



# *Fostering Hope*

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## 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

## I Am a Child of God

Overall, I think I have a pretty great life. I am blessed!

I have a beautiful, talented, VERY understanding wife; three amazing, capable kids; a job that I believe makes a difference in the lives of numerous kids and families; and co-workers who regularly go above and beyond what is expected for the sake of those kids and families. I even have some friends that I really enjoy being with. Again, I realize I am blessed!

But even though all that sounds great, and most of the time it is, things aren't always great. Sometimes, I have a bad day, or week, or weeks. And it's during those times when things aren't going well that I have to have a talk with myself. And here is what I say:



- My wife is important. She makes me a much better version of my real self.
- My kids are important. They too make me a much better version of my real self. They inspire me.
- My job is important. I try to add value to the lives of those I work with, and by their extension, the lives of the kids and families we serve.
- My friends are important. Relaxing and laughing and enjoying my time with them brings balance into my life.

But none of those things defines me as a person. I am not defined by the fact that I am Mari's husband, or Jordan's, Aja's, and Alyssa's dad. Or by my job at COBYS. Or that I have friends.

The only thing that defines me as a person is that I am a child of God. Everything else is fleeting. Extraordinarily important to me now, but fleeting. So in those moments of uncertainty, those moments that are challenging, I rest in the fact that in the midst of all that is happening around me, I am defined by one thing, and one thing only: I am a child of God.

And I hope and pray that you know that you are a child of God, as well.

On the journey with you,

Mark

*Former COBYS board president David Stauffer spurred these thoughts with a presentation he did some years ago. I thank and credit him.*

## Starting on the Next 500

After the 500th adoption became official at Lancaster County Courthouse on May 31, COBYS wasted no time getting to work on the next 500. Donny & Lorene Zimmerman and 82 of their closest friends and family members entered for the adoption of two-year-old Dylan.

Dylan is the third son that the Zimmermans have adopted through COBYS. All three came into their home soon after birth. Now the growing family consists of Josiah, 6; Kade, 5; and Dylan, soon 3.



"My friend grew up in foster care," Lorene explains, "and her experience inspired me to do foster care. I feel that every child deserves a loving home."

"Foster care had always appealed to Lorene," adds Donny. "If this is your calling, don't hold back," he counsels. "Foster care may take a lot of your time, but can be very rewarding. I would recommend anyone that has interest to attend trainings and see what it's all about."

Donny & Lorene, who live near Fredericksburg, Lebanon County,

did just that and were approved

as COBYS resource parents in August 2012. Josiah joined their family almost immediately, and his adoption was finalized in August 2014. Next came Kade, adopted in 2015.

Building their family through foster care and adoption has presented some challenges for Donny & Lorene as they have learned to surrender control of their schedule to the needs of their boys. The many trainings, visits, hearings, and doctor appointments sometimes have been a stretch, but Donny & Lorene always have help. Donny is the youngest of seven children and Lorene has nine siblings.

"Our church and family are extremely supportive," emphasizes Lorene. "And COBYS has been so good to us. They have always supported us. I can't emphasize that enough."

Lorene says it also helps her to remember that her family is part of her life's mission. "Approach it with a mission mind," she says. "If you view it as helping children and families, you won't become so overwhelmed."

# Ministry by the Numbers: 2017/18 Annual Report



COBYS Family Services had a historic year that included the 20th anniversary of our adoption ministry and the purchase and

fiscal year (July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018), COBYS served children and families in these ways:

**Adoption.** COBYS finalized our 500th adoption in May in the midst of a year-long anniversary celebration. Jerraca Hernandez, the first child adopted through COBYS in 1998, shared her testimony at a spring banquet.

An affiliate of the Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network (SWAN), the COBYS adoption program provides a variety of adoption-related

Adoption-Related Services	2016/17	2017/18
Child Specific Recruitment	11	18
Child Preparation	56	84
Child Profiles	78	104
Family Profiles	36	44
Adoption Finalizations	34	31
Post Adoption Services (# of families)	28	65

renovation of the \$1.1 million Murry Hill Center to make room for expanding programs and services. More than 60 volunteers donated nearly 700 hours of service in preparation for the move of foster care, adoption, and family life education staff into the 13,600-square-foot facility along Oregon Pike early in 2018.

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 123 staff, including 55 full-time employees (up from 122 and 45 last year). During the past

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. While the number of adoptions finalized was

similar to the previous year, adoption-related services expanded rapidly, resulting in the addition of three new full-time staff positions.

**Counseling.** Seven part-time therapists provided 4,610 hours of therapy at three centers during the year, a 33 percent increase from the previous year! Clinical services are offered at the Oregon Counseling Center, the Palmyra Area Counseling Center, and at the COBYS Family Life Center in Lancaster. Therapists provided an additional 966 client contact hours in group settings through two grant-funded programs.

Five therapists were trained in Seeking Safety, an evidence-based small group therapy program to address both substance abuse and trauma—one way that COBYS is seeking to respond to the opioid crisis. This program utilizes both COBYS therapists and family life educators to serve clients from Lancaster County's treatment courts. COBYS is seeking additional licensed therapists to meet the demand for child/adolescent services.

**Family Life Education.** Along with implementing Seeking Safety, COBYS educators partnered with Ephrata and Hempfield School Districts to pilot a Truancy Diversion Program for the Lancaster District Attorney's office. During the year educators led 88 courses and 39 workshops, providing 1,483 classroom hours of instruction to 1,336 adults, youth, and children. In comparison, the previous year's totals were 101, 29, 1,533, and 1,289. Programs and workshops were provided at various locations in partnership with 38 schools, community organizations, and churches.





**Foster Care.** The foster care program provides temporary care for abused and neglected children. Again this year, the number of children served hit a new high, with foster care staff facilitating 32,636 days of care for 170 children, up from 27,049 days of care for 154 children. COBYS served 44 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 such as prenatal drug addiction, vision difficulties, congenital defects, and Down Syndrome. Of the 82 children discharged from COBYS' care, 41 were reunified with parents or other relatives, 16 were adopted by their foster family, 22 moved to other placements, and 3 were discharged after fleeing.

COBYS approved 24 new foster/adoptive resource families, bringing the total number of families open with COBYS during the year to 116. Orientation sessions are offered twice each month for people interested in exploring foster care and adoption. COBYS then provides 27 hours of training—offered six times per year in daytime and evening formats—to those seeking approval as resource families.

**Permanency Unit.** 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 to overcome the issues that led to their children's placement in care. Despite challenges posed by high staff turnover, the program served 155 children from 107 families, the same number of children as the previous year. A total of 21 children returned home to a parent or guardian, 21 were transferred to the adoption unit to gain permanency through adoption, and 9 others were released to caregivers through permanent legal custodianship. Three youth signed out of care after turning 18.

The 21 children transferred to the adoption unit was triple the number from the previous year. Staff first seek to reunify children with parents or relatives, but an increasing number of cases involving parents struggling with

drug addiction make reunification within the 15-22 months provided by state law more difficult.

## Financial Support

The COBYS budget for the current year is more than \$5 million. Private giving (the focus of this report) accounts for nearly 15 percent of COBYS' income. Strong private giving helps offset challenges posed by inadequate public funding for some of our programs and services.

Giving to the general fund grew by a modest three percent over the previous year, the seventh consecutive year of growth following the recession, but the smallest percentage increase in recent years. The big story for 2017/18 was unprecedented bequest giving, which was timely in light of major spending on a new building.

Because of strong private giving in recent years, board and staff opted not to launch a Murry Hill Center campaign, but did send a low-key appeal letter, resulting in \$7,103 in "campaign" giving. (On the table below in previous years "campaign" refers to the Work for the Well-Being of the City campaign that focused primarily on the COBYS Family Life Center and education programming.) In Kind giving of goods and services was up sharply, due mostly to the donation of quality used furniture from Intermediate Unit 13 with a depreciated value of more than \$21,000.

We are grateful for strong support which enables us to continue to serve children and families in Christ's name and on the church's behalf!

*A version of this report that includes a contributors list can be viewed on the Newsletter page at [www.cobys.org](http://www.cobys.org).*

Year-to-Date Private Giving Summary (Five-Year Comparison)					
	7/1/2013 - 6/30/2014	7/1/2014 - 6/30/2015	7/1/2015 - 6/30/2016	7/1/2016 - 6/30/2017	7/1/2017 - 6/30/2018
Bequests	\$31,912.67	\$228,988.26	\$106,448.86	\$1,003.29	\$700,422.95
Campaign	\$129,964.44	\$91,796.81	\$52,375.52	\$11,974.60	\$7,103.00
General	\$557,324.10	\$585,584.25	\$666,412.95	\$706,513.37	\$727,509.15
In Kind	\$23,799.80	\$23,778.85	\$28,900.28	\$24,440.91	\$48,066.87
Total	\$743,001.01	\$930,648.17	\$854,137.61	\$743,932.17	\$1,483,101.97

## Dedicated: 200 Attend Murry Hill Center Open House



More than 200 guests stopped by COBYS Family Services open house events at Murry Hill Center on June 10 and 13, about a hundred each day. Located at 444 Murry Hill Circle in Lancaster, the 13,600-square-foot facility houses adoption, foster care, and family life education staff.

The open house events featured tours of the renovated facility, program displays, and staff presentations of services. In addition, a Sunday dedication service featured comments by Executive Director Mark Cunningham, a litany led by board Vice-President Wilbur Rohrer, and a prayer offered by Atlantic Northeast District Executive Pete Kontra. Board

President Fred Keller and Mark officially opened the building at a Wednesday ribbon cutting ceremony. Video of the dedication service and the text of Mark's speech can be accessed at <https://cobys.org/news-events/>.

COBYS purchased the building in January for \$1.1 million to help alleviate severe over-crowding at the main office in the historic mill at 1417 Oregon Road in Leola. Murry Hill Center is centrally-located between the main office and two COBYS facilities in downtown Lancaster. It is an additional location for COBYS; all other buildings are being retained. The main office continues to house administration and counseling staff.

*(From left) Mark Cunningham and Fred Keller cut the ribbon held by executive staff Mary Sourber and Abby Keiser; Mark speaking at the Sunday dedication; and Wilbur Rohrer and Pete Kontra visit before participating in the dedication.*

## ExtraOrdinary Give Set

The 2018 edition of the Lancaster County Community Foundations' Extraordinary Give is shaping up to be the best ever, thanks to a "stretch fund" of at least half a million dollars to be divided among participating organizations.

COBYS will participate with more than 400 other nonprofits on Friday, November 16, in Lancaster County's largest day of giving. Over the past six years, this 24-hour online giving event has raised over \$31 million for more than 500 organizations, including \$7.1 million last year. During that same span COBYS has received \$289,000, including more than \$68,320 last year.

For the first time this year offline gifts (checks, stocks, securities) can be





## Bike & Hike Targets 20-Year Growth Streak

It's not too late to participate in the 22nd annual COBYS Bike & Hike, to be held Sunday afternoon, September 9, at the Lititz Church of the Brethren. The event includes a three-mile walk, 10- and 25-mile bicycle rides, and the 65-mile Dutch Country Motorcycle Ride, which this year will travel along scenic country roads in northwestern Lancaster and Lebanon Counties. A silent auction runs throughout the afternoon. Pre-registration is not required.

The Bike & Hike is COBYS' signature fundraiser, having raised more than \$1.3 million for COBYS ministries since its inception. Last year, the event grossed \$136,669 and attracted more than 600 people. Participants included 306 walkers, 129 bicyclists, and 166 motorcyclists on 104 cycles, along with some additional friends who stopped in to visit and participate in the silent auction.



Bike & Hike income has grown for 19 consecutive years. Planners are seeking to make it 20, while also setting a new attendance record.

"We are off to a great start this year, with record business support already in the bank," said Director of Development Don Fitzkee. "Now we just need walkers, riders, and donors to get us the rest of the way."

Walkers and bicyclists donate a

\$25 registration fee, obtain support from sponsors, or both. Motorcycles are \$35 per cycle, plus \$25 for an additional passenger. Those who pre-register by September 5 receive a \$5 discount. New this year, participants can not only register online, but create a personalized fundraising page to invite support from friends.

Each participant receives a free t-shirt, ice cream and refreshments, and a chance to win a door prize. Those who raise certain levels of support earn additional prizes. Junior and senior high youth groups who raise \$1,500 or more earn a gym and pizza night.

For more information, including the brochure, sponsor sheets, and walk and ride routes, visit [www.cobys.org/bike-and-hike](http://www.cobys.org/bike-and-hike) or contact Development Associate Anne Stokes at 717-656-6580 or [anne@cobys.org](mailto:anne@cobys.org).

## for November 16

# THE EXTRA ORDINARY GIVE



channeled through the ExtraOrdinary Give and are eligible for matching funds. Arrangements for such gifts must be made by the end of October, with a minimum donation of \$10,000 required. For the second year, businesses may give matching funds in

advance.

Otherwise, 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 Friday, November 16, choose COBYS from the list of organizations, and give a donation of \$25 or more.

Every dollar donated will be stretched with at least \$500,000 from the Community Foundation, Rogers & 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 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.

COBYS again will team with Brethren Village to host a giving station at the Village's Chives American Grill from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Stop in to give and receive a treat. Additional events may be scheduled at other locations.

For more information, visit [ExtraGive.org](http://ExtraGive.org). To learn more about giving prior to the event and still earning a match, contact Development Associate Anne Stokes at [anne@cobys.org](mailto:anne@cobys.org) or 717-656-6580.

COBYS Family Services  
1417 Oregon Road  
Leola, PA 17540

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