

## Child Preparation: Making Sense of Double Dip Feelings

**In child welfare, kids face many unknowns** and need special care and guidance to be prepared for their present and future. Kids want to know:

*When will I get to go home to my mom?*

*Will I ever get to go home?*

*Will I find a forever home?*

Since their understanding of the situation is greater, preparation is particularly important for older children in foster care. They need to process the reality of being adopted:

*Is it okay if I want to be adopted?*

*Does it mean I love my mom and dad any less?*

*Is it okay to be happy with my adoptive family?*

Sometimes there are clear answers, many times there are not. It is perfectly normal and acceptable for children and youth to experience what's referred to as "double dip" feelings; to be both happy and sad at the same time. Our caseworkers provide preparation services to the kids we serve in six-month segments. While there are similar patterns and duties to what our caseworkers do, providing child preparation is as unique as the child. Here are some examples:

### prepare

(pri-pair) verb:

to work out the details  
of: plan in advance;

to make ready  
beforehand;

to put in a proper  
state of mind.



#### ***Will I find a forever home?***

Sometimes, a foster home placement is not successful. A COBYS caseworker helps a child understand that they are not a failure even though a placement did not work. Caseworkers maintain hope right along with the child that a new match will be successful, lining up in-home and community visits with a potential forever family. Preparation services don't just happen during business hours. Care may be provided during an evening dinner or a weekend visit or activity.



#### ***Is it okay to be happy with my adoptive family?***

Caseworkers are not licensed therapists, but sometimes by being a consistent, trustworthy, adult presence, they are the right resource for teens to open up to. Lending a listening ear for adolescents and teens who don't want to talk with a therapist about their trauma is important. Healing can happen through discussion over a meal or coffee, through writing or reading.

## 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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Kathy Focht      Donna Parcell  
Kay Kulp          Merv Wampler  
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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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# 25 Years and Counting

I recently celebrated my 25th work anniversary at COBYS. That's a lot of years. One gets older in 25 years. I turned 57 years-old this past June. That isn't old, but it certainly isn't young. It may be younger than some, but it isn't young. I am starting to notice some things that give indication that I am getting older. Here are a few.



1. The snow I shovel gets a little heavier each year.
2. I count cutting the grass as exercise. It's a self-propelled walk behind, not a riding, but that still has to count for something.
3. I need to walk around a bit in the morning to loosen up my knees before going down the stairs.
4. My son and son-in-law can hit a golf ball further than I can. (I was going to include that I can still beat them both at golf some of the time, but I thought that would be bragging, so I decided not to include that.)
5. I look forward to reading my AARP magazine. (For those who are young, AARP stands for the American Association of Retired Persons. I am not retired, but I became a member a few years ago.)
6. I need to always have a pair of reading glasses with me.
7. I got an electric bike so I can keep up with my kids.
8. By the end of Friday, I feel very worn out.
9. I watch Jeopardy almost every evening. I record it and watch it later, but I still watch it.
10. I am saying "what?" a lot more than I used to.




A lot has changed for me as I age. And a lot has changed in my 25 years at COBYS. With each passing year, there are more and more issues and layers of complexity facing our clients. The reality is that biological parents face a myriad of challenges contributing to homelessness, addiction and other issues leading to their children being placed into foster care. The children we serve have suffered trauma and do throughout their time in foster care, sometimes from rules and processes designed to protect them. This is the reality of the climate within which COBYS operates doing difficult work. (See pages 5-6 for your invitation to our annual banquet where you can learn more about these realities).

Even with these changes, so much has stayed the same at COBYS.

- The dedication from our staff is the same.
- Our calling to serve is the same.
- The need for the support we receive from you is the same.
- And most importantly, the focus on providing services from a Christian perspective to many kids and families is the same.

With best wishes for a blessed new year,

**Mark Cunningham,**  
Executive Director



**Life is Sacred**  
**Integrity**  
**Faith**  
**Teamwork**  
**Servanthood**

Core Values:  
**LIFTS**

# COBYS Board of Director News

COBYS Family Services is happy to introduce three new members to our 2022 Board of Directors.



## Kelli Barber

Kelli Barber works at Clark Associates as a Financial Systems & Data Senior Manager. She enjoys hiking, traveling and spending time with friends and family. She attends Community Fellowship Church (CFC), volunteers with TNT Youth Ministry

in Lititz and serves on the Millersville Business Advisory Council.

Kelli is interested in serving as a COBYS Board Member because she appreciates, "the way COBYS truly cares for everyone involved in the process [of child welfare]. Not only do they serve the children well, but they also have programs for the biological, foster and adoptive families. Just as we are adopted as sons and daughters through Christ, COBYS

allows families to show the same love to others."

As she begins her service for COBYS, she is, "excited to serve on the board of such an intentional, passionate, Christ-centered, and people-focused organization. Although I am new, I can already tell that the staff and other board members are genuinely passionate about helping those in need, and I'm looking forward to serving in the same way."



## Kathy Focht

Kathy Focht is a retired public school administrator. As a member of Lancaster Church of the Brethren, she has held various roles on ministry teams and the church board, including as the current chairperson for the church's preschool board.

She also serves on the Parish Resource Center and Millersville University Alumni Boards and volunteers at Brethren Village. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her family, traveling with her husband, and reading.

Throughout her professional career, Kathy, "appreciated the services that COBYS provided for some of our children and families in crises. The experienced and professional

staff members I had the privilege to work with spoke volumes as to why COBYS has been such a strong community link for these children in need." She is looking forward to serving on the COBYS Board so that she can, "continue the long-established process of providing a supportive and safe environment for children and families."



## Donna Parcell

Retired after 30 years as a research scientist, Donna is now a full-time Grandma to two grandchildren with a third on the way, and a part-time photographer. She volunteers in a variety of leadership positions at her church, Indian Creek Church of the Brethren. These leadership roles include serving as a youth leader and Sunday school teacher for junior and senior high school youth for 20 years, leading Vacation Bible School, and leading

monthly Family Fun Nights. She also serves in the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren (ANE) in many roles, including as a youth advisor, helping to plan district activities such as a yearly retreat.

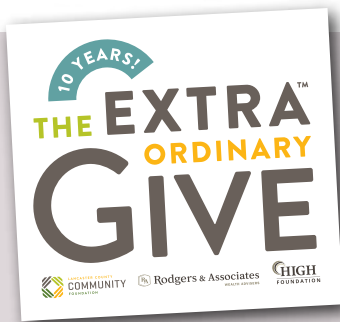
Donna volunteered in Nigeria following the 2014 Boko Haran insurgence, participated in a Nigeria workcamp and led a Fellowship Team to Nigeria.

Donna enjoys spending time with family and being outside. She has been an avid supporter of COBYS for many years through the Family Fun Walk that was previously held in Harleysville, Pennsylvania, encouraging her youth groups to participate and enjoying

friendly competition with Joan Kabakjian, Executive Director Mark Cunningham's sister, to raise the most money. She appreciates the work that COBYS does to provide safe and loving homes for children in need, and the passion and commitment of the staff. In her new role as Board Member, Donna is, "excited to learn more about COBYS from this new angle, and to work with people who have a passion for helping children. I think very highly of COBYS as an organization, and I am very impressed by their leadership. I am honored to serve alongside them and am eager to help in any way that I can."

## Why we do what we do.





## Extra Good ExtraGive 2021

We are so grateful to all our friends who helped us not only reach our goal of \$80,000, but to surpass it with over \$83,000 donated to COBYS Family Services on Friday, November 19 during Lancaster's Extraordinary Give, the 24-hour online giving event. That number will only rise when COBYS receives its portion of the over \$500,000 stretch pool funds which are made possible by the Lancaster County Community Foundation, Rodgers and Associates and the High Foundation, along with many other businesses, organizations and individual donors. The event raised a total of over 15.8 million dollars for over 500 non-profit organizations who are located in or serving Lancaster County.

Although we narrowly missed out on the Midnight Madness prize (awarded to the first 20 organizations to receive 50 unique donations during the opening hours of the event), we did receive \$100 as one of the organizations to get a donation during the Magic Minute at 11:19 am.

COBYS was honored to be a guest on *Smart Talk*, the conversational information radio program hosted by Scott LaMar on public radio station WITF, during their coverage of the Extraordinary Give. Executive Director Mark Cunningham and Adoption Coordinator Melanie Rankin shared the mission and details about the work we do at COBYS.

Another bright spot of the day was that **30 first-time donors gave to COBYS**, broadening our circle of care.

It is gratifying to know that so many people acknowledge and support the difficult work we do and the way we do it. We are proud of the wonderful, meaningful work our staff does daily and are humbled by your trust in us to continue that work.

## Designating Your Gift

You are likely one of our many supporters across the region who believes in the importance of our services. You believe in providing quality care with compassion, dignity and hope in a way that recognizes the uniqueness of each child, adult and family we serve. Throughout the year, our generous donors provide sustaining financial gifts in many ways ranging from yearly donations to special events and even donated items. What you might not know is that you have a choice in designating your monetary donations.

*As we begin 2022, it is a good time to provide a reminder of how you can designate a gift.*

**General Fund** – Giving to our General Fund provides COBYS with resources to use where needed most across the organization. The nature of our work in child welfare and human services means that our needs shift throughout the year, and having unrestricted funds allows us to operate an organization that responds to these shifting needs. All donations given through special events, like Bike & Hike, or that are not designated for another purpose, go to the General Fund.



**COBYS Care Fund** – We recognize that sometimes our supporters want to give to something tangible. Our COBYS Care Fund (formerly Care for Kids) allows you to do just that and supports the ways our staff go above and beyond to provide our clients with care to meet their unique needs. Donating to COBYS Care Fund supports:

- **Counseling** – We recognize the importance of mental health and strive to provide access to services to as many children and adults across our community as possible.
- **Enhanced Child Preparation Services** – Our highly trained caseworkers connect with children in the foster care system by providing child preparation services (see pg.1). Your gift helps enhance these interactions, it is the difference between meeting with a foster teen for just coffee or a full lunch, meeting with a young child in a park or going to play mini golf, or providing a small, occasional, "just right" gift to make a teen feel listened to at their regular meetings. These things change the interaction; a somewhat small change can make a profound difference.
- **Lessons, camps, educational opportunities and special life experiences for foster children** – Our resource families go above and beyond for kids in their care by getting them connected with these special educational and life opportunities, because they know it makes a difference in their lives. It is also expensive and often isn't covered by the modest county funds families receive. Your gift provides discretionary funds to support families and kids with these experiences.
- **Kids Closet** – When a toddler needs a winter coat in size 18 months and we don't have it in stock, we make the purchase. Kids are special and sometimes their clothing and personal care needs are special too.

For more detailed information about the COBYS Care Fund and the latest needs list for the Kids Closet, please visit [www.cobys.org/support-us/needs-list/](http://www.cobys.org/support-us/needs-list/).



## 2022 ANNUAL BANQUET

# FACING REALITY

*With hope for a brighter future.*

### Join Us!

Executive Director Mark Cunningham and Director of Development Anne Stokes invite you to join us for our annual banquet of good food and fellowship.

Thursday,  
**March 10,  
2022**

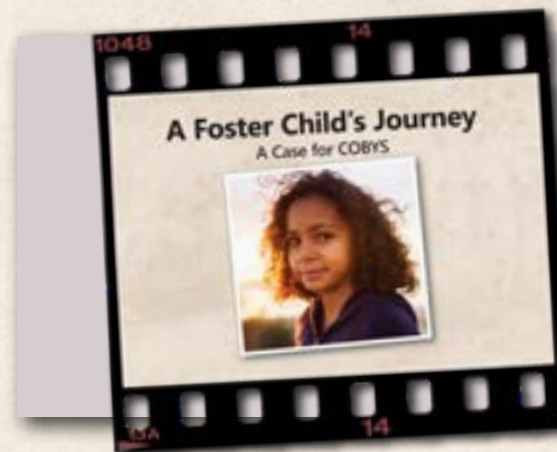
**6:00 p.m.**

(Doors open at 5:30 p.m.)

**Middle Creek Church**

351 Middle Creek Road, Lititz

*Banquet will also be livestreamed on the COBYS YouTube channel*



Airing at the banquet this year is a COBYS documentary based on a representational case to deepen understanding of the need for care and for generosity.

**Attendance at the banquet is by reservation only. Please return the response slip below or contact Rebekah Hamilton at 717-656-6580 ext.161 or [rebekah@cobys.org](mailto:rebekah@cobys.org) by Tuesday, March 1.** Seating is limited to 450 on a first-come, first-served basis. A table is considered reserved when payment is received. We welcome individuals, couples and friends who are not part of a complete table. Individual meals are valued at \$18.60 per person.

## COBYS 2022 Banquet Response Slip

Clip Here

To reserve your place, please complete and return this slip in the enclosed envelope no later than **Tuesday, March 1, 2022**, or contact **Rebekah Hamilton at 717-656-6580, ext. 161 or [rebekah@cobys.org](mailto:rebekah@cobys.org)**.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Your Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_ First time attendee?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

- I/We will attend the banquet as individuals and will donate as we feel led at the event.
- I/We have enclosed a minimum donation of \$325 to reserve a table for eight for the banquet. (list names on reverse side).
- I/We have enclosed a minimum donation of \$475 to reserve a table for 12 for the banquet. (list names on reverse side).

- I/We plan to watch the livestream** of the banquet and have enclosed a donation to support the ministries of COBYS.
  - I/We will not attend, but have enclosed a donation to support the ministries of COBYS.
  - I/We request a shuttle bus from Brethren Village.
- Make check payable to COBYS Family Services.

## A Foster Child's Journey

Behind each data point, unit of service, hour of therapy and class delivered, is a face and a case. Who are COBYS clients, the cases we receive? What exactly does COBYS do for them?

We serve a broad segment of society, but many COBYS clients receive services through county foster care and state adoption programs.

*Our documentary presents a representational case overview of the work done by the hearts and hands of COBYS staff as we walk with our clients through their realities and times of uncertainty.*



## Why you make a difference

Because of you, COBYS is able to provide care through our ministries that goes beyond the basics; caring for the person, not just the circumstance. With your partnership, we bridge the gaps in funding, providing service with a commitment to excellence, hope for a brighter future and a focus on the needs and God-given potential of every child, individual and family.

**We simply are not the same agency without you.**

### Reservations:

- **Call:** Rebekah Hamilton at 717-656-6580 ext.161
- **Email:** rebekah@cobys.org
- **Mail** the Banquet Response Slip

### Donations:

- **Online by Credit Card:** [www.cobys.org/donate](http://www.cobys.org/donate) Pick "Banquet" in Gift Designation
- **By Check/Mail:** Please use the handy return remittance envelope

### Menu:

- Mixed greens salad with hot bacon dressing
- Rolls
- Poppyseed Chicken
- Gene Wenger's Ham loaf
- Gourmet potatoes
- Mixed veggies
- Dessert
- Coffee/tea/water

**Inclement Weather Date:  
Friday, March 11**



BANQUET SPONSOR

*We hope you'll join our sponsor in support of COBYS.*

COBYS cares about your health and we ask that you not attend if you are feeling ill. We will keep COVID precautions in mind at the event and follow guidelines regarding cancellation decisions.

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.

List the name of each person you are registering (as it should appear on his/her name tag) or email: rebekah@cobys.org.

Guest #1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest #3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest #4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest #5 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest #6 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest #7 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest #8 \_\_\_\_\_

Guest #9 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest #10 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest #11 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest #12 \_\_\_\_\_

*Those who reserve tables will receive preferred seating. A table is considered reserved when payment is received. Names may be submitted with payment or anytime up until the **March 1** deadline. If plans change and you or any of your guests are unable to attend, please let us know so we can invite others. If you do not fill your table, we may assign others to vacant seats.*

Please let us know if you have any special seating needs: \_\_\_\_\_

## Child Preparation continued from pg. 1



**When will I get to go home to my mom?**

Guiding a child for years and through multiple rounds of preparation services, making sure her unique needs can best be met by any potential, permanent resource, being that child's advocate.



**Is it okay if I want to be adopted, does it mean I love my mom and dad any less?**

Celebrating with a 17-year-old as his adoption day is nearing after years of uncertainty with residential and family placements. The right match seemingly elusive until it finally comes together. Working through the complicated web of emotions that comes with connecting to biological parents and siblings while looking forward to a future adulthood with new, stable and forever support.



**Will I ever get to go home?**

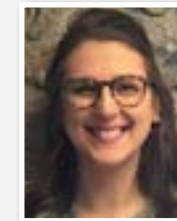
Celebrating Christmas with a child who is living in congregate care and literally has no one else in the world.

## The Faces of COBYS

*What is one difficult reality about the work we do that you would like people to know?*

**Ashley Naque, Adoption Caseworker**

*We provide six different units of service within our department: Child Preparation, Child Specific Recruitment, Child Profiles, Finalization, Post-Permanency and Family Approval Documents! We dig our hands into a little bit of everything.*



*What is one word you would use to describe COBYS culture and why?*

**Dejane Fells, Foster Care Caseworker**

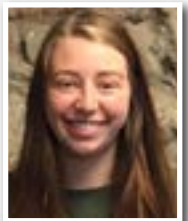
*One word I would use to describe COBYS culture is genuine, because I feel that everything COBYS does is from a good place and with a good heart.*



*What is one word you would use to describe COBYS culture and why?*

**Johanna Griswold, Resource Home Coordinator**

*Balanced – COBYS encourages their staff to strive to be their best professionally and provide ongoing training. COBYS also acknowledges that what their staff does can be challenging. A balance between professionalism and the mental health and wellbeing of their employees is maintained.*





COBYS Family Services  
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Leola, PA 17540

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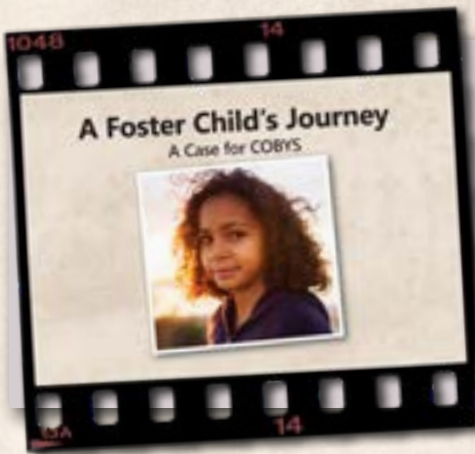
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**2022 Annual Banquet**

**FACING REALITY**

*With hope for a brighter future.*



Airing at the banquet this year is a COBYS documentary based on a representational case to deepen understanding of the need for care and for generosity.

**Thursday,  
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Or mail in the Banquet Response Slip on page 5**