

Doubling Up: *Permanency Unit Gearing Up for Expansion*

At their August 12 meeting the Lancaster County Commissioners unanimously approved an expansion of the COBYS Permanency Unit, beginning in November and phasing in through June 30, 2016. The program will double in size from eight staff to sixteen. New hires will include a supervisor (see page three), five new caseworkers, a case aide, and a secretary/receptionist, matching the structure of the existing unit.

"We are so excited about this," says COBYS Director of Placement Services Mary Sourber, "because it means doubling the number of children and families that we can serve in Lancaster County."

Last year, under the direction of Supervisor Nicole Lauzus, the program served 93 children from 60 families.

"I also believe it is a reflection of

The exemplary work of current Permanency Unit staff helped create the opportunity for expansion of the program, says COBYS Director of Placement Services Mary Sourber. Current staff are (clockwise from bottom left) Supervisor Nicole Lauzus, Jade Landis, Krista Rankin, Leonida Gonzalez, Krista Burkholder, Courtney Farr, Christina Venerick, and Alba Serrano.

the exemplary work that the Permanency Unit already is doing," adds Mary, "which is why we were asked to double the program."

"This program is essential in providing caseworker intervention to the parents and children who are in out-of-home placement due to abuse or neglect," agrees Lancaster County Children & Youth Agency (LCCYA) Executive Director Crystal Natan. "The [existing] COBYS permanency program has consistently provided high quality services and is an invaluable partner in serving the children and families of the county."

Since July 1999, COBYS has operated

the Permanency Unit (originally called the Reunification Program) in partnership with LCCYA. Funded by the County, but staffed by COBYS, since 2005 the program has been housed at 134 E. King Street in Lancaster.

The Permanency Unit provides care for foster children and services to birth families. "The program's primary focus," says Mary, "is to work with

(continued on page three)

Help Wanted for Fall Work Days

Some work needs to be done to convert two former apartments into office and visiting space to get ready for the Permanency Unit expansion. The building is located at 134 E. King St., Lancaster.

COBYS is seeking volunteers to assist with painting, removing carpet, installing ceiling tiles, and perhaps other tasks, depending on the skill level of volunteers.

Work Days are scheduled for: Friday, September 11, from 8:30-12:30 as part of United Way of Lancaster County's Day of Caring, and three Saturday mornings: September 19, October 24, and November 14, from 8 a.m. to noon. Donuts and drinks will be provided.

Additional full- or half-day dates may be scheduled on weekdays for groups of five or more volunteers.

For more information, or to sign up, contact Director of Development Don Fitzkee at 717-656-6580 or don@cobys.org.



Mission Statement

Motivated by Christian faith, COBYS Family Services educates, supports, and empowers children and adults to reach their full potential.

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Fostering Hope is the quarterly newsletter of COBYS Family Services, a Christian family service agency, affiliated with the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren.

COBYS Family Services
 1417 Oregon Road
 Leola, PA 17540
 Phone: 717-656-6580 · 800-452-6517
 Fax: 717-656-3056
 www.cobys.org

Keeping Close Watch on Spending

About five years ago, as I was reading the newspaper, I found myself squinting and moving the paper in and out in an attempt to bring the words into focus. This was frustrating to me, since I had never needed glasses. My eyesight had always been excellent. But that experience led me into the “new normal” of requiring glasses to read.

So I went to the Dollar Store and bought five pairs of reading glasses for five dollars. I strategically placed them around my house and brought a pair to work.

Dollar Store reading glasses are every bit as effective as reading glasses from anywhere else, but they fall short on style, as my wife, kids, and co-workers were all too willing to point out to me. So not wanting to further embarrass my family or my co-workers (or myself), I broke down and got four pairs of less objectionable reading glasses at Costco, spending a total of \$19.99.



I will admit that it hurt a little bit to pay so much. My philosophy has always been “form follows function.” That is, so long as something does what it is intended to do, it really doesn’t matter what it looks like. So spending \$19.99 for four pairs of glasses at Costco when I had previously spent just five bucks at the Dollar Store for five pairs of glasses, which worked every bit as well as the more expensive glasses, was troubling to me.

I recently was reminded of my frugality when Director of Development Don Fitzkee asked to borrow a pair of my reading glasses for a transitional time after his cataract surgery. I agreed to let him use a pair, reminding him that these were “a good pair.” Basically, I was telling him that he really needs to be careful with this five-dollar pair of glasses, because these were the expensive ones.

As I realized what I had said, I laughed out loud. Even I am sometimes amused at my own frugality.

Still, I believe that this quality generally is beneficial in my personal financial management, and I also believe strongly that COBYS benefits from this trait.

Last year more than 2,000 donors made at least one financial contribution to the work of COBYS. Each one of them could have decided not to give or to give somewhere else. But they chose to give to COBYS. I want to be sure that we are using this money wisely.

So thank you for entrusting your gifts to COBYS. We take that trust seriously and strive to be good stewards with each gift we receive. With the help of some expensive five-dollar reading glasses, I keep close watch on how we spend your money.

Mark Cunningham, Executive Director

(continued from page one)

birth families so that children can be reunified with their parents.”

In cases where reunification is not possible, permanency is achieved through adoption or other means.

While the identified client in the COBYS traditional foster care program is the child, says Mary, Permanency Unit staff focus on the family unit as the client, not only supervising the care of children but assisting birth parents and monitoring their progress on their court-approved family service plans.

All clients are referred by the County, and children are placed with families trained by the County or private agencies including COBYS.

Rankin to Head New Permanency Unit

Krista Rankin has been named Supervisor of the new COBYS Permanency Unit, beginning this fall. Krista has been employed as a Permanency Unit Caseworker since August 2011. In her new role she will supervise a team of seven staff, providing care for foster children and coordinating services for birth families.



A graduate of Eastern University with a degree in Elementary Education, Krista previously was employed as a substitute teacher as well as a Therapeutic Support Staff, working with children on the autism spectrum.

Krista resides in Willow Street with her husband Jason, and their toddler daughter.

‘Rose’ Seeking a Home Where She Can Grow

Meet “Rose,” an energetic 12-year-old who is in need of an adoptive family. Rose is very creative and enjoys expressing herself through art, music, and dance. She also is very athletic, loves to be outside, and isn’t afraid to get dirty and have fun.

At the same time, she enjoys typical pre-teen activities like watching movies, playing games on any technological device, shopping, and painting her fingernails.

Rose is in need of a family who will provide her with unconditional love and

stability, in addition to the attention and nurturing she missed out on as a child. Right now Rose is working on sorting through the strong emotions she feels as a result of the traumatic events of her life. She is learning to make good choices and utilize the coping skills that she has been taught.

Rose displays a great deal of resilience and has many strengths.

Will you help her blossom into the amazing person she has the potential to

become? To learn more about Rose please contact Melanie Rankin at melanie@cobys.org or 717-656-6580.



And They All Lived Happily Ever After...

Adoptions don't always come with fairy tale endings. COBYS Family Services supports families beyond adoption day to achieve the best outcomes possible.

Free Post Permanency Services:

- **Case Advocacy:** *Finding the resources you need.*
- **Respite Care:** *When you really need a break!*
- **Support Groups:** *You're not in this alone.*

Available to any PA family who has adopted any child anywhere through any organization.



To learn more, contact Mary Sourber at mary@cobys.org or 800-452-6517. 1417 Oregon Rd., Leola, PA 17540 800.452.6517 • cobys.org

Annual Report

Motivated by Christian faith, COBYS Family Services educates, supports, and empowers children and adults to reach their full potential. We carry out this mission through adoption and foster care services, counseling, family life education, and more. COBYS employs 73 staff (30 full-time), working from three locations. During its 35th anniversary year COBYS saw significant growth in several ministries and set a record for private donations. This report covers the July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015 fiscal year.

Adoption. An affiliate of the Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network (SWAN), the COBYS adoption program helps



prepare children and families for adoption, finalizes adoptions, and provides post-adoption support. Adoption staff finalized 16 adoptions and provided additional

services to 206 foster children and 23 foster/adoptive resource families. Ten families received support services after their adoption. The number of adoptions finalized and families served declined sharply from the previous year in part due to a loss of momentum associated with a leadership transition.

In addition to these SWAN-related services, COBYS provided free birth parent counseling to two families facing unplanned pregnancies and worked with five families who were seeking to adopt an infant. COBYS birth parent counselors are available as a resource to pastors and others who assist families facing unplanned pregnancies.

Counseling. COBYS therapists provided 3,169 hours of therapy during



the year, an increase of 483 hours (18 percent) from the previous year. This was the seventh consecutive year of growth; during the past five years client hours have more than doubled. Nineteen percent (53) of clients received services at a discounted rate, with private donations of \$33,390 supplementing the sliding scale fees that these clients were able to pay.

COBYS offers individual, family, and marital counseling to both children and adults. Therapists address relational issues with couples and families; depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders; ADHD; and more. Four part-time therapists provide services at the Oregon Counseling Center, north of Lancaster; and at the Palmyra Area Counseling Center, hosted by First United Methodist Church. Additional hires are expected in the coming year.

Foster Care. The foster care program provides temporary care for abused and neglected children. Foster care staff facilitated 20,367 days of care for 123 foster children, up from 19,146 days of care for 96 foster children the previous year. All children were referred by Lancaster County and Berks County Children and Youth Agencies.

Intentional efforts are made to place brothers and sisters in the same home. COBYS families cared for a total of 32 sibling groups, including five groups of three and four groups of four. COBYS families also cared for 10 children with special medical needs, including premature birth, brain trauma, prenatal drug addiction, and congenital defects.

Of the 66 children discharged from care, 30 were reunited with their birth parents or relatives, 14 were adopted by their COBYS foster family, and the rest went to other placements.

COBYS approved 18 new foster/adoptive resource families, bringing the total number of families at year-end to 70. Last

spring, COBYS added a new training format for potential resource families. Families now can choose to receive their 27 hours of training through three day-long classes or the traditional nine-week evening pre-service training. COBYS offers monthly informational sessions at the COBYS main office and at the Wyomissing Church of the Brethren for families interested in exploring foster care or adoption.

Family Life Education. The Family Life Education (FLE) program received two grants totaling \$279,755 from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)—one to spearhead a



Communities That Care Coalition in Southern Lancaster County to address needs of teens and families and the other to provide parenting education to the Spanish-speaking population of Lancaster County (see page seven). In addition, FLE tapped into a new income stream of \$130,000 over three years from the United Way of Lancaster County as a partner in three “collaboratives” with other agencies. These funds will help COBYS reach teen parents, provide training for operators of in home day care centers, and serve children with challenging behaviors.

During the past fiscal year COBYS educators led 58 courses and 14

workshops, providing 935 classroom hours and serving 751 adults, youth, and children. Classroom hours grew by 26 percent from the previous year, while the total number of people served was down 17 percent.

Programs were offered at 18 different sites including the COBYS Family Life Center in Lancaster, community locations, schools, and churches.

Permanency Unit. Permanency Unit staff served 93 children from 60 families, both figures down slightly from the previous year. Fifteen children from 10 families returned home to a parent and another was released to a relative. Parental rights were terminated for 12 children from eight families so that they can be adopted, with two others achieving permanency through placement with a Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodian. Three youth signed out of Agency custody after turning 18.

Based in Lancaster and operated in partnership with the Lancaster County Children & Youth Social Service Agency, the Permanency Unit seeks to find safe, permanent homes for foster children. Staff monitor the well-being of foster children, support foster parents, and assist birth parents to overcome the issues that led to their children’s placement in care.

Community Connections. Through Community Connections, COBYS provides case management services to help local churches link families with needs to services in the community. As their support network widens, families’ financial dependence



on the church lessens. COBYS partnered with three churches to help them meet the needs of seven families.

Generous Giving

COBYS Family Services’ annual budget of \$3 million is supported by public funding, grants, fees for services, and private donations. This report focuses on private giving, which accounts for nearly one-fifth of COBYS’ income.

Thanks in part to two record fundraisers, two large bequests, and extra income generated by the Work for the Well-Being of the City capital campaign, total private giving of \$925,364 shattered the previous income record, set last year. Even without the record year in bequests, for the fourth consecutive year giving to the general fund grew—a healthy increase of 5.2 percent over last year.

Pledges to the “Work for the Well-Being of the City” capital campaign reached the \$300,000 goal in July (see page six).

We are grateful for the strong financial support that enables us to continue to serve children and families in Christ’s name!

A version of this report that includes a list of donors will be available soon on the News & Events page at www.cobys.org. Audited financial statements are available upon request.



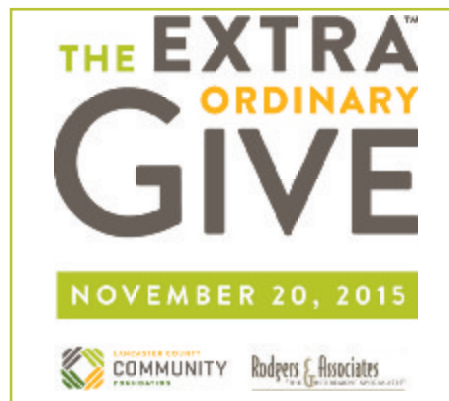
Private Giving Summary, Five-Year Comparison					
	07/01/2010 - 6/30/2011	7/1/2011 - 6/30/2012	7/1/2012 - 6/30/2013	7/1/2013 - 6/30/2014	7/1/2014 - 6/30/2015
Bequests	\$0.00	\$9,375.00	\$33,196.96	\$31,912.67	\$228,988.26
Campaign	\$12,053.85	\$0.00	\$650.00	\$129,964.44	\$90,996.81
Endowment	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
General	\$495,162.90	\$519,575.60	\$524,165.69	\$557,324.10	\$586,384.25
In Kind	\$11,682.06	\$15,396.18	\$17,765.82	\$23,799.80	\$18,495.15
Total	\$519,398.81	\$544,846.78	\$576,278.47	\$743,001.01	\$925,364.47

4th ExtraOrdinary Give Set for Nov. 20

COBYS Family Services will participate in the fourth annual ExtraOrdinary Give on Friday, November 20.

The Extraordinary Give is Lancaster County's Largest Day of Giving. The 24-hour online giving marathon will benefit more than 300 local organizations. Every dollar donated at ExtraGive.org that day will be stretched with at least \$250,000 from the Lancaster County Community Foundation, Rodgers & Associates, and other corporate sponsors.

The logistics are the same as previous years. With credit card in hand, donors simply need to visit ExtraGive.org between 12:00 midnight and 11:59 p.m. on Friday, November 20, choose COBYS from the list of organizations, and give a donation of \$25 or more. On top of the stretch, an



additional \$50,000 will be awarded in prizes.

New this year, COBYS will partner

with Brethren Village (BV) to host a giving station at the Village. Donors who stop by to support COBYS or BV (or any other organization) will receive a small thank you gift. More details will be available later.

COBYS again is seeking friends to give at the stroke of midnight to earn one of the \$1,000 Early Bird prizes offered to the first 10 organizations to reach 50 unique donors.

Last year COBYS finished 25th out of 306 organizations in total dollars raised with earnings of \$40,676.

Please mark your calendar and remember COBYS on November 20. If you don't have access to a computer or have questions, contact Don at 717-656-6580 or don@cobys.org.

Giving on the Job

If you work in the corporate world and decide to support COBYS through United Way or by enlisting a matching gift from your employer, you are in good company. Many donors find ways to support COBYS ministries through the workplace.

While COBYS is not a United Way agency, individuals in some areas can designate United Way contributions to benefit COBYS through the Donor Choice program. To participate, simply obtain a form from your employer and specify COBYS Family Services as the agency you would like to support.

Whether or not you participate in United Way, you may want to check if your employer matches employee contributions. Many do. You may be able to double your donation to COBYS—and double the ministry we are able to accomplish.

Looks Like We Made It:

Campaign Reaches Pledge Goal

The Work for the Well-Being of the City Campaign has reached its \$300,000 pledge goal.

"A designation of funds from a bequest received earlier this summer put us over the top," explained Director of Development Don Fitzkee. "While we still have some money to come in, we are celebrating reaching our pledge goal."

Pledges now total \$300,266. Of that amount, \$252,780 has been received.



Most of the remaining outstanding pledges are from churches, who are contributing through 2016.

In October 2012 COBYS purchased a 5,400-square-foot facility at 171 E. King Street, Lancaster, to house Family Life

Education staff and programs. The move was prompted by a need for consistent, well-equipped facilities for education and childcare and a growing realization that many people served by COBYS education programs live in the city.

In June 2013, COBYS launched the campaign to pay for the building—known as the COBYS Family Life Center—and undergird education programming. The campaign theme is based on Jeremiah 29:7.

In concert with the education theme, the campaign goals can be summarized in three R's: **R**etire remaining debt on the Family Life Center (\$185,000); **R**ecoup a portion of costs for furnishing the building (\$45,000); and **R**aise new funds to support Family Life Education programs (\$70,000).

The first two goals have been met; all debt has been retired. All additional campaign income is being used for Family Life Education programming. COBYS offers a wide variety of evidence-based programs for parents, caregivers, and children to strengthen family bonds and help children avoid behaviors that put them at risk.

Se habla Español: COBYS Expanding Spanish-Language Parent Programs

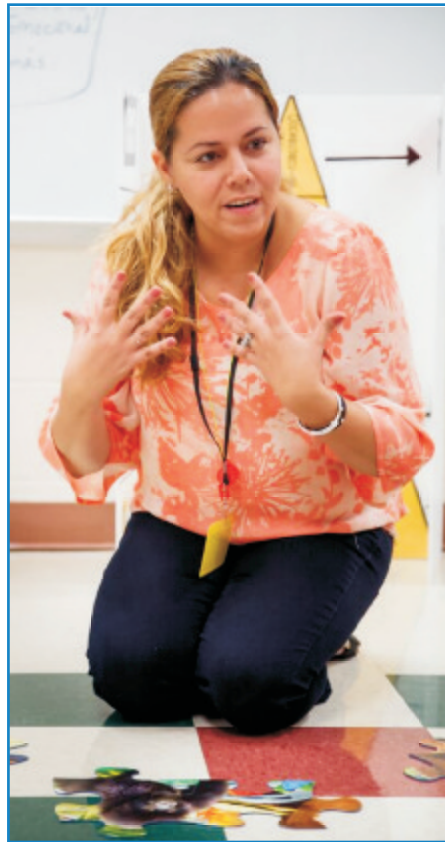
With help from a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, COBYS is expanding its Spanish-language parenting programs.

Educators Nydia Alvarez and Kenia Perez-Gonzalez began teaching the Incredible Years Series (IYS) class for parents on August 13 at the Salvation Army in Lancaster, the first of 18 weekly sessions that will continue into December.

This is the first large-scale evidence-based parenting program to be taught in Spanish by anyone anywhere in Lancaster County, according to COBYS Family Life Education Supervisor Holly Hardin.

“We are thrilled to be able to bring this program to the area,” she says, “and plan to continue to offer high quality programs like the Incredible Years Series for Spanish-speaking families.”

While parents are learning in Spanish, two pairs of educators— Jess Schroedel & Drew Scheffey and Rosie Good & Terrie Stauffer—are leading concurrent Dina Small Group Therapy programs in English for children of parents in the adult class. Childcare is provided for siblings not enrolled in the program.



Ten parents and ten children participated the first week, according to COBYS Program Coordinator Karen Herr. “They seem to be really receptive to what’s going on.” Offering the program in Spanish, she adds, instantly broke down barriers. “We had all smiles and parents joking around with us already,” she said.

While COBYS occasionally has served Spanish speakers on a smaller scale, the IYS program takes it to a new level, says Holly. The 18-week program is one of four that

Nydia Alvarez (left) and Kenia Perez-Gonzalez (above) are teaching a Spanish language parenting class at the Salvation Army in Lancaster.



will be offered at Salvation Army over the next two years. The next one begins in January.

Incredible Years is an evidence-based curriculum that is proven to enhance positive family relationships and empower parents to manage children’s difficult behaviors.

The Dina program (named after puppet Dina Dinosaur who is used in instruction) is designed for children, ages 4-8, who exhibit challenging behaviors. It reduces children’s aggressive and disruptive behavior while increasing pro-social behavior, conflict management skills, problem-solving strategies, and emotional literacy.

Leaman Joins Board

Ken Leaman joined the COBYS Family Services Board of Directors in July. Ken is co-owner and president of JK Mechanical, Inc.

Ken views his business as an expression of his faith, operating it on Christian principles, providing a chaplain to assist employees, and



for the past five years closing the company for one day to volunteer his work-force to a community work day.

Ken is an active

member of Willow Street Mennonite Church, where he has headed the church Leadership Team and currently chairs the Building Committee. He and his wife, Judy, live in Willow Street. They have two grown children and five grandchildren. In his free time Ken enjoys flying as an instrument-rated aviator and golfing.

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Become our fan on Facebook.



Bike & Hike: Please Join Us This Sunday!



*Record business support is in place.
Routes are planned and mostly marked.
Ice cream and drinks are ordered.
Volunteers have their assignments.
Silent Auction items are ready for bids.
Heaps of t-shirts and stuff are cluttering offices.
Door prizes are arriving almost daily.*

All we need now are more than 500 walkers, bicyclists, and motorcyclists and their generous sponsors (and some sun would help) to raise more than \$110,000 at the 19th annual COBYS Bike & Hike on Sunday, September 13, at Lititz Church of the Brethren.

Participants choose from a three-mile walk, 10- and 25-mile bicycle rides, or the 60-mile Dutch Country Motorcycle Ride. They pay a registration fee, raise money from sponsors, or both, and come out for an enjoyable day.

All participants receive a t-shirt, ice cream and drinks, and an opportunity to win door prizes.

Schedule

Motorcycle Registration Begins	12:45
Motorcycle Ride	1:30
Walk/Bicycle Registration Begins	1:31
25-mile Bike Ride	2:00
Walk & 10-mile Bike Ride	2:30
Food, Door Prizes, Fellowship	4:15
Silent Auction throughout afternoon	

**Advance registration is *not* required.
Just come!**

Those who raise certain levels of money can earn additional prizes.

A Silent Auction is open for bids throughout the afternoon. Those unable to walk or ride may stop in for the auction and a bowl of ice cream.

Visit <http://www.cobys.org/news.htm> for more information, including the event brochure with registration form, routes for the walk and rides, and a sale bill of Silent Auction items.

Questions? Contact Don Fitzkee at 717-656-6580 or don@cobys.org.