

## A Smorgasbord of Support for Adoptive Families



*The Nelson & Treva Bollinger family has benefitted from free post-permanency services, available to any Pennsylvania family who has adopted a child. Children from left to right are Dane, Camirah, Anastasia, and Salome.*

Adoptive parents Nelson & Treva Bollinger have been sampling a variety of experiences to benefit their family over the past few months, thanks to free post-permanency services available through COBYS (see also "Free Help for Adoptive Families," page three).

"We kind of went to the buffet," says Treva, "but now we'll decide what we'll stick with for our regular diet."

"The Bollingers have basically tapped into every resource that I have suggested," agrees COBYS adoption caseworker Matt Stoltzfus. "That's the

purpose of post-permanency, to give families tools and choices, the opportunity to try some different things to find out what works for their family."

The Bollingers have a long history with COBYS and with foster care and adoption. Treva grew up with two adopted sisters, and her parents, Glenn & Joann Martin, were COBYS foster parents for a number of years. When Treva was 19, the Martins welcomed 9-year-old foster daughter, Anna, into their home. Anna eventually chose to remain in foster care

instead of being adopted and grew as a member of the Martin family.

It was no great surprise when Treva & Nelson joined COBYS' team of foster parents in 2006, but things got a little complicated when Treva became pregnant during the course of their foster parent training. Son Dane was born in August 2006 and they eventually adopted daughter Camirah, leaving them with a pair of two-year-olds, born two weeks apart.

In addition to Dane & Camirah, now 11, two additional daughters round out the family: Seven-year-old birth daughter Salome and Anastasia, 2 ½, who joined the family at four weeks of age and was adopted through COBYS in June 2016.

Parenting four children can be stressful, and adoption introduces family dynamics that can present challenges. Herself a social worker, Treva understands the importance of getting support. Since their adoptions the Bollingers have participated in a COBYS education program and several years ago received an earlier round of post-permanency services.

So in February, when the family was going through a rough patch, Treva reached out for help. "I still call COBYS as my go-to resource," she says, "even though we're no longer a foster family." (They concluded service after adopting Anastasia, and Treva became an on call COBYS caseworker.)

Matt reminded the Bollingers that they were eligible to receive free post-adoption support and together they identified three family goals for the six-month funding period: 1) Self-care for the parents; 2) Self-confidence for

*(continued on page three)*

## 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.

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## Easing Our Growing Pains

COBYS Family Services is experiencing growing pains. In the past three years our budget has grown by more than 50 percent and staffing has nearly doubled. Facilities are maxed out and administrative and support structures are straining under the increased work load. This rapid growth indicates to us that the needs of children and families are great and that clients and partners trust COBYS as a provider of compassionate, professional services.

Because of our pains, in February we decided to seek a second opinion. We retained True Edge Performance Solutions to evaluate the organization's fitness and readiness for growth. Discussions focused on how to grow responsibly to meet increasing needs, while being sure to maintain a strong Christian identity. True Edge pronounced us more-or-less healthy, but prescribed some measures to keep us that way.



**Tim Strawser**



**Lori Zimmerman**

Among them were seeking an additional property or properties to ease crowding and beefing up staffing in key areas. We currently are actively looking for a property to lease or purchase. And I'm pleased to announce that Lori Zimmerman and Tim Strawser are joining our staff in two newly created positions.

Lori is our new marketing and communications coordinator. After sifting through many resumes and interviewing a number of highly qualified candidates we chose Lori as the person who can best help us. Since 2006, she has served as the public relations coordinator for the Warwick School District. Lori was the spokesperson for the district; wrote and managed website content and social media accounts; produced presentations; created promotional materials; and more.

Tim is our business operations manager. While our frontline staff who serve kids and families has grown dramatically in recent years, the administrative structure to support them has not. Tim will have some responsibilities with counseling billing, human resources, and general business administration. A graduate of Elizabethtown College with a degree in Business Administration, Tim for the past 30 years has been an account manager at Physicians Support Systems, where he worked at all levels of medical billing for physician clients.

I am confident that Lori and Tim are just what the doctor ordered to ease our growing pains. I have no doubt that they will be good for what ails us as we continue to serve an increasing number of children and families!

*Mark Cunningham, Executive Director*

*(continued from page one)*

Camirah; and 3) Increased bonding and attachment for the entire family. They worked at these goals in a variety of ways.

While post perm funds can't be used to pay for lodging, early on Nelson & Treva got away to a bed & breakfast for a weekend to themselves, the first time in three years they had been away together without kids. "It was wonderful," says Treva. Upon arrival, "the first thing I did was take a nap!"

Matt also was helpful to Nelson, says Treva, validating the quiet but essential role he plays in the family.

For the whole family post-perm funds were used for a summer pool membership at Refreshing Mountain Camp. "We love it," says Treva. "It's been awesome. We're all having fun together." The regular pool visits this summer provided a regular family activity and an outlet for some excess energy, and was especially good for Camirah, who is an excellent swimmer.

Post-permanency funding also has enabled the family to go out to eat a few times, including a special meal at Golden Corral to celebrate the end of the school year and a "Girls Night" with Treva and her daughters enjoying time together.

Camirah benefited from six weeks of gymnastics in the spring at C3 Gymnastics in Sinking Spring. "It was a very uplifting place" says Treva, "and Camirah came away feeling stronger and turned out to be very good at gymnastics. So that built her up a lot."

Over the summer both Treva and Camirah tried craniosacral therapy. Acknowledging that this nontraditional intervention involving therapeutic touch is a little different, Treva nonetheless saw value in the opportunity for bonding between her and Camirah.

"Matt just encourages us to try things," Treva says. "You don't know which intervention is going to be the one that works, so sample some options. And I'm the mom that will try things."

Currently they are giving horseback riding at Triangle Therapeutic Riding Center in Reinholds a try. After just two sessions Camirah was becoming more



comfortable around the horses, and Treva was noticing that many qualities that go into a positive relationship between horse and rider—trust, connections, communication, reading body language—also apply to family relationships. There also are valuable lessons in self-regulation, such as posture, balance, and breathing with

the horse.

Overall, the Bollingers had a pretty good summer, and COBYS post-permanency services clearly have contributed. Part of the value of post-perm, says Treva, is that it is time-limited to six months, so it gives some deadlines. "It gives you a kick in the pants," she says, before offering, "Accountability would be a better word."

Now that they have been given opportunity to try some things, Treva figures, going forward, they will pay out of pocket to continue a few activities that they have found especially helpful.

"Our story isn't over," adds Treva. "We can't say the picture is completely rosy. The challenges and behaviors are still there and we deal with them every day. But I feel like this gave us a boost."

## Free Help for Adoptive Families

COBYS Family Services offers free post-permanency services to any adoptive family. If you live in Pennsylvania and adopted a child, you qualify. (Permanent legal guardians or kinship care providers also can receive services.)

"It's important for adoptive families to know that they don't need to take this journey alone," says COBYS Adoption Coordinator Stacie Burger LaBarbera, herself an adoptive mom. "It's important for them not to isolate themselves. This is a forever journey."

Services are offered through and funded by the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN). Adoptive families in need of support simply contact SWAN at 800-585-7926 and ask to be referred to COBYS.

COBYS' three post-perm caseworkers currently are serving 25 families, offering a variety of services that fall under the broad categories of case advocacy, respite care, and support groups. You can learn more about each of these units of service at <https://cobys.org/adoption/post-adoption/>.

"The things we do as a post-perm caseworker are pretty broad," explains caseworker Matt Stoltzfus. "It really is tailored to the family's needs. They really dictate what they need."

Along with services offered to specific families through individualized family support plans, post-perm staff also provide ideas and resources for adoptive families through a regular group e-mail.

Despite the fact that professional support is available to adoptive families at no cost, Stacie thinks she understands why some families are slow to seek help.

"By the time they have adopted their child they are tired of having caseworkers in their home and tired of living in a glass house," she suggests. But she adds that in post-perm, the level of caseworker involvement generally is less intense and can be shaped by the participating family.

"I think if families realize that it's not as intensive as with foster care and adoption that they will be more open to the service."

Questions? Contact Stacie or Matt at 717-656-6580 or e-mail [postperm@cobys.org](mailto:postperm@cobys.org).



# Annual Report

COBYS Family Services continued to experience growth in budget, staffing, persons served, and financial support during the past year.

Motivated by Christian faith, COBYS 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 122 staff, including 45 full-time employees (up from 89 and 36 last year), working from three locations. During the past fiscal year (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017), COBYS served children and families in these ways:

**Adoption.** An affiliate of the Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network (SWAN), the COBYS adoption program provides a variety of adoption-related services (see table). They include child specific recruitment to help locate adoptive homes for children, child preparation to ready children for transitions, child and family profiles to facilitate matching, finalizations, and post adoption support.

After experiencing dramatic growth the previous year, the program stabilized in 2016/17. After 14 years without an increase in SWAN funding for adoption-related services, reimbursement rates were reduced for the coming year, presenting new financial challenges.

| Adoption-Related Services              | 2015/16 | 2016/17 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Child Specific Recruitment             | 14      | 11      |
| Child Preparation                      | 49      | 56      |
| Child Profiles                         | 91      | 78      |
| Family Profiles                        | 38      | 36      |
| Adoption Finalizations                 | 33      | 34      |
| Post Adoption Services (# of families) | 24      | 28      |

**Counseling.** COBYS therapists provided 3,465 hours of therapy during the year, a 14 percent increase from the previous year. Seven part-time therapists provide services at the Oregon Counseling Center, north of Lancaster; at the Palmyra Area Counseling Center, hosted by First United Methodist Church; and now at the COBYS Family Life Center in Lancaster.

Despite the addition of therapist Michelle Wegman, the counseling program is receiving more referrals than therapists are able to serve in a timely fashion. Staff are strategizing how best to meet the growing need. Services include individual, family, and



marital counseling for both children and adults.

The program is completing a two-year grant-funded process to certify therapists to provide Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, an evidence-based treatment to help children and teens overcome mild to moderate trauma. Director of Family Life



Services Abby Keiser became supervisor of the program, with Dr. Michele Romeo Martin shifting to the clinical supervisor role.

**Family Life Education.** After a year of dramatic growth in 2015/16, fueled by some one-time grants, the Family Life Education program consolidated gains in 2016/17. Educators led 101 courses and 29 workshops, providing 1,533 classroom hours of instruction to 1,289 adults, youth, and children. In comparison, the previous year's totals were 107, 31, 1,545, and 1,313. Programs were offered at 40 sites including the COBYS Family Life Center in Lancaster, community locations, schools, and churches.

COBYS introduced the new evidence-based Celebrating Families! program to serve families with a parent in recovery from addiction and received a new two-year grant to offer Incredible Years programs in the ELANCO school district.

**Foster Care.** The foster care program provides temporary care for abused and neglected children. Foster care staff served more children than ever before, facilitating 27,049 days of care for 154 children, up from 26,947 days of care for 141 children the

previous year. COBYS served 43 sibling groups, striving to preserve these enduring relationships by placing children together in the same home with one or more siblings. COBYS families also cared for 12 children with special medical needs. Of the 78 children discharged from care, 44 were reunified with parents or other relatives, 26 were adopted by their foster family, and eight children moved to other placements.

COBYS approved 23 new foster/adoptive resource families, bringing the total number of families at year's end to 92.

### Permanency Unit.

The Permanency Unit hired additional staff to complete a two-year doubling process. In partnership with the Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency, which funds the program,

Permanency staff seek safe, permanent homes for foster children; monitor the well-being of these

children; support foster parents; and assist birth parents to overcome the issues that led to their children's placement

in care.

As part of the program's expansion, the number of children served grew by more than a third from the previous year. Staff served 155 children from 99 families, up from 113 and 78.

Seventeen children returned home to a parent or guardian, seven moved toward adoption, and nine others were released to caregivers through permanent legal custodianship. Two youth signed out of care after turning 18. Supervisor Ruby Nolt joined staff in July 2017, replacing Nicole Lauzus who elected to further her education. Krista Rankin also continues as a supervisor.

### Community Connections.

Staff revamped the Community Connections (CC) program to better serve churches and other organizations. With energy directed toward this re-visioning, clients served dwindled to two families from one congregation, down from seven families the previous year. The program partners with churches, schools, and community organizations to help motivated individuals or families address financial, mental health, relational, and other needs.



## Financial Support

The COBYS budget for the current year is \$4.4 million. Private giving accounts for 15 percent of COBYS' income. Overall private income declined from the previous year—due to a sharp drop in bequests and the conclusion of the successful Work for the Well-Being of the City capital campaign, which raised \$307,000 to retire debt on the Family Life Center and expand education programming.

Giving to the general fund grew by six percent, the sixth consecutive year of growth. While general fund giving has been increasing, growth in the overall budget has been fueled largely by new publicly-funded or grant-funded programs. At the same time, public funding for some established services like foster care or adoption has been flat or reduced. Donations from individuals, churches, and others are as essential as ever for our ministries and are a primary reason that COBYS is healthy when similar agencies face greater financial challenges.

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 can be viewed on the Newsletters page at [cobys.org](http://cobys.org). Additional financial information is available upon request.*

### Private Giving Summary, Five-Year Comparison

|                  | 7/1/2012 - 6/30/2013 | 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2014 | 7/1/2014 - 6/30/2015 | 7/1/2015 - 6/30/2016 | 7/1/2016 - 6/30/2017 |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Bequests</b>  | \$33,196.96          | \$31,912.67          | \$228,988.26         | \$106,448.86         | \$1,003.29           |
| <b>Campaign</b>  | \$650.00             | \$129,964.44         | \$90,996.81          | \$51,775.52          | \$11,974.60          |
| <b>Endowment</b> | \$500.00             | \$0.00               | \$500.00             | \$0.00               | \$0.00               |
| <b>General</b>   | \$524,165.69         | \$557,324.10         | \$586,384.25         | \$665,412.95         | \$706,513.37         |
| <b>In Kind</b>   | \$17,765.82          | \$23,799.80          | \$18,495.15          | \$28,800.28          | \$24,440.91          |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>\$576,278.47</b>  | <b>\$743,001.01</b>  | <b>\$925,364.47</b>  | <b>\$852,437.61</b>  | <b>\$743,932.17</b>  |



# Another Great Day!

## *Bike & Hike Participation Surges, Income Record within Reach*



Don Fitzkee. "It felt really good to have such a strong show of support." Of course, picture-perfect weather certainly didn't hurt. In addition to walkers and riders, a number of others came out to enjoy the afternoon and check out the Silent Auction that ran throughout the day, generating income of \$4,360.

The top selling item was a meal for eight at the soon-to-

be-open Lampeter Café, donated by COBYS board member and café co-owner Lisa Reinhart. The meal sold for \$525; to keep the peace between the final bidders, it was sold a second time at the same price.

Bike & Hike income has grown 18 straight years, peaking at \$133,556 last year.

"The history of the event," says Director of Development Don Fitzkee, "is that income grows by a few thousand dollars after the fact. So a record income figure is still within reach. I haven't given up on the streak just yet."

Top fundraisers were Floy Fitzkee, \$7,500; Mari Cunningham, \$7,080; Londa Brandt, \$6,450; and Lucy de Perrot, \$4,015. Nineteen other

The 21st annual COBYS Bike & Hike experienced a surge in participation and raised more than \$130,000 so far. With a number of pledges to collect and additional donations expected, projected income currently stands at \$131,740.

Held Sunday, September 10, at the Lititz Church of the Brethren, the Bike & Hike drew 601 walkers and riders, tying the previous high established in 2008. Attendance was up 18 percent from last year's 509. All told the event attracted 166 motorcyclists on 104 cycles for the 60-mile ride in eastern Lancaster County, 129 bicyclists for the 10- and 25-mile rides, and a whopping 306 walkers—nearly 100 more than last year—for the three-mile stroll through Lititz.

"We were thrilled with the fantastic turnout," said Director of Development



**1) There was a lot to smile about at the Bike & Hike; 2) Ray & Peggy Kline brought up the rear on the motorcycle ride; 3) Gwen Myer and Olivia Shenk ready to tackle 10 miles; 4) It was a perfect day for a cycle ride; 5) Top fundraisers (from left) Floy Fitzkee, Londa Brandt, and Mari Cunningham together raised more than \$21,000; 6) More than 300 walkers helped tie an all-time high in participation; 7) 25-mile bikers on scenic Lime Rock Road.**

participants raised at least \$1,000. More than 100 businesses and others donated cash, prizes, auction items, and supplies (see page seven).

Six youth groups participated, raising more than \$20,000. Little Swatara Church of the Brethren (COB) raised half of that at \$10,200. Four others earned gym and pizza nights by raising \$1,500 or more. They were: Midway Church, \$3,080; West Green Tree (\$2,637), Mountville (\$2,040), and Mohrsville (\$1,512.75) COBs. Chiques COB junior high added \$950.

More than 50 volunteers staffed the event, including board members, staff, friends, and six Linden Hall students, who served as part of Lancaster's United Way Day of Caring. A photo gallery from the Bike & Hike is available at <https://www.facebook.com/COBYSFS>.







## Special Thanks to These Supporters



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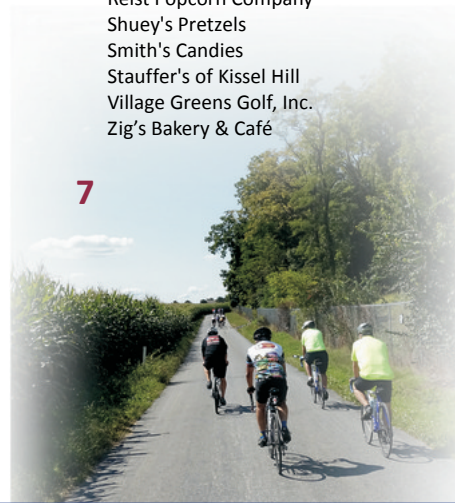
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Petra Church

### Refreshments

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## ExtraOrdinary Give Set for November 17

The 2017 edition of the Lancaster County Community Foundation's ExtraOrdinary Give is shaping up to be the best ever, thanks to an expanded "stretch fund" of at least a half million dollars to be divided among participating organizations.

COBYS will participate with more than 400 other nonprofits on Friday, November 17, in Lancaster County's largest day of giving. Over the past five years, this 24-hour online giving event has raised \$22.5 million for more than 500 organizations, including \$7.1 million last year. During that same span COBYS has received \$220,769, including more than \$55,000 last year.

The logistics are the same as

previous years. With credit card in hand, donors simply need to visit [ExtraGive.org](http://ExtraGive.org) between 12:00 midnight and 11:59 p.m. on November 17, choose COBYS from the list of organizations, and give a donation of \$25 or more.



NOVEMBER 17 2017

Every dollar donated will be stretched with at least \$500,000 from the Community Foundation, Rodgers & Associates, The S. Dale High Family Foundation, and other community partners. The more COBYS donors give, the greater our

portion of the stretch fund.

On top of the stretch, an additional \$50,000 will be awarded in prizes. During certain time periods, individual donations will be randomly selected. If a COBYS

donor is chosen, the foundation will add \$1,000 to that donation.

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. COBYS has earned this prize each year so far, but the competition is growing more intense.

To spur giving COBYS is seeking a business donor or donors to provide \$5,000 or more to match each dollar given to COBYS above \$50,000. Contact Director of Development Don Fitzkee at [don@cobys.org](mailto:don@cobys.org) or 717-656-6580 to learn more about the business match.

COBYS will provide additional information closer to the date. To learn more about the ExtraOrdinary Give, visit [ExtraGive.org](http://ExtraGive.org) or contact Don.