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New Annual Most Wanted Poster One of Many Highlights in Child Support Month

Cincinnati (Aug. 4, 2010) A new Most Wanted poster featuring eight parents who now owe more than \$335,000 in child support payments will be released today by Hamilton County's Department of Job and Family Services as one of the many planned activities for National Child Support Month.

The eight men owe money to 11 different children. The person with the highest delinquent account on the poster is Philip R. Gross, 55, whose last known address was in Atlanta. He owes more than \$167,000 to three children.

To appear on a Most Wanted poster, the whereabouts of the absent parent must be unknown and the parent with custody of the children must sign a waiver. In addition, a person must have a child support-related warrant.

"It is sad and unfortunate that some parents shirk the responsibility of raising and supporting their children," said Moira Weir, director of the Department of Job and Family Services, which houses the county's Child Support Enforcement Agency. "In many cases, the taxpayer has to provide support for their children. If someone out there knows where these parents can be found, please call the Sheriff's office. Let's hold parents accountable and let's make sure we do what we can for these children to lead happy, healthy lives."

In addition to the new Most Wanted Poster, the agency has planned a Fatherhood Conference to celebrate Child Support Month. "A Brighter Future: Strengthening Fathers for Families and Community" is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aug. 13, at the Kingsgate Marriott. The event, sponsored by the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services, Lighthouse Youth Services and the Ohio Practitioners Network for Fathers & Families, is free to the public and is targeted to fathers and attorneys, court personnel, probation officers and social service agencies who work with fathers and families.

Reds Hall of Famer Joe Morgan will provide opening remarks. Congressman Steve Driehaus will be the lunch keynote speaker. He will present Judge Thomas Lipps, presiding administrative judge of Hamilton County's Juvenile Court since 2005, with a Congressional Proclamation during lunch. Judge Lipps will also receive the Child Support Hero award for his longtime commitment to furthering child support collection efforts.

The conference will include a continental breakfast and lunch and close with a community dialogue on fatherhood. Further details will be announced soon, including speakers and presenters. To register, visit online at <http://healthyfathers.brighterfuture.sgizmo.com> or call 513-487-6780.

The conference will include a chance at amnesty for those who have their licenses suspended. Parents who show up at the conference and make arrangements to begin paying off their delinquent support can have their license reinstated.

“We would love it if people would take advantage of our offer of amnesty and start working with us on supporting their children,” Weir said. “Suspending a license, placing someone on a Most Wanted poster, seeking a criminal warrant – these are actions of last resorts. We would much rather work out an agreement with someone we know is willing to be responsible for their children.”

In addition to Most Wanted poster and driver’s license suspensions, Hamilton County Child Support uses a variety of tools to collect child support, including intercepting tax returns, denying passports, freezing and seizing funds from bank accounts and suspending professional licenses.

The County’s Child Support Enforcement Agency handled more than 90,000 cases and collected more than \$143 million last year for families that might not otherwise have had the money necessary to pay for such items as food, medical care, child care, school clothes and school supplies. Many of the children who do not receive child support turn to public assistance, with taxpayers providing financial support.

About Hamilton County’s Department of Job and Family Services

The Department of Job and Family Services administers federal, state and local programs for those in need. The Department helps with local child protection, adult protection, child care, child support enforcement, workforce development, cash assistance, food stamp disbursement and Medicaid disbursement. Servicing Hamilton County since 1947, the Department helps hundreds of thousands of residents each year. The Department of Job and Family Services is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, an international, independent, not-for-profit child and family service accrediting organization.