

Making the Case for Pillows

Do you remember the last time you were so frustrated and angry that you wanted to hit a punching bag for a while? Or maybe you were so out of sorts that you just needed to hug or squeeze out your feeling?

Libby remembers. She remembers because she still feels that way sometimes. When she does, she often turns to her pillow. Libby, a twelve-year old softball player and cheerleader is the daughter of Karla and Mark Sanders. Adopted through COBYS Family Services as a toddler, she understands the need to express feelings freely and has a heart for helping others be able to do that too, especially kids in her community.

When visiting the supply closet at LIFE House, a facility in Reading that supports children entering the foster care system and hosts parent/child visitations, Libby noticed that there were clothes, diapers, health care items and school supplies for the kids, but there were no pillows. COBYS maintains a similar Kids Closet for the foster children in our care, and we also did not have any pillows. Libby decided to change this, recognizing the emotional importance of a good



Left: Libby Sanders poses with some of the 80 pillows and pillow cases she provided to COBYS Kids Closet.

Above: Libby's note to each pillow recipient.

pillow, particularly for foster kids who can be living between different homes.

She and her mom talked with people at their church, Fleetwood Bible Church, to see if her pillow donation efforts could be the focus of this past summer's Vacation Bible School. Her cause was enthusiastically adopted and Libby began working with fellow church member Amy Gambler, who operates the Little Brown Suitcase Ministries, a foster care and adoption support charity. Using the organization's website, Libby started asking for donations.

It turns out, Libby is not the only one who recognizes the importance of a good pillow in

helping deal with our emotions. At the time of this article, 423 pillows, 160 pillow cases and nearly \$1,000 had been donated to support Libby's efforts. Libby personally delivered many of the pillows to the COBYS Kids Closet, along with words of reassurance that she and her mom added in soft vinyl to each pillow case. "You are always loved", inspiration penned by Libby, or "Love poured down", inspired by The Little Brown Suitcase fundraising items.

Libby didn't stop with the pillows. True to form, she went one step further. With every pillow and pillow case donated she includes a copy of a hand-written note of encouragement reminding the recipient that "...God loves you and always will. You did nothing wrong, you are amazing."

Libby makes a great case for sharing pillows.



Left: Inspirational phrases added by Libby to each pillow case.

Mission Statement

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

Board of Directors

Wilbur Rohrer, President
Rebecca Fuchs, Vice-President
Suzanne Schaudel, Secretary
Robert Wintsch, Treasurer

Erin Bensing
Fred Keller
Kay Kulp
Eric Landram

Ken Leaman
Scott Moyer
Lisa Reinhart

Administrative Staff

Mark Cunningham, Executive Director
Cynthia Umberger, Director of Business Operations
Anne Stokes, Director of Development
Abby Keiser, Director of Family Life Services
Mary Sourber, Director of Placement Services
Jen McDowell, Adoption Supervisor
Holly Hardin, Family Life Education Supervisor
Sharon Kingsley, Foster Care Supervisor
Ruby Nolt, Krista Rankin, Permanency Unit Supervisors
Tim Strawser, HR and Business Manager
Bethany Kauffman-Raub, HR and Office Supervisor
Doug May, Communications & Development Manager

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
717-656-6580 • 800-452-6517
Fax: 717-656-3056
www.cobys.org

Why Do I Do That?



Sometimes I wish that I would enjoy doing everything I have to do. But alas, that isn't the case.

I really don't enjoy going to the dentist. I never have. It has nothing to do with the actual dentist or the staff. They treat me well and are very professional. It's not even that I have a lot of problems with my teeth. In my 55+ years, I have had only one cavity.

One issue I struggle with is having others people's hands in my mouth. That is a reasonable thing to not enjoy, isn't it? I also have an overactive gag reflex, which means that anytime one of their hands goes a little too far into my mouth, well, you know....

Plus, I always wondered about the polishing toothpaste they use. Does it contain actual sand or does it just seem that way? The texture and taste bothered me so much that my dentist actually ordered a special head for the cleaner that doesn't require polish to be used.

My son and I are the only two people in the entire practice that use that special head. Like father, like son. All this, and I get to pay for it!



So why even go to the dentist? Because it is necessary for my overall health.

Then I think about the work we do here at COBYS. We work with children who have been abused and neglected. Do I enjoy what we do? That is a difficult question to answer. We work with families that have experienced a lot of hardship and have many times made really bad decisions. It's hard for me to say I enjoy that work.

Yet I enjoy knowing that we can walk with children and families through difficult times. I enjoy working with our outstanding staff. I enjoy talking with others about our ministry. The work we do is valuable and necessary, but it's hard for me to say I enjoy having to do the work we have to do. So why do we do it? Why do we do something that we don't necessarily enjoy? We do it because it's necessary.

What about Jesus being crucified? Do you think he enjoyed that? No. In Matthew 26:39 He says, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Jesus didn't enjoy being crucified. So why did he do it? Jesus did what was necessary for me to be forgiven of my sins, and I am eternally grateful.

Puts going to the dentist in perspective, doesn't it?

COBYS Core Values -LIFTS

Life is Sacred. Believing that all people are created in the image of God, we recognize the inherent worth of each client by exhibiting empathy, compassion and respect.

Integrity. We strive to be honest, authentic, and trustworthy in saying what we mean, matching our behaviors to our words and taking responsibility for our actions.

Faith. Jesus is Lord of our organization. We trust him to provide for our ministry's

needs and to empower transformation in our own lives and in the lives of those we serve.

Teamwork. Respecting our unique contributions, we value and care for each other, both personally and professionally, and enjoy working and growing together.

Servanthood. Servanthood leadership is reflected perfectly in the life and person of Jesus Christ. We seek to integrate the highest standards of professionalism with Christ's example of joyful service.



Post Permanency Services

Providing support and hope to children and adoptive or guardianship families by offering guidance and validation, expanding the network of resources and support, and facilitating bonding and self-care.

The papers are signed. The celebrations were held. The process is complete. But the journey has just begun. And there is help along the way.

Post Permanency Services are free of charge to Pennsylvania families, and are subsidized through the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN).

COBYS Post Permanency Services help with case advocacy, respite care and support groups.

Contact us at postperm@cobys.org, call 800-452-6517 or visit www.cobys.org/adoption/post-adoption

Kinship Support Services

Kinship arrangements are often unanticipated and can result in a range of unique household needs and challenges. Support is available!

Join Our Community

Attend groups for information specific to kinship caregivers. Network with other kinship caregivers who are going through similar experiences.

Are you raising a relative's child?



Kinship Coffee Sessions

Monthly educational discussion groups with child-care and refreshments available. A different topic is discussed each month with practical community resources shared.

Kinship Seminars

Speakers present information specific to kinship caregivers. A meal and free childcare activities are provided. Training certificate offered.

More information, times, dates and locations are listed at www.cobys.org/kinship

The Faces of COBYS

What does working at COBYS mean to you?



**Caroline Fisher,
Sr. Foster Care Caseworker**

Working at COBYS means getting the chance to be a part of something bigger than myself, allowing me to walk alongside my co-workers who give their all on a daily basis and truly care

about their cases. We support each other through hardships & then we celebrate together during the mountain top moments. I couldn't do this work without such a supportive and encouraging team.

How does your work at COBYS inspire you?



**Rose Strawser,
Administrative Assistant,
Family Life Education**

All of us can further God's kingdom no matter what career we have chosen, however, to know that absolutely everything I do at my job here at COBYS will directly or indirectly help someone to feel God's love makes my work even more fulfilling.

2018-2019 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 has earned a reputation of excellence in the community for the quality services we provide to those we serve. This level of excellent service is a direct reflection of the quality individuals we have serving in leadership and staff positions. During this past fiscal year we have given renewed focus to fostering excellence in our staff by highlighting fundamentals, 26 qualities we believe our staff exhibit and should show to those they interact with on a daily basis.



COBYS employs 134 staff, including 54 full-time and 80 part-time employees. During the past fiscal year (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019), COBYS served children and families with excellence in these ways:

Adoption. COBYS continues to provide a significant level of adoption related services as an



Adoption-Related Services

	2017/18	2018/19
Child Specific Recruitment	18	19
Child Preparation	84	80
Child Profiles	104	104
Family Profiles	44	27
Adoption Finalizations	31	42
Post Adoption Services (# of families)	65	79

Fostering Hope 4

affiliate of the Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network (SWAN). Services 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. The level of services provided by the



COBYS has facilitated the adoptions of 542 children and counting.

Counseling. Eight part-time therapists provided 6,012 hours of therapy at three centers during the year, including 1,195 hours of service through Dina group therapy provided to children ages 4-8 with behavioral challenges in eight groups held throughout the region. Clinical services are offered at the Oregon Counseling Center, the Palmyra Area Counseling Center and at the COBYS Family Life Center in Lancaster City.



Dina small group therapy

Seven therapists were trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy for adults experiencing trauma. COBYS was part of a grant to facilitate regional training of 28 therapists in this type of therapy, increasing the capacity for care throughout the area. Additionally, eight COBYS therapists received training in Trauma Focused-

Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) focused on children and adolescents who have experienced trauma. The Counseling Department has also completed a transition to electronic documentation, increasing efficiencies of the department and organization. We continue to see an ever increasing need of therapeutic services for children and adults and evaluate how COBYS can meet this need.

Kinship Support Services are ongoing



Family Life Education (FLE).

COBYS Family Life Educators held 119 courses and 42 workshops this year, providing 1,763 classroom hours of instruction. Through these services, 1,526 children, youth and adults have been served. These are all increases from the previous year. A new Kinship Program has been implemented, providing a variety of supports and referrals to grandparents and other relatives raising children. These services will continue in the next year, funded by Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency and the Lancaster County Drug and Alcohol Commission. FLE services were provided at 11 churches, 21 schools & daycares and 14 community organizations.



Foster Care. The foster care program provides temporary care for abused and neglected children. This year, COBYS foster care staff facilitated 32,028 days of care for 185 kids. This was an increase in the number of children served from the previous year, but a decrease in the number of days of care provided. The decrease in overall days of care



provided results from a pattern of judges sending children home to biological families or kinship resources more quickly than in the past. The children served included 36 sibling groups, with efforts made to preserve sibling relationships by placing kids in the same home with a least one sibling. Additionally, there were 15 medically needy children served. During the year, 100 children were discharged from our care with 40 being reunified with parents or other relatives, 34 were adopted or attained permanent legal custodianship with their foster family and 26 moved to other placements.

Is it time?

Foster Care/Adoption

Our Resource Families provide love, guidance and structure for children in foster care. Twenty-two new foster/adoptive families were approved in the last year, bringing the total number of families open with COBYS during the year to 120. Orientation sessions are offered twice each month for people interested in exploring foster care and adoption. COBYS then provides 27 hours of training—offered throughout the year in daytime and evening formats—to those seeking approval as resource families.



Permanency. In partnership with the Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency, which funds the program, Permanency Unit staff seek



safe, permanent homes for foster children; monitor the well-being of foster children and support foster parents; and assist birth parents in overcoming the issues that led to their children's placement in care. The staff of this unit served 161 children from 98 families this year. While 13 children from 20 families were transferred to the adoption unit to achieve permanency, and six kids from four families were released through permanent legal custodianship, 28 children from 20 families were reunified with their biological parents. This is a large number of children and families and a huge accomplishment for all parties involved.



Financial Support

The COBYS budget for the year is more than \$5 million. Private giving (the focus of this report section) accounts for 14 percent of COBYS' income. Strong private giving helps offset challenges posed by inadequate public funding for our programs and services.

Overall, giving to COBYS remains strong when viewed over the last five years. Going forward into our 40th year, COBYS looks to build on the strong foundation of giving that has been established, and engage with individuals and churches across the region in a variety of ways.

COBYS supporters bless us in many ways, including remembering us in prayer, giving monetary gifts and supplies throughout the year, and participating in special events like our annual Banquet and Bike & Hike. We are continually filled with gratitude for the strong support of our ministries by individuals, businesses and churches. We could not provide words of encouragement for a young child or resource family, attend court hearings and advocate for children in our care, or provide counseling sessions or parenting classes without your assistance. We are ever mindful that this continued investment is earned, and strive each and every day to be faithful to God and the trust you have placed in us.



Year-to-Date Private Giving Summary (Five-Year Comparison)

	7/1/2014 - 6/30/2015	7/1/2015 - 6/30/2016	7/1/2016 - 6/30/2017	7/1/2017 - 6/30/2018	7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019
Bequests	\$228,988.26	\$106,448.86	\$1,003.29	\$700,422.95	\$26,949.71
Campaign	\$91,796.81	\$52,375.52	\$11,974.60	\$7,103.00	\$25,125.00
General	\$585,584.25	\$666,412.95	\$706,513.37	\$727,509.15	\$696,170.44
In Kind	\$23,778.85	\$28,900.28	\$24,440.91	\$45,281.01	\$33,222.65
Total	\$930,648.17	\$854,137.61	\$743,932.17	\$1,480,316.11	\$781,467.80

Stepping Up at 2019 Bike & Hike

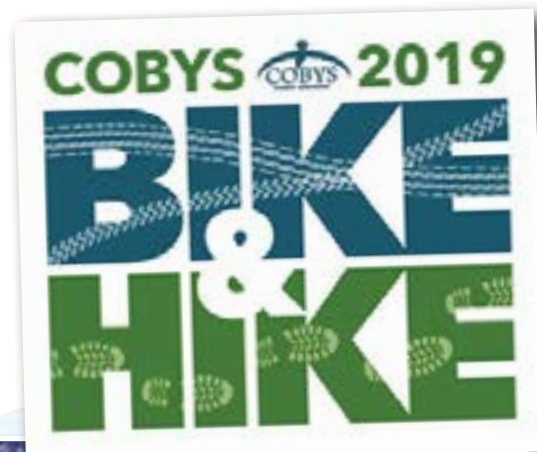
Beautiful late summer weather mirrored the blessings of the 23rd annual COBYS Family Services Bike & Hike, Sunday, September 8.

Hundreds of participants walked, bicycled or rode motorcycles on courses through Lititz and the surrounding scenic countryside. 400 participants paid a registration fee and/or raised money from sponsors. Through their generous efforts and the support of local businesses over \$118,000 was raised toward supporting COBYS programs and ministries. This number is expected to grow.

"Our faith motivates us to make a positive difference in the lives of others. We are delighted that so many participants enjoyed a fun event and at the same time, with the help of their friends and family, raised funds critical to the successful operation of COBYS," said Anne Stokes, director of development.

The Bike & Hike event has raised more than \$1.6 million for COBYS ministries in 23 years.

All attendees were treated to ice cream when the walkers and riders returned from their treks. Participants also had the opportunity to bid on Silent Auction items and enjoy family-friendly activities staffed by employees in various COBYS programs.



Family Celebration

Participants enjoyed games, activities and the chance to learn about COBYS programs.



Ice Cream!



Thanks to our top fundraisers

The top six fundraisers this year included, Londa Brandt, Mari Cunningham, Lucy De Perrot, Don & Carolyn Fitzkee, Floy Fitzkee and Keri & Cheri Miller.



Floy Fitzkee, Londa Brandt and Don Fitzkee at the 2019 Bike & Hike.

The top three fundraising youth groups were from the following Churches of the Brethren: Little Swatara, Rehrersburg; Mountville; and West Green Tree, Elizabethtown.

Thanks to our business sponsors

EVENT SPONSOR



Fellowship



T-shirts



HIKE: Walkers

More than 170 participants walked through beautiful Lititz and Lititz Spring Park.



BIKE: Bicycle Rides

83 riders cycled either 10 or 25 miles through the countryside around Lititz.

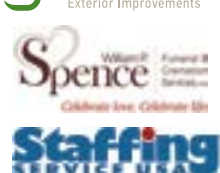


BIKE: Motorcycle Ride

Over 130 riders enjoyed a safe, scenic ride through northwest Lancaster County.



SILVER SPONSORS



BRONZE SPONSORS



COBYS Family Services
1417 Oregon Road
Leola, PA 17540

Non-Profit
U.S. Post Office
PAID
Permit No. 52
Lancaster, PA

Address Service Requested



Become our fan on Facebook.

A Look Inside

Making the Case for Pillows.....	1
Message from Mark.....	2
The Next Step: Post Permanency Services.....	3
Kinship Support Services	3
The Faces of COBYS.....	3
COBYS Annual Report.....	4-5
Bike & Hike Review	6-7
ExtraOrdinary Give	8



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Support **COBYS Family Services** and hundreds of other community benefit organizations in this community-wide, **24-hour day of giving**.

Support Our Organization During
**THE EXTRATM
ORDINARY
GIVE**

NOVEMBER 22 EXTRAGIVE.ORG

On November 22, donate online at ExtraGive.org and your generous gift will be stretched by more than a **HALF MILLION DOLLARS** in stretch pool and prizes from the Lancaster County Community Foundation and sponsors. **Help us go the EXTRA mile together!**



www.extragive.org/organizations/cobys-family-services