressed as quickly as all would have liked. While the concerns for these children are real, they are only a minute fraction of families served by SCCS.

I have witnessed children who have been promptly pulled from hopeless and life-threatening circumstances and permanently placed with loving and caring relatives within a very short period, due to the quick and sure actions and support of the agency. I've also witnessed families, caseworkers, guardians and foster parents embrace in the back of my courtroom because the best interests of a child have been met.

Sometimes, this occurs because a parent has worked hard with the assistance of the caseworker to earn reunification. On other occasions, a parent has made the difficult decision to allow the child to be placed for adoption. This ultimate loving act is often as a result of soul-searching, the hard work of the agency and the supportive, gentle guidance of lawyers in the community who have focused on the welfare of families and children as a career calling.

Unfortunately for SCCS, none of these wonderful successes can be reported, due to the confidentiality of the proceedings to protect the privacy of these children. They continue on their mission nonetheless.

I have had the pleasure to meet the agency's new director, John Saros, and I am confident that the assistance SCCS provides to the community will not only continue but will be enhanced. That is good news for Summit County and for the children of our community who will benefit from the devotion and commitment of the staff at SCCS.

I encourage the citizens of Summit County to carefully and positively consider voting yes on Issue 21 on Nov. 6.

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