

**The licensed foster care and adoption services as well as parenting programs of COBYS**

seek to provide the best possible resources for children in the child welfare system. These children often have complex needs which make finding placements and providing services a challenge. Data for years has shown that in-home care is the preferred and most effective care when it is available. Unfortunately, there aren't enough foster families to address the need, especially for children with the most complicated needs.

When a family becomes involved with the child welfare system, the primary goal in many cases is to address issues and needs that resulted in children being placed in care and allow for the children to return to their biological family. During the time of separation from their biological parents, temporary care is established for children. First a kinship family arrangement is sought. The next option is foster care with a non-kinship source, followed by therapeutic foster care setting and lastly, a residential treatment or broadly, congregate care placement.

Despite efforts by many agencies like COBYS and federal funding through the Family First Prevention Services Act aimed at providing care in a family-based setting, there are many times when no such options are available for some children, leaving congregate care as the only spot for them to live.



## Child Welfare

# Congregate Care Conundrum



Over the years, COBYS has had many instances when we are providing case management to kids in congregate care and several kids with very long stays in various congregate care settings.

**What does congregate care look like in the life of a child?**

**It looks like restrictions.** Most congregate care settings have very strict schedules for kids: set time for meals, snacks, therapy, quiet time, outdoor time, play time, etc. Some congregate care settings are more restrictive than others, depending on the facility and the population they work with.

**Kids in congregate care often do not attach to their caregivers.** There usually are several caregivers and they frequently change due to staff turnover. Depending on the age or background of the child, this can impact their ability to form healthy bonds. For others, it can be good because they are terrified of forming a bond with a caregiver.

**They don't have opportunities.** For example, the chance doesn't exist for them to just go to a friend's house or go out to an activity because they want to, the way they may be able to in a foster home setting.

**There often are a group of same-age kids, all with a history of trauma.**

This can lead to a situation where

## THE COBYS+ DIFFERENCE

### Care Fund Provides Hopeful Moments

*While working with a teen who was residing in a group home, I noticed his shoes appeared rather tattered. I thought about how tough it must be to go to school without a nice pair of shoes. I found a way to talk to him about shoes without directly addressing the state of his. I learned that he really wanted a new pair of shoes for school and needed a pair of shoes for wrestling. I reached out to the county to see what they could do. They said they could not get both but could get his wrestling shoes. I was then able to get him a pair of high-top Vans (which he was able to pick out for himself), using money from the COBYS Care Fund.*

Ashley Naque  
Senior Adoption Caseworker



*continued on page 7*

### 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

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 www.cobys.org

## Glass Half Full

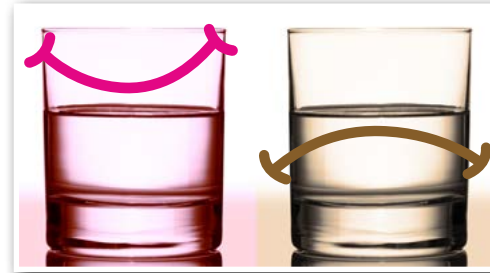
I have allergies. I didn't used to. I'm not exactly sure how that works, but it appears to be yet another disadvantage of "maturing." Some days are worse than others. And some parts of the days are worse than other parts of the days. But maybe I should phrase it the other way. Some days are better than others. And some parts of the days are better than the other parts of the day.



One of the things we do at COBYS is leadership training. About 35 leaders are invited to attend two trainings per year that I lead. These leaders are split into four groups to allow for more engaged conversation.

In the most recent training, we watched a short TED Talk given by Alison Ledgerwood, a social psychologist, then we discussed how her topic influences our lives and work. Alison talks about how we more easily get stuck in negative thoughts than positive. She says we need to continue to train our minds to think in the gain frame (glass is half full, some days are better than others) rather than a loss frame (glass is half empty, some days are worse than others).

This really isn't anything we as believers don't already know. Here is what Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians. "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."



I chose this leadership training because the work we do with kids and families is challenging. I know that because of what we do, we can't be "pie in the sky" thinkers all the time. There are challenging realities in all our lives.

But how can we not get stuck in the loss frame mentality? One suggestion Alison gave was to write down things you are thankful for. Studies have shown that engaging in this activity can improve one's outlook. It can actually change your mind.

So here are a few things I am thankful for. Colleagues who are making differences in the lives of kids and families. Donors who partner with us in the work we do. A wife and kids who bring me more joy than words can express. Friends to laugh with.

When reviewing that last paragraph, it's pretty easy to be in the gain frame. What are you thinking about today? What are you thankful for?

**Mark Cunningham,**  
 Executive Director

## Join Us for Mark's Retirement Celebration

**Thursday, October 19, 2023.**  
**at Lancaster Church of the Brethren**

Drop in to thank Mark and wish him well between 4:00-6:30 pm  
 Light food fare • Comments at 5:30 pm

*Details and chance to RSVP coming late summer.*

**COBYS 2023**  
**BIKE & HIKE**

**Sunday, September 10, 2023**  
 Lititz Church of the Brethren  
 300 West Orange Street, Lititz

**3-mile Walk**  
**10/25-mile Bicycle Ride**  
**65-mile Motorcycle Ride**

**PLUS, ENJOY THE Incredible Ice Cream Celebration**



### Mission & Ministries

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

COBYS carries out this mission by providing safe and loving homes for children through foster care and adoption services; helping children and adults overcome challenges through counseling; and leading family life education programs teaching skills and principles to parents, teens and children.

No matter how you participate, your partnership during the COBYS Bike & Hike helps make a positive difference in the lives of kids and families entrusted to our care.

**Learn more about us at [www.cobys.org](http://www.cobys.org).**

### MARK'S FAREWELL TOUR

**Help us celebrate Mark's journey to his last B&H before retiring.**



How will Mark Cunningham participate in his final B&H as executive director? Will he join in the motorcycle ride, or bike 10 or 25 miles? Or will he lead the walk through Lititz?

**Watch for COBYS summer videos to see what he decides.**

### Event Sponsors





# What to enjoy at the Bike & Hike

For our 27th Bike & Hike, we continue the time honored and appreciated bicycle and motorcycle rides and the walk through beautiful Lititz, PA. Despite last year's rain, we're going again with hopes for a bright, sunny comfortable September day. We are, of course, continuing the **Incredible Ice Cream Celebration!** Join us for fun, fellowship and a frosty treat.

## Join us on the day

**September 10, 2023**

From traditional group starts throughout the afternoon, to the **Incredible Ice Cream Celebration**, we'll gather to support and celebrate the ministries of COBYS.

### Schedule for the day:

#### Motorcycles (65-mile ride):

Registration..... 12:30 p.m.  
Ride begins..... 1:30 p.m.

#### Bicycle Riders and Walkers:

Registration begins ..... 1:30 p.m.

#### Bicycle (25 mile):

25-mile ride begins ..... 2:00 p.m.

#### Bicycle (10 mile) and Walkers:

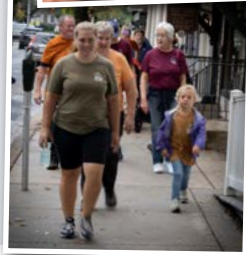
10-mile ride & Walk begin ..... 2:30 p.m.

#### Incredible Ice Cream Celebration:

When participants begin to return ..... around 3:15 p.m.



Registration and the starts of the rides and walk will take place in the front of the church (along Orange Street).



We continue with our improved ice cream bar with delicious Fox Meadows vanilla and/or chocolate ice cream and your choice of more toppings!

Ice cream will be served in the pavilion in the back of the church.

## Kick us off with a head start

# \$25,000 GOAL

### COBYS Bike & Hike Kickstart

- The Kickstart sets the foundation for our biggest fundraiser, getting you motivated to participate and excited to give.

- MARK'S FAREWELL TOUR:** In the weeks before the Bike & Hike, watch for videos of Mark Cunningham, executive director, as he ponders his participation at this year's event. Will he ride a motorcycle or bike? Will he walk? (We do know ice cream will be involved.) *Stay tuned.*

- Watch for emails, Facebook and Instagram posts for the videos and donate to the **COBYS Kickstart!**
- Choose **COBYS Kickstart** on the donation form (paper and online) to designate your donation.



### How It Works

**1 REGISTER:** Pre-Register online or by mail with a \$30 minimum donation or sponsorship.  
• \$5 early bird discount if you register before August 28.

• Registration is also available at the event on September 10.

• All donations \$20 and more will receive tax acknowledgment.

**Door prizes for all participants**  
**Raise more, earn thank you gifts**

**2 GATHER SPONSORSHIPS:** Expand your circle of giving – invite others to support you and COBYS.

• Create a fundraising page online.

• Collect donations – credit card online or by check.

• Submit sponsorship information and monies to COBYS at the Bike & Hike or mail to: 1417 Oregon Rd., Leola, PA 17540.

**Top Three fundraisers get Grand Prizes**

**3 ENJOY YOUR WALK OR RIDE:** We look forward to seeing you September 10 at Lititz Church of the Brethren.

For more details or to register/donate online visit [cobys.org/bike-and-hike](http://cobys.org/bike-and-hike).

If you have any questions please contact Steve Nichols at [steven@cobys.org](mailto:steven@cobys.org).

## 2023 Bike & Hike Sponsor Sheet

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

Circle One: Walk Bicycle Motorcycle

	Sponsor's Name	Sponsor's Complete Mailing Address	E-Mail Address	Phone No.	\$ Pledge	Pay Type	Received?
	Example: Joe Biker	1234 5th Ave., Lancaster, PA 17608	joebiker9876@aol.com	717-555-5555	\$500	Cash/Check	Yes/No
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							

Please provide complete information for all sponsors so we can collect pledges and send acknowledgments. Photocopy this form for additional sheets or print more from [www.cobys.org/bike-and-hike](http://www.cobys.org/bike-and-hike). A spreadsheet version is available online or create your own fundraising page online.

<b>Totals</b>	_____	_____	_____
	Submitted	Raised	Submitted

### 2023 Bike & Hike Pre-Registration Form

To pre-register, please complete this form and mail it with a check payable to: **COBYS Family Services, 1417 Oregon Road, Leola, PA 17540.** Or register at [www.cobys.org/bike-and-hike](http://www.cobys.org/bike-and-hike). You may deduct \$5 per person if you pre-register by August 28, 2023. Additional donations are also welcomed!

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Each participant: \$30 minimum donation/sponsorship.  
Family registration: \$100 minimum donation/sponsorships (for families of more than three individuals).

Number of Participants

Walker(s) ..... Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Dollar Amount

Bicyclist(s) ..... Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Motorcyclist(s) ..... Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Plus additional donation/ ..... Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Less \$5/person pre-reg. discount..... Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** ..... Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 1:  
Walk/ride.**  
**Step 2:  
Refresh**

# Incredible Ice Cream Celebration



What's better than ice cream? More ice cream, more toppings and friends and fellowship! COBYS is piling it on again when it comes to ice cream and toppings at the Bike & Hike as the **Incredible Ice Cream Celebration** continues! Create a delicious dairy dessert made with Fox Meadows vanilla and/or chocolate ice cream and your choice of toppings. What a great way to celebrate you and COBYS!

**Bike & Hike 2023 will be held rain or shine. Registration fees are non-refundable.**

## Fostering Hope

Look for our staff in the yellow shirts and say hello. Have a question about the care we provide for kids and families? Ask us. We are passionate about what we do and sharing the services we provide!



## Congregate Care

*continued from page 1*

they negatively feed off each other. Sometimes an increase in concerning behaviors is seen because the kids do not get along. These compounding negative behaviors make it even harder to find home settings to get kids out of congregate care. Kids have been "institutionalized" due to long stays in congregate care, moving from one placement to the next, unable to form healthy attachments with caregivers.

**One positive of congregate care is the access youth have to services.** Most settings have a therapist and psychiatrist on staff so there is easier access to those services when kids really need them.

**Why do children end up in congregate care?**

**It is typically a combination of their needs, their behaviors and the lack of a home setting** to meet those needs. Kids almost always do much better in a home setting but due to trauma-related behaviors and diagnosis we are unable to locate a foster home for some of them. These are difficult cases and the number of families willing and able to take on these challenges is a limited.

**One struggle being seen now** is that there are younger kids for whom a foster home cannot be found but they are too young for the group home. They are sent to the "shelter" side of a detention center as a last resort.

**For example,** a 10-year-old could be placed at the shelter when he/she absolutely would not need to be there if the only two group homes that accept a child that age hadn't both said "no" due to the child's previous behaviors. Those behaviors also prevent the possibility

## Care Fund Moments

*I was able to use the Care Fund again while working with a teen. As I was completing a round of Child Specific Recruiting (CSR), we needed to update his professional photos to use for matching/recruitment strategies. I worked with a Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) volunteer photographer. We were able to schedule a photoshoot for the teen's birthday so I could take him off campus for the day. We did the photoshoot at GoogleWorks Center for the Arts, got doughnuts at Benchwarmers, lunch at Say Cheese, and we even played a few games at the Works. The COBYS Care Fund made it possible for him to feel celebrated on his birthday.*

Ashley Naque  
Senior Adoption Caseworker

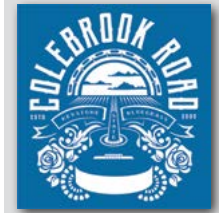
of finding a foster home willing to take them. That child winds up in a secure shelter when they really don't need to be there. You can see the downward cycle developing for the child.

**What is important to know about the role of congregate care in the child welfare system?**

**The answer is sometimes it's needed.** When kids' behaviors/needs are too high for a family to be willing to care for them, but not severe enough to meet the level of a residential treatment facility, the in-between is a group home, congregate care setting. The reality is that for some kids these placement settings are the only option left.

## Other Upcoming Events for 2023

**SUNDAY, SEPT. 24, 2023**



**Colebrook Road Concert**  
Stonebridge Farm, Lebanon, PA

Join us for an afternoon of foot-stompin' bluegrass music by **Colebrook Road** benefitting COBYS. Enjoy food trucks and family-friendly activities while listening to music at the home of Rachel and Mike Swank. Tickets are \$25 and will be available online starting July 15.

**THURSDAY, NOV. 9, 2023**

**Community Matters Live Podcast, Conversation**



**Location: TBD**

Come sit in on the live recording of the "2 Adoptive Mamas" podcast and interactive conversation. See how podcasts are made. Learn something new and join in the conversation about the importance of the whole community supporting foster care and adoption. <https://twoadoptivemamas.com/podcast/>

**FRIDAY, NOV. 17, 2023**



**Lancaster's ExtraGive**  
Online giving day

Show your support for COBYS and the work we do together during Lancaster's 24-hours of giving. The number of donors to COBYS that day determine our share of the Stretch Fund, so every donation helps. Plus, opportunities for additional prize categories take place all day. [ExtraGive.org](https://extragive.org)

### Event Sponsors



### Gold Sponsors



### Silver Sponsors



### Bronze Sponsors



**Supporting Sponsors: Garcia Garman & Shea, Spence Funeral, Thomas Erb & Sons**

**Special Thanks to Our Sponsors** for their generous funding in support of the mission of COBYS and our ministries. We encourage all participants to contact and patronize these businesses for products, service and solutions. **Missed out on sponsoring this year? Contact Anne Stokes at 717-656-6580 or [anne@cobys.org](mailto:anne@cobys.org) for information on business support opportunities for next year's events.**

## Top Needs List

1. **Summer Clothing** – t-shirts, sport shorts, leggings (for newborn – sizes 12-16 & teens)
2. **Summer Newborn Sleepers**
3. **Underwear and Socks**
4. **Diapers** (sizes newborn, 1, 4, 5, 6 & 7)
5. **Check Our Amazon Wishlist**



We are grateful to individuals, families and churches who help "stock the closet" with supplies for our foster and adoption children.



COBYS Family Services  
1417 Oregon Road  
Leola, PA 17540

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Lancaster, PA

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Become our fan on  
Facebook and Instagram

### A Look Inside

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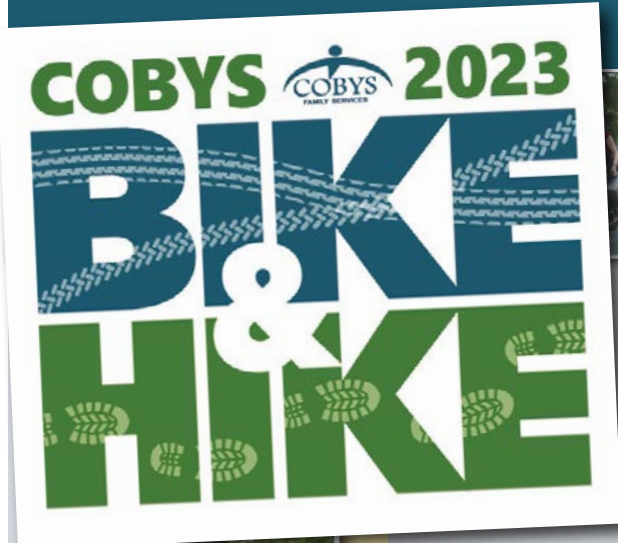


## Walk or Ride AND

## Eat Ice Cream!

September 10, 2023  
Lititz Church of the Brethren

### Registration is open!



- 65-mile country-side motorcycle ride
- 10 & 25-mile bicycle rides
- Three-mile walk



**Incredible  
Ice Cream  
Celebration**



Help us celebrate Mark's  
last B&H before retiring.  
Watch for email on how.

Sunday,  
September 10, 2023  
Lititz Church of the Brethren



[cobys.org/bike-and-hike](http://cobys.org/bike-and-hike)