

We do so much together!

Making A Positive Impact

It is kind of amazing. When you stop and look at it either way, as a big picture (what we've done over the past year), or homing in on really almost any given day, exceptional service and care is being delivered by the COBYS community.

This past year our 89 staff members continued our focus on trauma-informed care with best practices training to address the increasingly complex needs of children and youth in foster care and children, youth and adults in the community. We provide foster care in Lancaster, Berks, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lebanon, Schuylkill and York counties.

The COBYS community delivers care in situations that are sometimes challenging, messy and often heartbreaking. But the work we do is necessary and honorable and can be life-altering. In fulfilling our mission, that **motivated by Christian faith, we educate, support and empower children and adults to reach their full potential**, the care we provide can even be joyful.

This report provides a snapshot of our care during the past fiscal year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025).



Adoption

The COBYS Adoption unit provides services that assist children and families during the foster care process, in finalization of adoptions and in the life-long journey for families who have experienced adoption.

Our adoption staff work with some foster and adoptive families approved through COBYS, but also provide services for many additional children placed in foster homes licensed through counties and those already adopted and in kinship placements.

The following units of service were provided in the past fiscal year:

- 13 Child Specific Recruitments
- 58 Child Preparations
- 123 Child Profiles and Addendums
- 49 Family Profiles and Addendums
- 17 Adoption Finalizations
- 20 Families assessed for Post Adoption Services

To date 697 adoptions have been finalized by COBYS.

We need you to be a part of the solution.

Beyond financial support, we need to grow the COBYS Community with new donors and new foster families, joining those who know the valuable and needed services we provide.

Help us spread the word by sharing our stories and need for foster families on social media and with friends, inviting us to visit your congregation or display information at a local business.



"We wanted to provide love, community and a family for those without these basics that so many of us take for granted."

– Adoptive parent



Mission Statement

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

Board of Directors

Becky Fuchs, President
Ken Craul, Secretary
Rachel Bucher Swank
Doug Denlinger
Kathy Focht Sheri Johnson
Donna Parcell
Merv Wampler
Kelli Wenger

Administrative Staff

Dr. J. Michael Lausch, Executive Director
Cynthia Umberger, Director of Business Operations
Anne Stokes, Director of Development & Comm.
Abby Keiser, Director of Family Life Services
Mary Sourber, Director of Placement Services
Jen McDowell, Adoption Supervisor
Holly Hardin, Assistant Director of Family Life Services
Amanda Storrs, Resource Home Supervisor
Courtney Beiler, Foster Care Supervisor
Amy Wittmaier, Counseling Supervisor
Krista Rankin, Summer Weaver
Permanency Unit Supervisors
Tim Strawser, HR Manager of Personnel
Bethany Kauffman-Raub, HR Manager of Records & Benefits
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

444 Murry Hill Circle
Lancaster, PA 17601
717-656-6580
Fax: 717-656-3056
www.cobys.org

We Need You, and Thank You

As I reflect on the past few months, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for your support. Thank you so much for your part in bringing hope to the children and families we serve. As a result of your generosity, compassion and prayers, the individuals we serve have been able to experience the love of Christ in life-changing ways.

Our work is often challenging and messy. The stories we experience will melt your heart and bring you to tears. Yet through it all, our employees provide a level of care that is second to none. They routinely go above and beyond expectations to best serve others. Every situation we encounter is different, each carrying its own complexities and unique circumstances. As such, there is always a gap in what resources we can afford compared to what resources are necessary. We need your partnership to ensure the provision of resources to our children and families.



Thank you for standing with us.

Your donations are not just donations; they are an opportunity for healing, transformation, and hope. We simply cannot do this critical work without you. Your contributions are an act of love and faith. Your donations help to provide safe and loving homes for foster children, forever homes for those in need of adoption and the tools and counseling necessary for families to thrive. Whether you give financially, volunteer at the Bike and Hike or faithfully pray for COBYS, please know that you are making an eternal difference.

Blessings,
Mike



Thank You, Mary

Mary Sourber, director of placement services, is retiring in October after 30+ years of service at COBYS. We are grateful for her many years of direct care for kids and families and 19 years of leadership in our foster care, permanency and adoption programs. In her decades of service, Mary has had a front row seat to significant changes in the child welfare system, walking alongside children and families at every step. She knows firsthand what it means when we say our work is challenging, sometimes messy, often heartbreaking, but life-altering and even joyful.



"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at COBYS and am grateful to so many people for allowing me the honor of serving children and families for over 30 years. I have truly been able to live out my passion and desire to keep children safe and serve the Lord in this way. Thank you to those that I have worked with and served."

We celebrate with Mary in starting retirement and being able to spend more time with her children and grandchildren. Thank you, Mary!



Making A Positive Impact continued from page 1

Family Life Education

The Blues Program increased its number of training courses for mental health practitioners for teens by 42%, from 26 to 37 during this fiscal year. The Blues Program was also added as an approved resource for schools in Texas and California, allowing COBYS to train several practitioners from these states. For more information about The Blues Program visit www.bluesprogram.org



FLE statistics for the past fiscal year:

- 999 classroom hours including 703 hours for FLE courses and 296 hours for Blues Program training
- 670 adults attending FLE classes, representing over 856 children
- 330 Blues Program practitioner trainees, representing hundreds of children
- 111 courses held, including 74 FLE and 37 Blues trainings. Some courses are held weekly. Courses include:
 - Cooperative Parenting & Divorce
 - Incredible Years Parenting Program
 - Incredible Years Autism
 - Kinship Program
 - Seeking Safety Prison Program
 - Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)
- FLE local school district partners:
 - Conestoga Valley School District
 - Hempfield School District
 - Lancaster County Prison
 - Manheim Central School District
 - Penn Manor School District
 - School District of Lancaster

Stability Matters

Imagine how overwhelming it would be to move from your home multiple times in a year. National studies show that **more than a third of children** in foster care experience multiple placements in a year.

At COBYS, 92% (95 children) had only one placement setting with COBYS. That speaks to the preparedness of COBYS foster families and the support they receive throughout the process.



All the Right Tools

"I feel much more equipped to parent children from hard places. Before TBRI, I was honestly feeling very nervous about handling behaviors but I feel like I have a lot of tools in my back pocket to help these children now. Thanks for making this course available to us!"

– Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) parent participant

Foster Care

Our Foster Care team ensures that children are safe and supported while in care. COBYS foster families provide temporary care until a child can reunify with a birth parent or extended family. Foster families sometimes adopt a foster child if the court determines that the child cannot return home. COBYS continues increased foster family recruitment efforts due to on-going national and local shortages of foster parents.

Foster Care statistics for the past fiscal year:

- 18,161 days of care to 103 children, with 53 children placed in last year
- 25 sibling groups, one teen parent and child, and 11 medically needy children were served
- 12 foster children in our care were adopted, while 44 were discharged to other places including seven moving to kinship family placements.
- 83 foster families served, including 19 newly licensed foster families. We license families for both traditional foster care and kinship care.
- COBYS families are a diverse group, including individuals and married couples ranging from 25 to 68 years of age. Two thirds of our families also have biological or adopted children living in the home.

You came.

Thank you for your support.
Over \$112,000 raised!



Blessed with glorious late-summer weather, over 230 friends of COBYS came to ride bikes, walk or enjoy delicious food on the Tasty Tour. They gathered with the Bike & Hike Pros for conversation and fellowship and joined in the Incredible Ice Cream Celebration.

With the support of business sponsors, Kickstart contributions and participants (many who enlisted others to sponsor them), over \$112,000 was raised.

COBYS honored the top three fundraisers: Floy Fitzkee, Londa Brandt and Don and Carolyn Fitzkee. Many other individuals, families and groups, including Mountville Church of the Brethren, rallied support from friends and family to bolster our services.

Funds raised at the Bike & Hike allow COBYS to provide care the way care should be provided, with compassion, dignity and hope, to kids and families who are often experiencing trauma and at their lowest point. Together we lift them up.

Bike & Hike Pros, experienced folks who encouraged departing groups and moseyed back to enjoy the Incredible Ice Cream Celebration.



Top 2025 fundraisers (l to r): Don and Carolyn Fitzkee, Floy Fitzkee and Londa Brandt.



You rode.

Riders on the updated 25-mile course enjoyed a nice workout with wonderful views, while active families with two-wheeling youngsters and other participants explored the new 10-mile route.



No matter how you participated, your partnership in the Bike & Hike helps make a positive difference in the lives of kids, adults and families entrusted to our care.
Together we are making a better community and offering hope.

You walked.

Still the most popular Bike & Hike activity (other than the ice cream), many families and groups completed the traditional 3-mile walk in Lititz.

A growing number of Bike & Hikers chose the flavorful Tasty Tour walk with a sampling of treats from Dosie Dough, Café Arabella, Slate Café and CAVOLO! in Lititz.



You sundaed!

Sweet treats in the form of a create-your-own ice cream sundae at the event-ending celebration means everyone gets their favorite sundae. COBYS appreciates the fun, food and fellowship we can share with you in support of the important work we do together.



Event Sponsors



Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors



Making A Positive Impact continued from page 3

Counseling

In January 2025, the COBYS Counseling Center moved from its Leola, PA location into our main office at 444 Murry Hill Circle in Lancaster. This move provides a refreshed space for service delivery and allows therapists to further integrate with staff in foster care, adoption and family life education services, strengthening continuity of care for many clients.



During the past fiscal year, Counseling provided and engaged in:

- 5,154 counseling sessions held
- 121 new clients served
- 132 successful discharges



"Aside from the training, a real benefit is knowing that you're not alone in the things you're going through, and no matter how much training you've had, it'll never be perfect or easy, and that's OK."

– Foster Care parent on Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) training

A Permanency staff member was involved in a case with two sibling children in care. The biological mother then gave birth to twins. This staff member was present at the hospital since the newborns would also need to be put in foster care due to domestic violence by the father. Shortly after, the birth mother was able to move out of state to be with her mother. With a court hearing scheduled in just days to see if the babies could be placed with the birth mother, a safety assessment was needed of the new living situation. If the assessment could not be

When Timing Is Everything In A Family Matter



completed before the court hearing, the kids would be in care for another six weeks. Recognizing the immediacy of the situation, our staff member drove nearly two hours to meet with birth mother and grandmother. She was able to certify that the home met safety standards, and at the hearing the children were returned to birth mom's custody. COBYS wasn't required to make a safety assessment that fast, but given the timeline, our staff member went above and beyond to help reunify a mother and her babies.

Permanency

This year, one trend the Permanency Unit saw with five cases was the return of children to foster care after previously being reunified with their parents. Re-entry occurred due to parents recurring drug use.

Additionally, our staff is managing cases of adolescents with complex mental health needs that exceed the level of care foster homes can provide. As a result, it is challenging to secure appropriate group or mental health facility placements within Lancaster County to meet their needs, with many youth being placed outside the County where the necessary facilities are located. At the end of the fiscal year, 14 youth in our care were placed out of Lancaster County — including one as far away as Tennessee — due to the complexity of their mental health and treatment needs.



2024-2025 statistics:

- Permanency worked with 108 children from 73 families
- 16 children were reunified from 11 families
- Eight children from five families were transferred to adoption
- Three children from two families were released to legal guardian through subsidized permanent legal custodianship
- One youth chose to leave custody at the age of 18

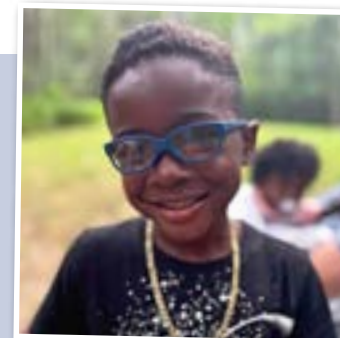
Financial Support

This year saw engagement with and generosity from our supporters, while we actively sought out new connections to keep our financial foundation strong. We organized visits to seven congregations and enjoyed connecting directly with individuals and families throughout the region. We met with many of our closest supporters through personal visits and critical fundraising events such as our Dinner & Conversation and The Bike & Hike. We welcome visits and calls with individual donors where we can provide personalized updates on your support of our critical care and express our sincere gratitude for the difference each individual, family or business really does make in our care.

While there was a decrease in yearly giving, we are actively pursuing new connections and donors with highlights

"I believe in what they are doing and also feel that they are providing a great service that needs a Christian influence which can impact the families that they serve."

– COBYS Donor



at local shops, participating in community events like the Lancaster Open Streets Festival and digital advertising across the region. To start a conversation about your

connection to COBYS, please contact Anne Stokes, director of development & communications, at anne@cobys.org or 717-656-6580 x101.

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

COBYS Family Services	7/1/2020 - 6/30/2021	7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022	7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023	7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024	7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025
Bequests	\$39,337.75	\$189,056.70	\$ 54,256.16	\$ 44,375.01	\$45,138.43
General	\$725,209.74	\$739,363.21	\$ 786,204.15	\$ 756,311.42	\$719,780.80
In Kind	\$16,348.07	\$9,893.75	\$ 21,956.38	\$ 15,361.43	\$8,117.39
Total	\$780,895.56	\$939,313.66	\$ 862,416.69	\$ 816,047.86	\$773,036.62

"I want to thank each and every one of you, at COBYS, for all the time, effort, love and protection you have provided. Our adopted daughter is an exceptional girl. She is smart, compassionate, kind, considerate, helpful, funny, loving, and a complete joy! She loves all of you and you have changed her world!"

– COBYS Child Prep parent



COBYS Coordinated Care, Covering All the Bases

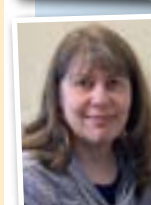
Together as a team, representatives from five departments many times get the chance to support foster families and children in the home during an active case. The team aspect of COBYS makes our organization unique. Each individual supporting the family can provide for different needs or offer different perspectives.



Foster Care Caseworkers help families navigate the system, advocate for the children and families, and are liaisons with the county and other providers.



Resource Home Specialists provide direct support to the foster parents and walk with them through the approval process.



Resource Parent Trainers provide feedback and TBRI strategies and are a sounding board to foster parents. They also bring together other professionals for provider meetings.

Adoption caseworkers meet with the children to provide Child Preparation Services to help them understand foster care and permanency, write child profiles, and help families navigate the finalization process.

COBYS therapist, if involved, meet regularly with the child, check in with the parents, and can coordinate care with other professionals providing care.





COBYS Family Services
444 Murry Hill Circle
Lancaster, PA 17601



Watch the new COBYS video

Scan the QR code or visit:
<https://youtu.be/FUE3klyvUVE>

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

Address Service Requested



Become our fan on
Facebook and Instagram

A Look Inside

Making A Positive Impact 1, 3, 6-7
Message from Mike 2
Mary Sourber Retires 2
Bike & Hike 2025 Recap 4-5
Bike & Hike - Save the Date 8

Upcoming Events SAVE THE DATES



November 30, 2025
Lancaster Farm & Home Center



March 26, 2026
The Inn at Leola Village

THE WENGER FOUNDATION
Praise Dinner

April 28, 2026
Lebanon Expo Center



May 16, 2026
Penn Medicine Park

Support COBYS Nov. 21, during the community-wide day of giving



Set a reminder for the day and make a plan. Choose the best time to give that works for you whether you are an early bird or an end-of-day night owl or you go for special times somewhere in between. We appreciate your donation.

Make Your Gift Count Double. At these times during ExtraGive day, your gift will be matched dollar for dollar by these generous COBYS sponsors:



6:00-9:00 a.m. Fillmore Container will match dollar for dollar up to \$100 per donation for a total of \$2,500.



7:00 - 10:00 p.m. National Energy Control Corporation will match dollar for dollar up to \$100 for a total of \$2,000.

Want to add your family or business? Contact Anne Stokes at anne@cobys.org BEFORE ExtraGive day.

For a complete list of hourly prizes provided by the Lancaster County Community Foundation visit: www.extragive.org/prizes

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