



Fostering Hope

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COBYS Permanency Unit Celebrates 20 Years

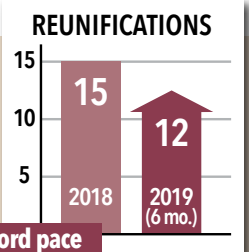
COBYS Family Services marks a 20 year partnership with the Lancaster County Children and Youth Social Service Agency (LCCYSSA) to provide a specialized, intensive program of services for foster children, biological families and foster parents. COBYS is the sole agency performing these government mandated services for LCCYSSA.

1999 COBYS enters into a contract with LCCYSSA to open the Family Reunification Program. An office is established at 228 E. Orange St. in Lancaster. Soon after name is changed to the Permanency Unit.



2009 Permanency Unit celebrates 10 years. Staff includes 5 caseworkers, 1 supervisor, a case aide and a secretary.

2019 COBYS celebrates 20 years. The Unit has grown to serve on average nearly 120 children and 75 families per year.



2019 is on record pace for reunifications

2005 COBYS purchases property at 134 E. King St. in Lancaster to house the Permanency Unit, providing space for family visitation and future growth. New location offers the benefit of close proximity to the county courthouse.



2015-2017 At the invitation of the Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency, which funds this program, the Permanency Unit doubled in size over two years. The Unit increased to 10 caseworkers handling over 100 children in over 70 families.



What happens when a child comes into the physical and legal custody of the Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency?

The biological parents are given a court-approved Child Permanency Plan with a list of objectives to complete and maintain in order for reunification to occur. A typical plan includes the need for parents to complete a mental health and/or a drug and alcohol evaluation and follow through with any recommended treatment. Parents must also obtain and maintain appropriate and stable income and housing in order to care for their children, as well as participate in either parenting classes or work with a parent educator. Parents then need to use the parenting skills learned during their weekly visits with their children. Commitment to their children and cooperation with the caseworker is an essential part of a parent's plan for reunification. The Adoption and Safe Families Act states that parents have 15 months to work on their plan towards

continued on page 2

COBYS staff and the Permanency Unit are highly dedicated and passionate professionals. They are intensely committed to the mission of the Children and Youth Agency. During the past twenty years the staff have impacted and made a difference in the lives of thousands of children and families. This is success!

– Crystal A. Natan, executive director, Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency

One Family's Reunification Story

Two little boys, ages 3 and 6, were placed into the custody of the Agency after concerns for physical abuse. While not enough physical abuse evidence was found, there were additional concerns within the family. They committed to counseling, worked with a parent educator to strengthen their parenting skills and showed stability in their housing and income. During this time they visited with their children, reassured them that they were doing everything they could to bring them home. This family persevered. The caseworker met with the parents several times a month, visiting them in their home, and encouraging them to continue to work on their plan. The caseworker believed in them, which can sometimes be the motivation a family needs to keep going. After ten months, the boys were returned home with their mom and dad, who had worked tremendously hard to complete the process. A few short weeks later they welcomed home a new baby sister. The family continues to do well and are an amazing example of a successful reunification.

There is a strong teamwork approach that is apparent within the COBYS organization, but also with those with whom they partner. The program has grown and strengthened over the years and is a definite asset to the County.

– Betsy Frame, director of permanency services, LCCYA

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

Getting Down to Fundamentals



I believe strongly that COBYS has outstanding employees. I regularly am updated about their efforts and the extra work they do to ensure that the children and families they work with are getting the best services possible. It's the main reason we have experienced significant growth and have developed an excellent reputation for providing quality, caring services.

The leadership team at COBYS has identified 26 qualities (we are calling them fundamentals) that our outstanding employees exhibit. From July through December I will be focusing on one quality each week, sharing a few paragraphs of why we identified that fundamental and what I think is important about it. The goal is to encourage us all to strive for excellence in these principal areas, to continue living out that fundamental in our work.

Each fundamental on our list relates to one of our five core values. Our core values are Life is Sacred, Integrity, Faith, Teamwork, and Servanthood.

The first fundamental that we have identified under the core value of *Life is Sacred* is **be kind to others**. It seems to me that being kind is a great place to start. Matthew 10:42, Jesus says, "And if anyone gives a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."

A cup of cold water is the perfect first step. If we are to influence those we encounter, and I believe we are called to do just that, then the best way to begin that relationship is with "a cold cup of water" kindness. The server that is slow in refilling your water glass? Be kind. The person who cuts you off in traffic? Show a little kindness. I am not advocating being a doormat or being taken advantage of, I am advocating for us being kind.

Other fundamentals we'll explore include communicate honestly, give credit where credit is due (I didn't think of that one, Director of Placement Services Mary Sourber did), pray for each other, be intentional about building relationships, and enjoy each other. We might even discuss the small acts of servanthood that come with being aware and mindful of others; like changing the toilet paper roll and washing the dishes. Those small acts can make a fundamental difference!

Permanency Celebrates 20 Years from page 1

reunification. If at 15 months, parents have made significant progress, the Agency can ask the Court for more time for parents to complete their plan or maintain their stability prior to children returning home. If significant progress is not made, the Agency will discuss other permanency options for children, such as adoption or permanent legal custodianship with another caregiver.

Permanency Unit caseworkers work diligently alongside parents and children on their reunification plans. Caseworkers support, encourage and empower parents to be the best

they can be for their children. They meet with parents several times a month, refer them for services and maintain contact with those providers to ensure that parents are making progress. Caseworkers prepare court reports and testify in court regarding both parents and children's progress and safety. They see children in their out-of-home placement each month, ensuring their safety and well being, all while completing significant amounts of paperwork and documentation to meet state requirements and guidelines.

What you should know

Approximately 15,000 children in Pennsylvania's child welfare system are unable to live with their biological families due to abuse, neglect or behavioral problems.

The goal of foster care is to assist biological families in resolving the issues that led to the child's placement in care so that families can be reunited as quickly and safely as possible.

Foster care is intended to be temporary for children. If families cannot be reunified within 15 months another permanent option, such as adoption, is pursued.

COBYS Resource Families are married or single persons, with or without biological children, and families with and without a stay-at-home caregiver.

They have a common desire to share God's love with children in need through one of three types of foster care.

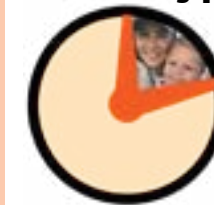
Resource families provide love, guidance, nurture and structure children need to heal from past experiences and realize their God-given potential.

Considering Foster Care or Adoption?

Is it time?

Foster Care/Adoption

Three Types of Foster Care



Short Term – Stand-by/Respite Care:

Short term care provides emergency or planned help for foster and adoptive families.

Respite Care: "Part-time parents" provide temporary care for a few hours or a few days a month to allow foster and adoptive families to regroup and take time for themselves.

Stand-by Care: Families provide on-call/emergency placement for children after hours (5 p.m.-8:30 a.m.) and on weekends for the county agency.

Long Term – Foster Care:

Foster families provide full-time care for children, ages birth to 18, until children can be safely returned to their biological family or permanently placed in an adoptive home.



Forever – Adoption:

Adoption is a beautiful way to build a family and provide a stable, loving home for a child. Currently more than 2,500 children in Pennsylvania need permanent adoptive homes.



COBYS Celebrates Resource Parents

On May 20, 2019 COBYS hosted our annual banquet honoring our resource parents. The following families were recognized for their years of service at the "You are the missing piece in a child's life!" themed banquet.



From left to right: Melissa & Herb Martin, Carla & Matt Preston, and Andrea & Joel Metzler. The puzzle pieces are answers to the question "Why are you foster parents?"

Celebrating five years of service with COBYS: Kevin & Jeanette Christophel of Reading have cared for seven children; Kevin & Sarah Esh of East Earl have cared for two children; Herb & Melissa Martin of Denver have cared for fourteen children; Joel & Andrea Metzler of Mountville have cared for fifty six children; Matt & Carla Preston of Lampeter have cared for thirty six children; Troy & Gwen Redcay of Ephrata have cared for three children; Brad & Lisa Rowe of Lancaster have cared for one child.

Celebrating fifteen years of service with COBYS are Kevin & Julia Martin of Lebanon. They have cared for twelve children during their tenure with COBYS.



COBYS Counseling Department

COBYS Family Services' trained staff offer professional psychotherapy and support to children, individuals, couples and families; encouraging them to work through problems and find healing in broken relationships.

- 8 therapists and one clinical supervisor are trained PA licensed, clinical professional therapists
- Evidence-based therapy for children and adults
- Serving clients from all walks of life, with many kinds of challenges
- Children and adults receiving COBYS services through programs based across the community

Counseling provides the building blocks and tools to help people keep moving forward.



COBYS provided over 4,600 hours of client services last year

Types of Therapy:

- Trauma & PTSD, Depression, Anxiety and Grief: TF-CBT and EMDR therapies (Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing)
- Depression, anxiety and other mood disorders
- Relational issues
- Family therapy
- Marital and couples' therapy
- Child and adolescent mood and behavior problems
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

TF-CBT & EMDR

COBYS therapists are TF-CBT & EMDR trained and use these models with patients who would benefit from these trauma specific therapies.

COBYS Counseling Centers

The Oregon Counseling Center

1417 Oregon Road
Leola, PA 17540
Located four miles north of Lancaster, just off Routes 222 and 272 near Oregon Dairy and Reflections Restaurant.

COBYS Family Life Center

171 East King Street
Lancaster, PA 17602
Located in downtown Lancaster at the corner of King and Lime.

The Palmyra Area Counseling Center

520 East Birch Street
Palmyra, PA 17078
Located in First United Methodist Church and co-sponsored by Palmyra-A Caring Community

Dina Small Group Therapy

Dina Dinosaur is an 18-week, small group training program for children aged 4-8 who are difficult to manage, aggressive or who may have disruptive behaviors. While children attend Dina School, parents attend the Incredible Years Parenting Program.



The program is implemented in all the counseling center locations and at these sites:

Blue Ball Elementary School
Doe Run Elementary School
Grace Point Church of Christ in Elizabethtown
and soon in Pequea Valley School District

The State of Mental Health in Lancaster County



Impacting Suicide Rates

"In Pennsylvania, the suicide rate increased by **34%** from 1999 to 2016 and the state's suicide rate of 16.3 per 100,000 people was higher than the national average of 15.4 per 100,000 people."

<http://www.mcall.com/health/mc-nws-suicide-pa-20180607-story.html>

Crisis Proportions

Suicide deaths: **13.9%** vs. Opioid overdose deaths: **13.1%**
(per 100,000 population)
(CDC, 2017)

Impacting the Workplace

Serious mental illness costs America **\$193.2 billion** in lost earnings per year.

10.2m

Approximately 10.2 million adults have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders.



The average delay between onset of (mental health) symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years.

Impacting Healthcare

36%

Increase in volume of individuals seeking mental health treatment via the Emergency Department in Q1 of 2019 versus Q1 of 2018.

Source: Lancaster Behavioral Health Hospital

17,656

Number of CRISIS calls handled by BHDS* Crisis Intervention hotline in 2018.

34% increase over 2012

*Behavioral Health and Development Services

1,703

Involuntary hospitalizations facilitated by Lancaster BHDS in 2018.

Impacting Schools

Over one-third (37%) of students with a **mental health condition** age 14-21 and older who are served by special education drop out – **the highest drop out rate of any disability group.**

37.5%

Percent of students who reported feeling **depressed or sad MOST days** in the past 12 months.

About **1/4** of all 8th, 10th and 12th graders in the County report feeling like **"life isn't worth it at all" one or more times over the past year.**

Source: Pennsylvania Youth Survey, 2015



Family Fun Walk

COBYS 25th Annual Family Fun Walk was held on rainy May 5 at Peter Becker Community in Harleysville.

Loyal families, youth groups and individuals gathered again for the beautiful 3-mile walk to raise money in support of COBYS' ministries. All participants were treated to ice cream, refreshments, fellowship and door prizes after the walk.

Youth groups from Coventry, Indian Creek and Quakertown Churches of the Brethren earned gym and pizza nights by raising more than \$1,000.

Thanks to our Event Sponsors Bauman Family Fruit Butters & Cider and Gouldey Welding & Fabrications and Sponsor Bergey's, Inc.

COBYS is grateful for the investment of the sponsors, walkers, and volunteers at this event. Over \$10,000 was raised through their dedication and efforts.



Wenger Praise Dinner

Dr. Tony Blair, president and dean of faculty of Evangelical Seminary and senior pastor of Hosanna! A Fellowship of Christians in Lititz, spoke at the 24th annual Wenger Foundation Praise Dinner on April 16, 2019 at the Lebanon Expo Center. Music was provided by Sanctuary, who returned to present a reunion concert.

The Wenger Family and some generous event sponsors covered the expenses so donations of the attendees could support the ministry of their choice. COBYS Family Services' Family Life Education programs, which are offered in partnership with church, school and community groups, were generously supported, along with three other worthy organizations.

COBYS is grateful to have received over \$20,000 from the dinner supporters.



Wenger Praise Dinner speaker Dr. Tony Blair



Planting and Tending God's Garden

Inspired by comments made at COBYS' annual Staff Breakfast by Misty Wintsch, associate pastor of Mechanic Grove Church of the Brethren

Gardening, making flowers grow, is a dirty and time consuming process. There are those of us who love to dig in the dirt, use all the right tools and gardening processes, plant, weed and water flowers from seed to beautiful blooms. Others of us, love the beauty of flowers that bring us joy all spring and summer long, but are not enthused with the process of getting dirt under our nails, and the constant weeding and watering it takes to keep the flowers alive. Even if our enthusiasm for the process varies, once flowers bloom, we all can't help but be filled with gratitude for God's creative power that, with the assistance of our hands, grew such beauty.

The growing process, the planting, weeding and watering is what COBYS, including the staff who carry out our

ministries, facilitates for God and for each person and project we serve. We prepare the soil by offering resource parent training, working in the legal system, maintaining our buildings and monitoring our finances. We fertilize the soil when we develop and maintain relationships with county and state agencies, with schools and with community collaboratives. We do this when we connect with churches and individual donors through fundraising. We plant the seeds when we work directly with children, adults and families; when we make sure a foster child is placed in a safe home; prepare a six year-old girl for the transitions she faces through the foster and adoption process; counsel a man who has experienced trauma in his life to reach his full potential; help a mother be the

It's not the one who plants or the one who waters who is at the center of this process

but God, who makes things grow.

~ 1 Corinthians 3:7 (MSG)

best guiding presence for her child experiencing behavioral challenges.

The growing process can be dirty, filled with weeds, times of rain, drought and frustration, but we must remember that the process is worth it for the flowers, the lives touched by God and the ministries of COBYS.



The Faces of COBYS

What does working at COBYS mean to you?



**Beth Ressler,
Family Life Educator**

Working for COBYS means that I have the opportunity to work with wonderfully skilled and caring people to help families be the best they can be. With information, we can be more powerful. Family

Life Education shares quality information with parents, grandparents, adolescents and children nurturing growth in their role in the family. The support families receive through COBYS makes a difference where it counts!

**Allison Huber,
Adoption Caseworker**

Working at COBYS has provided me with an opportunity to love others as Jesus calls us to, and to be able to support and walk with folks on their foster care journey. It is a wonderful thing to be able to wake up each day, and no matter how difficult and challenging the moments may be, know that I am exactly where God wants me for this season and for His reasons.



How does your work at COBYS inspire you?



**Jade Landis,
Sr. Foster Care Caseworker**

My role at COBYS inspires me to continually do my best in whatever life throws at me. The children and families we work with are caught in the middle of trauma and pain, yet they continue to face each day and whatever trails or joys it brings. This inspires me to do the same and to be an example to them throughout the time that I am privileged to work with them.

**Sophia Mapes,
Permanency Unit Caseworker**

Working at COBYS inspires me to be a better person in and outside of work. COBYS inspires me to be closer to my faith and to remember that even though I am only one, I am making a difference in someone's life. A quote that constantly encourages me is, "I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do." –Edward Everett Hale





COBYS Family Services
 1417 Oregon Road
 Leola, PA 17540

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



Save the Date! September 8, 2019

Our annual ride, cycle and walk will start at Lititz Church of the Brethren, and include food, fellowship and a silent auction.



For more information and to register online, visit:
www.cobys.org/bike-and-hike
 Registration opens July 15, 2019

