

Consistency, Love and Care *The Hollinger Family Story*

Foster Care and Adoption can be an incredibly meaningful journey a family can take together. It can be an opportunity at the crossroads of meeting a need and growing in love. This journey may not be for every family, but those who choose to answer this "calling" almost always find the rewards far outweigh the challenges. The Hollinger family is one such family, and they offered to share their story.

From early in their relationship both Leah and Eric knew they wanted a large family. They initially struggled with difficulty with pregnancy and infertility, which became motivation to explore foster care and adoption. They eventually had three children of their own, but still saw adoption as a way to grow their family. Leah saw how beautiful adoption could be through her extended family.

Both Eric and Leah are educators; they see firsthand how important stability is to children. After their third child, they felt God nudge them to resume the foster care conversation. Three years later they were ready to take the step and answer the call by providing consistency, love and care where it was absent for a child.

However, answering God's calling doesn't mean it is easy.

Leah admits to being terrified at first; there is the feeling of the unknown with a new child. Leah emphasized, "You know very little about them or the trauma that they have endured. We took it one step at a time. Plus, you want to give this child love, but at the same time guarding your own heart because you know it might not be permanent." Yet, they learned that the cause is

"Caring is kind of the whole point. These kids need love and care. No matter the amount of time that they are placed in your home, you have an opportunity to show them that love."

– Leah Hollinger



The Hollinger family: Collins, Laine, Leah, Jay, Eric and TJ.

greater than guarding their feelings. For Leah, "Caring is kind of the whole point. These kids need love and care. No matter the amount of time that they are placed in your home, you have an opportunity to show them that love."

Sometimes the needs of a child are significant and foster parents may be unequipped. Eric and Leah experienced

this, and although it can be hard to accept, they were able to lean on their support system through the process. The biggest wins will come through trial because when you see a child's growth it can bring the greatest joys. "There are beautiful moments; like seeing our biological kids embrace their own big feelings and love their new sibling."

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

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Building Relationships

As a young, 20-something year old teacher, I thought teaching was about imparting knowledge to young minds. I believed this until one day in early June when an event occurred that changed me and helped me to understand the critical nature of building relationships with others.

I had been a sixth-grade teacher. However, due to a smaller number of students the following year, someone had to switch to a different grade level. That someone was me! My new assignment was going to be third grade. My new room was upstairs on the other side of the building. I decided to ask the class if anyone was able to remain after school for a bit to help me move my boxes of things upstairs. Three boys volunteered to stay. Now these were not just any three boys. These three boys were my biggest challenge that entire year. Their behavior was, what some may call, less than stellar. I was not thrilled, but at least it was some help to move things in a non-air conditioned building.



To my surprise, they were super helpful. No one complained; we just worked, talked and laughed. At the end of the move, I offered each of them \$5 so they could go to the local pizza shop for a drink and some slices. They were excited to receive this reward and departed for, what I assumed, the pizza place. I spent another hour or so moving things around and putting items away until deciding it was time to leave. As it was a hot day, I had my car windows partially opened throughout the day so the car would not be an oven when I went to leave. When I got to the car, I was shocked. As tears welled in my eyes, I looked down into the driver's seat to find three, five-dollar bills sitting on my car seat. The boys put the money in the window and had left. It was then that I recognized just how critical relationships are to just about everything in life. Those boys did not stay to help for a reward. They stayed because they knew, despite the numerous behavioral challenges we had encountered, that I cared for them.

I have carried this simple lesson with me for over thirty years: No one cares about how much you know or what you do if they don't first know you care about them.

I was never the best teacher in the building, but what I did do was love on my kids. You do not need to be the best anything, just love people and let them know you care (even when it is really hard to do!). I did not understand it then, but I certainly do now! This is exactly how Jesus lived; loving the unlovable, eating with the outcasts, and caring for the lonely.

This type of love is what is at the center of what we do at COBYS. We understand that to build community, we have to first build relationships. Thank you for being in relationship with us. You are such an important part of our COBYS community!

Blessings,

Mike



Foster Families

Support Our Foster Families

Back-2-School Drive

Donate items or organize a drive to get our kids Back 2 School ready. Scan code for the list. Questions, contact Janice at jburchart@cobys.org



COBYS COBYS 2024

BIKE & HIKE

**Sunday,
September 8, 2024**

Lititz Church of the Brethren, 300 W. Orange St., Lititz

10/25-mile Bicycle Ride

3-mile Walk

**1.5-mile Tasty
Tour Walk**



New Event!

Mission & Ministries

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

COBYS carries out this mission by providing safe and loving homes for children through foster care and adoption services; helping children and adults overcome challenges through counseling; and leading family life education programs teaching skills and principles to parents, teens and children.

No matter how you participate, your partnership during the COBYS Bike & Hike helps make a positive difference in the lives of kids and families entrusted to our care.

**Learn more about us
at www.cobys.org.**

**For up-to-date
info and to
register scan
this code**



**Incredible
Ice Cream
Celebration**



Changes are afoot!

What's changing?

We are excited to introduce the **Tasty Tour**, a new opportunity for foodie walkers at our signature fundraising event.

The new **Tasty Tour** is a walk with stops at four popular eateries in Lititz. The **traditional 3-mile walk** and **10 and 25-mile bicycle rides** remain.

The event ends with the **Incredible Ice Cream Celebration**.

The end of an era.

The motorcycle ride portion of B&H is being discontinued. Riders can visit the event web page for historic courses we've offered over the years. We hope riders will still join us and experience something new.



Event Sponsors

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CONTAINER

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Sunday, September 8, 2024

Lititz Church of the Brethren, 300 W. Orange St., Lititz

Yes, we're going again with hopes for better weather than the last two years. Ride your bicycle or walk (or walk and snack), and of course, there'll be the **Incredible Ice Cream Celebration!**

**Kick us off
with a
head start**

**\$25,000
GOAL**

COBYS Bike & Hike Kickstart

The Kickstart sets the foundation for our biggest fundraiser, getting you in gear or stepping up to support COBYS at this event.

New in 2024! The Tasty Tour

Try this delicious new family-friendly event! Stroll a shorter route and sample these Lititz treats:

Dosie Dough: ½ Sandwich (choose Chicken salad, Hummus & fresh veggie, Turkey or Ham)

Café Arabella: ½ Mediterranean Flatbread with chicken and hummus or ½ Falafel wrap

Sweet Legacy: Delicious Cookie

Slate Café: Refreshing coffee/tea and power ball energy bites

(Gluten-free options available)

Foodies take note! Participation in Tasty Tour is pre-order only and minimum donation/sponsorship is \$60/person. Sign up before August 26.

Watch for emails, Facebook and Instagram posts for informative videos and donate to the **COBYS Kickstart!**

Indicate **COBYS Kickstart** on the donation form (paper and online) to designate your donation.



**Incredible
Ice Cream
Celebration**

Join us on the day

Choose your event, arrive on time and let the fun begin, all the way through to the **Incredible Ice Cream Celebration**. We cherish the chance to gather with you to celebrate in support of the ministries of COBYS.

Registration and the starts of the rides and walks will take place in the front of the church (along Orange Street).

Schedule for the day:

25-mile Bicycle Riders:

Registration/Check-in begins..... 12:00 p.m.

Ride begins..... 12:30 p.m.

Tasty Tour Walkers:

Check-in begins 12:30 p.m.

Tasty Tour Walk begins 1:00 p.m.

10-mile Bicycle Riders and 3-mile Walkers:

Registration/Check-in 1:00 p.m.

Ride and Walk begin 1:30 p.m.

Incredible Ice Cream Celebration:

When participants begin to return around 2:45 p.m.

We finish with ice cream! Delicious Fox Meadows vanilla and/or chocolate ice cream and your choice of toppings!

Ice cream will be served in the pavilion in the back of the church.

1 READY Register:

- Pre-Register online or by mail with a \$30 (\$60 Tasty Tour) minimum donation or sponsorship.
- **\$5 Early Bird Discount if you register before August 26 (August 12 for Tasty Tour).**
- **Family registration:** \$100/(\$200-Tasty Tour) minimum donation/sponsorships (for families of more than three individuals).
- **NOTE: Due to planning for food, Tasty Tour is pre-registration only by August 26.**
- Registration is also available at the event on September 8 (not for Tasty Tour).
- All donations \$20 and more will receive tax acknowledgment.

2 SET Gather Sponsorships:

- Expand your circle of giving – invite others to join you or support you and COBYS with a pledge.
- Create an online fundraising page.
- Collect donations – credit card online or by check.
- Submit sponsorship information and monies to COBYS at the event or mail to: 1417 Oregon Rd., Leola, PA 17540.

3 GO Enjoy A Walk or Ride:

We look forward to seeing you September 8 at Lititz Church of the Brethren.

For more details or to register/donate online visit:
cobys.org/bike-and-hike.

If you have any questions please contact Steve Nichols at:
steven@cobys.org.

**Door prizes for all participants.
Raise more, earn thank you gifts!**

Top Three fundraisers get Grand Prizes

First time participants and all participants will be entered into two prize drawings.

2024 Bike & Hike Sponsor Sheet

Your Name _____ Phone _____ Circle One: Bicycle Walk Tasty Tour
Address _____ Email _____

	Sponsor's Name	Sponsor's Complete Mailing Address	E-Mail Address	Phone No.	\$ Pledge	Pay Type	Received?
	Example: Joe Biker	1234 5th Ave., Lancaster, PA 17608	joebiker9876@aol.com	717-555-5555	\$500	Cash/ Check	Yes/No
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							

Please provide complete information for all sponsors so we can collect pledges and send acknowledgments.
Photocopy this form for additional sheets or print more from www.cobys.org/bike-and-hike.
A spreadsheet version is available online or create your own fundraising page online.

Totals	Raised	Submitted
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2024 Bike & Hike Pre-Registration Form

To pre-register, please complete this form and mail it with a check payable to:
COBYS Family Services, 1417 Oregon Road, Leola, PA 17540.
Or register at www.cobys.org/bike-and-hike. You may deduct \$5 per person if you pre-register by August 26, 2024 (August 12 for Tasty Tour). Additional donations are also welcomed!

Each participant: \$30(\$60-Tasty Tour) minimum donation/sponsorship.
Family registration: \$100/(\$200-Tasty Tour) minimum donation/sponsorships (for families of more than three individuals).

Number of Participants	Dollar Amount	
	Bicyclist(s) @ \$30 ea.	Total \$ _____
	3-mile Walker(s) @ \$30 ea.	Total \$ _____
	Tasty Tour(s) @ \$60 ea.	Total \$ _____
	Number of gluten-free or allergies of _____	_____
Plus additional donation\$ _____		
Less \$5/person pre-reg. discount		Total \$ _____
		Total \$ _____

Name(s): _____
Address: _____
Phone No: _____ E-mail: _____

Everyone Wins at Bike & Hike!

Bike

Choose the bicycling route that fits you best.

The 25-mile course wheels to Speedwell Forge and crosses a covered bridge.

The 10-mile course is more moderate but still takes in the beautiful Lancaster County countryside.

Hike

Take the traditional 3-mile trek. Enjoy a walk in the park and a tour of Main Street, Lititz on our signature route.

Make it a Tasty Tour. Treat your taste buds on a shorter, sampler stroll. Four stops offer a taste of some delicious Lititz destinations.

Ice Cream!

COBYS is piling it on again when it comes to ice cream and toppings at the **Incredible Ice Cream Celebration.**

Create a delicious dairy dessert with vanilla and/or chocolate ice cream and your choice of toppings.

Fostering Hope

Look for our staff in the yellow shirts and say hello.

Have a question about the care we provide for kids and families? Ask us.

We are passionate about what we do and sharing the services we provide!



Bike & Hike 2024 will be held rain or shine. Registration fees are non-refundable.

Event Sponsors



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Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors



Supporting Sponsors: Cassel, Spence Funeral Services, True Edge Performance Solutions

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors for their generous funding in support of the mission of COBYS and our ministries. We encourage all participants to contact and patronize these businesses for products, service and solutions.

Missed out on sponsoring this year? Contact Anne Stokes at 717-656-6580 or anne@cobys.org for information on business support opportunities for next year's events.

A New Look for COBYS

COBYS Family Services is pleased to unveil our new logo. As the services and programs of COBYS have grown in recent years, we wanted a refreshed agency image, reflecting the hope and promise of a brighter future for the children, adults and families we serve.

The logo demonstrates how much COBYS values being an organization with serving hands and caring hearts for those in need. The colors represent inspiring energy and hope.

Each service area of COBYS will be represented with a corresponding color used in the logo design to help quickly identify focus of information presented.

We are grateful for the work and cooperation with our friends at Scheffey Marketing & Communications in the design of the new logo.



COBYS Care In Action

A COBYS Adoption caseworker was providing child preparation services for a young girl, engaging in activities like gathering all the reasons she is special from family members and sharing them with her through a keepsake graphic.

This activity was just one way the caseworker was trying to help the child understand how she is learning and growing, and how she is special.

Another way to emphasize this was during a visit when the caseworker brought a small pot of flowers for the child, and talked about the idea that the child is "flowering" as she grows and learns new things. The delighted young girl proceeded to put the flowers in the basket on the front of her bike and show the case worker a new skill she had mastered, riding her bike without training wheels. The caseworker's eyes welled up with tears, realizing how far this child has come during the time COBYS has worked with her!



Consistency, Love

continued from page 1



The Hollinger family: Back row: Eric, TJ, Leah; Front row: Jay, Laine, and Collins

"If you have the means and capacity to take in a child then you should prayerfully consider it."
– Leah Hollinger

Foster care and adoption is a journey for the whole family, where consistency and boundaries aid everyone in meeting physical and mental needs.

The Hollingers' hope to dispel the notion that the need is too great for anyone to make a difference. "If you have the means and capacity to take in a child then you should prayerfully consider it. Choosing an agency that provided a lot of support was important to us. We felt that COBYS was honest with us during the training and helped prepare us as best they could for what was to come. They have been beside us every step of the way ever since. And with an agency like COBYS you will receive honesty and support from training through every step; the COBYS team cares alongside us as greatly as we did as parents."

Eric and Leah admit that fostering is a calling and not for everyone. They know from experience there will be bumps, but also great joys. A point Leah cements when she notes, "I can't imagine my life without my adopted son Jay."



COBYS Family Services
1417 Oregon Road
Leola, PA 17540

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COBYS COBYS 2024
Family Services

BIKE & HIKE

The end of an era.

The motorcycle ride portion of B&H is being discontinued from our signature fundraising event. Riders can visit the event web page for historic courses we've offered over the years.



We hope you will still join us and experience something new.

Sunday, September 8, 2024

Registration Opens July 8

Some things are the same:

The **traditional 3-mile walk** and **10- and 25-mile bicycle rides** remain. The event, of course, will end with the **Incredible Ice Cream Celebration**.



And something's new:



Introducing the **Tasty Tour**, a new opportunity for foodie walkers.

Register early for this shorter walk with stops at four popular eateries in Lititz.

Details and forms on page 3-6!



Details and Registration: cobys.org/bike-and-hike