

An On-call Calling

Eric and Marisa Albrecht have been a part of the foster care standby community since 2021 and have had over 20 standby foster children placed in their home. They have a passion to help children and families in our community. They answered some questions to share their story.

Meet the Albrecht Family

We have been married for almost 13 years and have three biological daughters, Ivy, 6, Seren, 3, and Maeve, 5 months. We were both born and raised in the Lancaster area on farms but have enjoyed living downtown in Lancaster City since being married.

How do you describe standby foster care and what does that look like in your family?

We often refer to standby foster care as being the on-call family for any after hours emergency placements. We are the initial safe home for those children. It's a week-long commitment and we need to be open to any and all placements while on-call. It could be a caseworker bringing a 6-month old baby to our door at 3 a.m. or a sibling set of three needing to be picked up from the hospital at 10 p.m. Standby foster care requires a lot of flexibility but is a vital piece of the puzzle to support the overall foster care system.

When children are placed with us it is typically their first introduction to foster care. We do our best to create a calm environment and to help them acclimate and answer questions. Standby is unique because of how short term it is. Children may be placed with us for only a few hours or up to a few days. They arrive with very little background info so we find ourselves being hyper observant to their physical and emotional cues to learn what we can do to best support them while they are in our care. Children often arrive with no belongings so that may mean making last minute trips to the store for a fresh set of clothes or baby

formula to get through the night. We try to keep extra toiletries and essentials, and our girls have often shared their clothes to help get through that initial night. They love being able to help out as well.

Why did you decide to become foster parents? What makes standby foster care something you feel called to?

We had always been interested in foster care but began looking into it in 2020. Life had slowed down and we felt like it was a good time to get trained and start that process. We only had one kid at the time, so we felt like we had the space to welcome in more kids. We were interested in short term foster care to start, and while reading about standby at COBYS, immediately felt called to it. We are both flexible and don't mind the challenge and "interruption" of standby. Both of our families are local so we also have a strong support system. We love kids and work well as a team so we can be all hands on deck when we get calls.



"We value creating a warm and welcoming environment for these kids who have just been abruptly placed in our home and often are coming from some very hard circumstances."



The Albrechts (Marisa, Maeve, Seren, Eric and Ivy) on a "non on-call" day.

We value creating a warm and welcoming environment for these kids who have just been abruptly placed in our home and often are coming from some very hard circumstances.

Why did you choose COBYS as the agency through which you became licensed foster parents? What do you appreciate about the COBYS staff?

We knew we wanted to work with a Christian organization and some friends had highly recommended COBYS to us. When we began getting certified as a Resource Family we quickly realized we made the right choice. The certification process was extremely thorough and we felt like the training and requirements really helped prepare us for what we were stepping into.

The individuals that we've worked with at COBYS have all been incredible - detail oriented, organized, knowledgeable and always willing to answer our questions. We feel they genuinely value us and the well being of our family, supporting us in various ways when we need it, but also respecting the fact that we are human and have limits to how much we can do.

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.



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A Fresh Perspective

We all have routines and patterns that help to make our days feel comfortable. Some of us thrive on routine, others, like the Albrecht family in our feature story, more easily embrace disruption. Every so often, a quiet (or at times a not so quiet) nudge indicates that it is time for a change. This is true each day and in our walk with Christ. We fall into comfortable prayer routines or devotional readings. Yet, scripture reminds us that God is always doing something new:

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?"
(Isaiah 43:19).

Trying something new is not just about personal growth, it can be an act of obedience and trust. In 2026, COBYS is trying new things too, particularly with our fundraising events. Changes to the Caring Hearts Luncheon and the introduction of the COBYS Baseball Bash, are in response to donor preferences and that nudging to try something new. We are hoping that these re-imagined and new events will lead to some unexpected blessings, helping COBYS to better provide for the needs of our children and families.

We hope that you will consider trying something new too and join us at the Caring Hearts Luncheon and the Baseball Bash. You may discover that this new thing you try becomes the place where God grows your faith and uses you in a very powerful way!
Blessings,
Mike



Welcome New COBYS Board Members



Keith Fox, MHA

Keith joins the COBYS' Board with significant experience in health-care strategy and business development with Lancaster General Health. Currently,

he helps lead their direct-to-employer services, Penn Medicine HealthWorks, as the Director of Employer Relations & Strategic Growth.

Keith has been married to Jen for 24 years with three children. Adoption is near and dear to him and his family. His youngest daughter was fostered before joining the family through adoption. Keith is an avid Philadelphia Eagles and Penn State football fan. He and his family enjoy the water (beaches, ocean, lakes, creeks) and playing board and yard games. He serves on the leadership board at Manheim Brethren in Christ Church, where the Fox family is actively involved with various children & youth ministries.

Because of his personal connection to foster care and adoption, Keith and his wife also lead an adoption/foster support ministry at their church. "I am excited to serve on COBYS' Board, so that I can give back to my community, be part of Christ's mission to help the orphans, and provide help and services to families in our community that are fostering and adopting children."



Bill Kepner

Bill Kepner is currently the Senior Consultant for Non-Profit Management Solutions (NPMS), providing fund development and advocacy support for the United Disability Services (UDS) Foundation. Previously, Bill served as COO for UDS starting in 2007, moving to CEO in 2010. Prior to his paid leadership, Bill served on the UDS Board of Directors.

Bill brought 22 years of senior level management experience in healthcare to UDS as a previous Regional VP for Homedco and Apria Healthcare, as CEO of Kairos Healthcare and the first COO of the Inglis Foundation.

He led UDS Foundation for 18 years, through very challenging times to become one of the top human services organizations in Pennsylvania, currently serving over 15,000 clients daily. Bill is known for his servant leadership style and for building great teams. He hopes his experience in overseeing another non-profit and working with various boards can be valuable to COBYS.

Bill is an active member at Mountville Church of the Brethren involved as a Deacon, Finance Committee chair, adult Sunday school teacher, choir member, and serving on the Leadership Team and Renovation Committee at church.

Bill is blessed with Phyllis, his wonderful wife of forty six years and three beautiful daughters who have blessed him with six grandchildren, ages 4 to 18. His hobbies are sports, music, New York Times crossword puzzles and any word games.



Save the Date: Sunday, September 13, 2026



Bicycle ride, walk or take the Tasty Tour at our signature fundraising event.
Plus ice cream for all!



Join Us

March 26, 2026

The Inn at Leola Village, Bella Giardino

Join us for a delicious buffet lunch and hear how, together, we are changing lives. The COBYS Community is giving hope and opportunity to children and families when it is needed most. See how challenges are being met and brighter futures are possible.

Hear more from the Albrecht family (featured on page one) and we'll share stories about our staff, kids and families doing everyday things in extraordinary ways.

We hope to see you there.

Schedule:	Cost:
11:30 - 12:00	Welcome reception and appetizers
12:00 - 12:45	Buffet lunch
12:45 - 1:30	Family conversation

A freewill offering will be taken.

Buffet Selections

Penne pasta with chocolate and braised beef tomato sauce
gorgonzola, wild mushrooms, lightly dusted Wilbur's dark chocolate

Slow roasted chicken with whipped potatoes and assorted vegetables (gluten free)

Orecchiette Pasta with sautéed broccoli, crushed cauliflower, garlic and chilies (vegan/vegetarian)

RSVP by March 16, 2026:

Make reservations online: cobys.org/spring-luncheon
Or scan the QR code

Or coordinate with Steve Nichols:
Email: steven@cobys.org, Call: 717-656-6580 ext. 161

Mail check and information to:

Steve Nichols
444 Murry Hill Circle
Lancaster, PA 17601

On the form please list all attendees



Presenting Sponsors



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444 Murry Hill Circle
Lancaster, PA 17601

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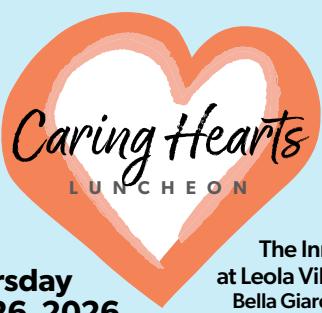
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A copy of the official registration and financial information of COBYS Family Services may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. (EIN 23-2128881)

Upcoming Events - A COBYS Connection for Everyone!


Caring Hearts
LUNCHEON

Thursday
March 26, 2026

The Inn
at Leola Village,
Bella Giardino
38 Deborah Dr, Leola

Join Us
for a delicious lunch
and hear through the perspective
of a foster family, how we are
changing lives
together

See the invitation
and details on page 3


The WENGER
Foundation
LOCAL GIVING.

Praise Dinner
Tuesday
April 28, 2026
Lebanon Expo Center
80 Rocherty Road, Lebanon, PA

Enjoy a delicious meal
with friends, and tap your feet
to inspirational Christian music.



Special musical guests:
Legacy Five


Baseball
Bash
Penn Medicine
Park
Silverball Suite
650 N Prince St, Lancaster

Saturday
May 16, 2026

Stormers Baseball & More

Scheduled Activities: Stadium Tour,
Ballpark food buffet, Free arcade games,
Suite level seating behind home plate,
Post game Fireworks

