



Child Therapy

COBYS has five therapists who can provide therapeutic services for children from age four through adolescents.

When counseling our youngest clients, COBYS' therapists use play therapy where they act out behavioral scenarios with which the children are having difficulty, modeling appropriate behavior and actions.

Just as there has been an increased awareness of the effects of trauma on the lives of adults, our trained and licensed therapists are also able to provide trauma focused care using Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). TF-CBT is an evidence-based treatment for children and adolescents who have experienced trauma. It allows their parents or caregivers to be a part of the healing process.

An overarching necessity for success in providing therapy to young children is the engagement of parents and caregivers from the child's entire community. This community includes teachers, school counselors and other professional service providers.

LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME:

Counseling for Our Youngest Clients

Joy* was placed into foster care as an infant and developed a strong and secure attachment to her foster parents. When she was a young child, her father was identified through paternity tests and he began actively pursuing reunification with his daughter. Joy was exhibiting high levels of anxiety during visits with her father and separating from her foster mother.

Joy started therapy at COBYS, along with her foster mother and birth father, to help her develop more comfort with her father and less anxiety separating from her foster mother. This level of comfort gradually developed over time through play therapy. After about three months of receiving care, Joy had developed a positive and trusting relationship with her father and moved into his home without distress.

The beautiful part of this story is how supportive the foster mother was in helping Joy to build a relationship with her father, and the positive relationship the



foster family and birth father developed. Before ending therapy, the birth father expressed his deep appreciation to the foster family for giving Joy such a good start in life and asked them to continue to be involved in her life as her godparents.

Because of therapy provided by COBYS, the selfless care received from her COBYS Resource Parents and the loving care of her father, Joy was able to experience a smooth transition and have two families who love and support her.

**Named changed to protect child's privacy.*

As the story of Joy illustrates, it is important to recognize that therapy can be very beneficial for young children, not just adolescents and adults. Parents should be proactive in getting children care when they see a problem developing. That way, kids can have an established therapy provider, and as they age, they can return for check-ups with a trusted person, maximizing their chances of thriving as they grow and develop.

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

We're Still Here



Things at COBYS have become a bit more challenging during this Coronavirus pandemic, as I am sure they have been for all of you at work, at home and in almost every aspect of life. At COBYS, we transitioned to a remote service delivery model beginning on March 16. Required foster care visits are being completed through video technology such as FaceTime, Skype and Zoom. Therapists are continuing to provide service to clients through teletherapy. While all in-person group meetings have been canceled for at least the next few weeks, family life

educators are checking in with class participants, making sure that adults and children continue to receive education materials and care. While delivering care during the COVID-19 crisis is not ideal, the staff at COBYS are making every effort to ensure that our clients continue to receive quality, personal care, no matter the circumstance.

The services we provide at COBYS can continue since they are currently deemed life-sustaining by the government, but it has not always been the case that what we do is deemed essential.

In 2015, Pennsylvania State government didn't pass its budget until nearly nine months after it was due. During those months, COBYS was not paid for many of the services we provided because the state considered us "non-essential." (I wrote about this in the Winter, 2015 edition of this newsletter. I am confident that most of you still have that edition at the ready and will refer back to it. Okay, I don't really think that. And since I am writing about this again, it is obvious that I still have significant issues with the state classifying what we do as "non-essential.")

I find it interesting that today, in the midst of the Coronavirus, COBYS is allowed to remain open because the state considers what we do "life-sustaining." So, if this crisis would happen beginning July 1 in a year when the budget doesn't pass, the state wouldn't pay us for many of our services because we are "non-essential," but we would be allowed to remain open because our business is "life-sustaining." I said it in 2015 and I will say it again, what we do is absolutely essential. And I will add that what we do is also "life-sustaining."

Just ask the kids who now have a safe place to sleep each night with our Resource Families. Ask the kids who now have a forever home through adoption. Ask the families who are learning positive ways of interacting with their kids. Ask our counseling clients who receive services that have brought them healing and peace in their lives. I'm confident all these people would say that what COBYS provides is essential and life-sustaining. I am also confident that each of you believes in the work COBYS is doing. We thank you for your continued commitment to our essential and life-sustaining services.

Mark Cunningham, Executive Director

**We
Need
You.**

While there is always a need for qualified resource families, with the county's current restricted access to cases, we anticipate a greater need than normal as restrictions are lifted. Please prayerfully consider for you and your family if foster care or foster care to adopt is right for you. Is It Time?

Is it time?
Foster Care/Adoption

Go to cobys.org/foster-care/types-of-resource-families/ for more information about becoming a resource family

Join Us: COBYS' Events

COBYS Family Fun Walk Is On! (with your help)

For the last 25 years, COBYS has hosted a **Family Fun Walk** in Harleysville, PA. We are blessed with strong support from folks in the region – some congregations and families have been participating every year! But with restrictions on gathering for events due to the coronavirus, we are canceling our "regular" **Family Fun Walk**.



However, with your help "The Walk" will go on. This year we are transforming the **Family Fun Walk** into the **"Walk Where You Are"**. As we are all following "Stay At Home" orders, one of our few reprieves is a walk through the neighborhood. COBYS invites you to continue to take those welcome chances-to-be-outside-for-fresh-air walks, and help COBYS at the same time.

Here's how it will work this year.

- Participants seek walk sponsors and record them on the sponsor sheet.
- Individual participants, families and youth groups also can access an online crowdfunding platform.
- Return the sponsor sheets to us, or finish your crowdfunding by May 3.
- Then, on or before May 3 we encourage all participants to go for a walk. Send us a photo of you on your journey and we'll post the photos.
- Since we also won't be able to enjoy ice cream and refreshments together as we usually do, we encourage you to have some at home and send us a photo to share with other participants.

Go to cobys.org/news-events for complete information and a link to the sponsor sheet and crowdfunding platform.

This regional "Walk" is open to everyone – especially this year when travel isn't necessary!

Save the Date!

**Sunday,
September 13,
Lititz Church of the
Brethren**

**COBYS 2020
BIKE
&
HIKE**

While we can't predict the future, we can begin to plan. With hopes that all our lives will be back to some semblance of normal by the fall, we are making plans for the 2020 edition of the COBYS Bike & Hike. Please save the date and stay tuned for more information throughout the summer.

The Faces of COBYS

How do you describe COBYS to people you meet?

Meredith Yoder, Family Life Educator

COBYS is a wonderful organization that is dedicated to helping families and children. I love that I get to play a small part in helping parents build their confidence in parenting skills, foster hope through educating how to have a strong and loving parent/child bond and celebrate with those parents when they find parenting tools and strategies that work in their home. COBYS helps positive transformations take place (some big and some small) in each participants' parenting journey.



Rosie Good, Therapist, Counseling

At COBYS, I feel valued, accepted, and encouraged to be the best individual I can be, which in turn, makes me a better employee. COBYS knows the organization is at its best when the employees are at their best. COBYS truly implements the nurturing environment it encourages so many families to develop. The employee-employer relationship is mutually beneficial, and I am grateful every day to be working in this environment.



How does COBYS make a difference?

Andy Gonzalez, Permanency Caseworker

COBYS shares Christ-centered compassion and practical support with families when they need it most.



2020

Celebrating 40 years

The COBYS anniversary year celebration continues as we remember our second decade.

The 90s—Expanding to Meet the Need

The 90s was a decade of activity, expansion and growth. Recognizing that COBYS serves people of all ages through a variety of programs, in May 1990 the organization's name was changed to COBYS Family Services, no longer an acronym of Church of the Brethren Youth Services.

In mid-1990, the board voted to purchase the "Old Mill" where COBYS had been renting space. Through the decade, counseling centers opened around the county, new programs and classes were launched and fundraising events were introduced.

Services shifted to meet the demands for the kind of care that best served the children and families in need of our services. A group home was purchased for the Boys Group home ministry, and remodeled by volunteers only to see that ministry end after almost a decade. In its place, a Teen Mother & Child Group Home was opened.

In 1997, COBYS was licensed as an adoption agency by the Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN), and that same year was named Pennsylvania Agency of the Year by the Pennsylvania Foster Parent Association.

The end of the decade saw the launch of the Family Nurturing Education and Support Program. The Reunification Program partnership (soon after renamed the Permanency Unit) with the Lancaster Children and Youth Social Services Agency was established.

Through the expansion and growth of the decade, COBYS provided more, targeted and adapted service to care for each child with the continuity of care as if they were our only child.



40 Years
compassion
dignity
hope



Growing Staff



Foster Care:
Pennsylvania
Agency
of the Year



Permanency Unit
opens



Teen Mother
& Child
Group Home



Foster
Families



Name change

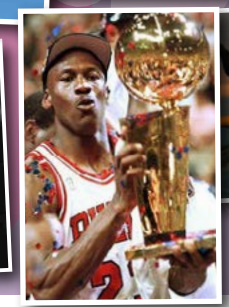
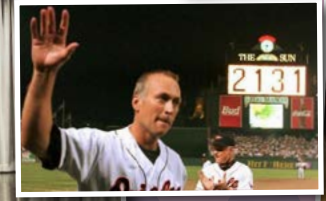
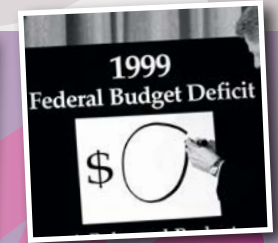


Fundraising:
Walks,
Banquets,
Wenger
Praise Dinner



In each issue of Fostering Hope in 2020 we will highlight milestones from one of the decades of our 40-year history. Next issue: Part 3: The 2000s.

The 90s





COBYS 2020 Banquet - Celebrating 40 Years



Executive Director Mark Cunningham instructs the audience on the proper way to settle dessert selection disputes.

COBYS recognized and honored Glen Faus, executive director from 1980-2001.



Photo by Mark Myers



Director of Development Anne Stokes reminds the audience that our phones will ring tomorrow with requests for services.

COBYS celebrated and honored Resource Parents Ann and Dennis Saylor who will be ending 32 years of foster care, having served 116 children.



Four decades, 40 years. That's a long time. On Thursday, March 12 we gathered as a community to look back on the evolution and journey of COBYS Family Services. After sharing fellowship and food (yes, it was the wonderfully tasty traditional Gene Wenger ham loaf), we explored highlights of our history with some heart-warming stories and payed tribute to some friends. Thank you to all who attended and contributed to COBYS for this milestone. Over \$58,000 was raised as we enter the 2020s.

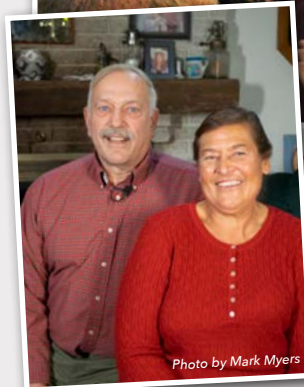


Photo by Mark Myers



Above: COBYS staff revealed the number of people served, unique interactions COBYS has performed with children, adults and families in 40 years - 61,564.



Mark Cunningham and Anne Stokes pose with a Letter of Commendation from County Commissioners Craig Lehman (l) and Ray D'Agostino (2nd from r) (top), a State Senate Citation with State Senator Scott Martin (r), (center), and a copy of remarks placed in the Congressional Record presented by a representative from U.S. Representative Lloyd Smucker (l, bottom).



Gathering music was performed by Peggy Grabowski at noon and Blake Hamilton in the evening.



A blessing was offered by COBYS Board Member Erin Bensing in the evening and Pete Kontra, district executive for the Church of the Brethren Atlantic Northeast District, at noon.

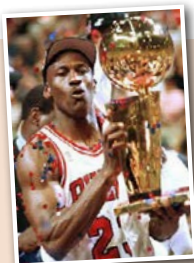


The Humble 80s Beginnings. Formed to meet the needs of at risk youth and families, COBYS spent the



decade learning, adapting and developing new programs aimed at helping children and families succeed. Teamwork and cooperation toward providing the best care were paramount.

Mary Sourber told the story of COBYS miraculous teamwork in action, placing six kids in foster homes in four hours - in her third week on the job!



Lori De Poto and Karen Rice share stories of the Boys Group Home and the Teen Mother & Child Group Home.

The Expanding to Meet the Need. 90s Activity, expansion and growth was the theme: a name change to COBYS Family Services; a new home office at the Old Mill; counseling centers opened; new programs and classes launched and fundraising events introduced. A Boys Group home ministry ran for a decade, then a Teen Mother & Child Group Home was opened.



The Depth of Services 00s Added. In partnership with the Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency, in 1999, the Permanency Unit was formed, and soon moved to its permanent home at 134 E. King Street. Later the county would ask that COBYS double the size of the unit to meet the growing needs of the county.

Krista Rankin recounts a Permanency Unit story of persistence and perseverance in permanently placing a long-fostered young man.



The Recommitting with Room to Grow. 10s As programs grew and strengthened, COBYS invested in personnel and facilities to meet the needs: 171 E. King



Street became the Family Life Center, and 444 Murry Hill Circle became home to Foster Care, Adoption and Family Life Education staff.

Abby Keiser shared a story of hard work, dedication and unselfish love as a biological father assumed custody of his daughter with help of therapy and the foster family.





COBYS Family Services
1417 Oregon Road
Leola, PA 17540

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*Celebrating
40 years*

THIS IS COBYS



Our new video!

Introduced at our annual banquet, our new video is available on YouTube. It is a video introduction to who we are, what we do, and most importantly, why we do what we do. Please enjoy, and share with your friends and family.

The video can be viewed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_H2u9xQWUU

To download and share with your congregation, please contact Doug May at doug@cobys.org.

