



## *Fiscal Year 2015*



### From the President and CEO

This has been an exceptionally busy year with both strategically planned and unanticipated opportunities for growth. Over the past two years we had worked diligently on the design and construction of our new administrative building, and we were fortunate to move into this facility in May 2015. Also included in the building are offices for our North Central Foster and Adoption Services and condominium ownership space for Intrada Technologies, our IT contractor for the past 15 years. In addition, an opportunity presented to acquire a house and property contiguous with our campus in Muncy, PA, and this fit perfectly with our planning for a Transitional Living group home for residents aged 17 to 21. That program had full capacity within a month or two of opening and has allowed us to operate a new type of group home that offers services to this age of youth who are now supported by the Department of Human Services beyond age 18. We have future plans to add similar group homes around the commonwealth. An unplanned opportunity was the acquisition of an existing child day care program operated in a church in Muncy, PA. The previous operators decided to close this facility as they experienced losses. This would have terminated employment for the employees and required parents to find alternative day care options for their children. Although new to us, this provided the opportunity for our agency to expand into the child day care business, which is in keeping with our mission. We are currently working to increase our licensed capacity to provide greater services to our community. We also worked closely with Erie County Office of Children and Youth in developing a program to manage their foster and respite resource parents. This resulted in the opening of a new office in Erie. While all of this development was occurring, it was time once again to work toward our four-year re-accreditation with the Council on Accreditation, and we achieved the highest levels of professional practice with accreditation in April 2015. Our agency is blessed in that the harder we try to achieve, the more our staff rise to the occasion. We are looking forward to an equally busy new year!

*Thomas A. Neuhard*



### Who Are The Children We Serve?

#### Gender

Foster Care: 49% Female 51% Male

#### Age of Foster Children:

7% less than 1 year old

39% age 1 to 5 years old

30% age 6 to 10 years old

12% age 11 to 15 years old

9% age 16 to 18 years old

3% age 18 and older

#### Referrals for Children

Foster Care: Increased 21%

Residential Service: Increased 23%

Receiving referrals for 1,854 children.

#### Placements for Children

Foster Care: increased 1%

Residential Care: decreased by 30%

Placing a total of 385 children.

#### Common Reasons for Non Placements

No home for Sibling Groups

No home due to the age of the child

Residential facility is full when referred

#### Reason Children Enter Care

Drug and Alcohol Issues of Parents

Failure Previous Placement

Alleged Abuse of child

#### Adoption Services

Increased 2%

Completing 635 units of service

#### Domestic Adoption Services

3 Adoptions & served 93 families

# Program Highlights

## FUN Academy

This past year FUN acquired a day care center in Muncy PA in March of 2015. The Center is currently at capacity, with a waiting list for infant care. In December we were approved for the PA Department of Education Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Many of the staff are applying for continuing education programs through either an Associate's degree or Child Development Associate certification. The higher education credits will allow the Center to advance to the next level of the Keystone STARS program which evaluates child care centers on a 4-star rating system with standards to improve quality of care. We are currently working with Muncy Township Supervisors and the Lycoming County Planning & community Development to secure zoning approval for a larger facility to be built on Ashler Manor campus in Muncy. The new building will be licensed for 150 children and will combine intergenerational care with 35 elder day care clients.



## Foster Care & Kinship

Our five foster care offices across the state continue to stay busy placing children who enter the foster care system. We strive to ensure safety for children and work towards meeting their permanency goal, whether it is to reunify with a family member, prepare for independent living, or identify an adoptive home. In addition, we are seeing an increase of work with kinship families as counties attempt to keep children in familiar environments. We have continued to enhance our family engagement efforts in an attempt to support the family and strengthen the chances of a successful reunification, in cases where that is the goal. All of our staff and resource families have been trained on the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting standards that went into effect in Pennsylvania at the end of December 2015, which gives resource families more freedom in making decisions for children in their care. This will hopefully give foster children more opportunities to participate in typical age appropriate activities and promote an increased sense of "normalcy" for children in care. We are always in need of individuals or families who would be able to open their home to sibling groups and older children.

## Accreditation

### We Are a COA and Hague Accredited Agency

Families United Network, Inc. is proud to be among a select group of social service organizations accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA) for our Foster Care, Adoption and Residential Programs and The Hague convention for our International Adoption Services.

Our site visit was held this past May and we received full renewal accreditation valid until 2019. To learn more about COA and Hague, visit [www.COAnet.org](http://www.COAnet.org).

## SWAN



Families United Network, Inc. continues to grow in our permanency work through SWAN.

We received a high volume of referrals during the 2014-2015 fiscal year, managing up to as many as 414 referrals at a time, from a large number of counties across the state. Families United Network, Inc. has made matching work a focus area for growth. In September 2014, we created one full time Matching Specialist position to cover our Mount Joy and South Central offices. Our full time Permanency Specialists continue to cover the matching responsibilities in the remaining offices. The Matching Specialist works with families who are specifically searching for an adoptive child from the foster care system to identify potential matches, and to provide ongoing support and training to those families. The creation of this position was intended to be able to know our waiting families more intimately, enhance communication between the families and the case workers of waiting children, and to provide ongoing support through the adoption, in order to make the most successful matches. Since the creation of this position, three families from these two offices have been matched, and three more families are doing pre-placement visits with identified children with a plan of a future placement date. It is hoped that with the success of this position, it will expand to cover our other foster care/adoption offices.

## Arborvale

Arborvale Manor is our community based Life Readiness Program for adolescent males ages 15 to 20. Our goal is to help guide young men through the difficult process of being in care and the extraordinarily difficult process of preparing themselves to leave care. Most of the young men we serve will have to make the transition to supporting and providing entirely for themselves within the near future. While this is an enormous challenge for any young adult, we have had some exciting results and experiences. One of our main goals is to connect our clients to the community in various ways to help them develop diverse skills and interests as young adults. We are experiencing an exciting time right now as all of our clients in the program are employed within the community. Learning job skills and having the opportunity to work in the community and gain the confidence of successfully completing a job in exchange for a paycheck are extremely valuable life experiences that are essential in our client's development and gaining their independence.



We have also had the opportunity to connect with a local church where many of our clients attend services weekly. The church leadership and congregation have been tremendously supportive of our clients and our program. In addition, the church pastor is visiting our clients weekly for bible study group right here at our program. This year we have also had the opportunity for many new and exciting recreational opportunities including a trip to Hershey Park, Washington D.C., The Renaissance Fair, hiking and kayaking. Our parents have gotten involved as well. The mother of one of our young men has found great joy in spending time with all of our residence, teaching cooking skills, listening and offering motherly advice. While our clients are working hard to develop into successful young men, we are relentlessly working towards improving our services by identifying more supports, new opportunities, increased experiential learning, and improved facilities. We are dedicated to our mission of demonstrating to our clients that their worth is truly significant to us and we are here to invest in them!



## Transitional Living Program at Ashler Manor

Families United Network was excited to introduce the opening of the Transitional Living Program in January of 2015.

In its first year, the program welcomed girls that were considered to be on their way to independent living. In the Transitional Living Program, the residents are required to manage their own bank accounts, pay bills monthly, and learn budgeting.

The girls are also expected to practice household responsibilities and be able to navigate through the community independently. Residents are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities. A few of the residents are on the cheerleading squad and the softball team.

The program has seen other achievements with two of the girls attaining their drivers' licenses and purchasing their own vehicles. One of the residents has already successfully moved out of the program and into an apartment of her own. She also attends college locally while maintaining a job. The Transitional Living Program helped her fill out rental applications, visit various options, create a budget, and educate her about the process.

The girls are establishing themselves in the community and beginning to show success. The agency is excited about the program's accomplishments and is seeking the development of more Transitional Living Programs in the future. Future locations may include Lancaster, York, and Westmoreland County.

# New News

## Water Rescue at the Ashler Manor Campus

On March 11, Morton Neely, the Residential Services Director of Ashler Manor and Jordan Homet, the Executive Chef at Ashler Manor both risked their lives to save two girls that had runaway. The girls had crossed the ice on the Susquehanna River bank and hoped to swim across. Mort and Jordan noticed the girls running toward the river and soon followed after. They managed to get both girls out of the river in their heroic efforts. They were nominated as Williamsport Sun-Gazette's person of the year finalists. Jeff Wheeland, the State Representative for the 83rd Legislative District in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, also commended them on their heroic actions. Chris McKibben, Muncy Township Fire Chief, stated "If the two men never saw the girls take off and if the men did not intervene, the girls were going to die. There is no way they would have survived in that water. I feel they would have been quickly swept downstream and under the ice." Families United Network is proud of both Mort and Jordan for going above and beyond any expectation. They risked their lives to save those of their clients.

## Resource Family Management Program New in Erie

On April 21, 2015, the Erie County Office of Children and Youth awarded Families United Network an exclusive contract to manage resource family homes for foster child placements from that agency. The decision followed a competitive and rigorous proposal and interview process that spanned a period of three months. The new venture goes by the title Resource Family Management Program and operates out of our new North West office in Erie. The staff there are responsible for assessment, approval and ongoing management of a system of foster homes serving Erie County. Our agency is the primary private agency offering foster family management for Erie County. As this fiscal year ended in June, administrative staff were meeting with county representatives to plan the transition of approximately 50 Erie County licensed resource homes to our system. Staff recruitment and program design were also in full swing. It is an honor for Families United Network to collaborate with Erie County Office of Children and Youth in this exiting project.



**Our Mission**  
*Families United Network, Inc. is dedicated to strengthening families by providing children and youth with a safe, nurturing, community environment through a continuum of services, which focuses on reunification*



## Staff to the Recue

Melissa, from our North West Office, recently received a nomination by the Red Cross for the Lifesaving Award for her heroic actions while at CPR/First Aid Training earlier this month. Melissa Brooks arrived to her CPR/First Aid training early and was having a conversation with the instructor when suddenly, the instructor went into cardiac arrest. Melissa had to administer CPR, while another student called 911 and searched for the AED machine. EMT's arrived and used the AED machine. The instructor was rushed to the hospital and received medical assistance. Melissa's hope is that by hearing her story that others will have the courage to act as she did for someone else in time of an emergency. Melissa is truly a hero and we are glad she is a part of our FUN family.

## Private Adoption

This past year has been a very exciting year for the agency's domestic adoption program. This past year the agency completed 3 domestic adoptions, 29 home studies for families adopting both domestically, and internationally, and 56 post placement reports.

The agency continues to offer services to expectant mothers in the state of Pennsylvania. We offer pre-birth counseling to assist families with a birth plan. A worker is available at a moment's notice in order to provide the best care for our families. A social worker is assigned to work with the expectant mother, and a different worker is assigned to work with the pre adoptive family if a match is made. We provide services at the time of delivery at the hospital in all situations.

In addition to our own Domestic Program, the staff here at Families United Network Inc. is also able to continue to offer home study services to families adopting both internationally and domestically through out of state agencies. This is the largest aspect of our service and we are able to cover family referrals throughout the entire state of Pennsylvania.

Last, our agency is able to offer contracted services with other domestic agencies in need of staff located in Pennsylvania to offer birth parent counseling and more. We ask that you consider referring families to our agency if the need arises, and we promise to provide them with exceptional services.

Below is a photo of a loving family who was matched with a birth mother the day after the child was born at Geisinger Medical Center. The happy family has since returned home from the hospital and enjoying watching their new child grow and develop.



## Array of Services

Families United Network, Inc. continues to offer an array of services to families, children, social service agencies, and more. Our services include:

- Foster Care:
- Kinship Care:
- Medical Fragile Foster Care:
- Respite Care:
- Intensive Assessment Foster Care:
- Urgent Foster Care:
- Mother Baby Foster Care Placements:
- Transitional Living Foster Care
- SWAN Services
- Foster Adoptions
- Residential Group Home Services
- Life Readiness Services
- Shelter Services
- Drug and Alcohol Testing
- Domestic Adoption Services
- Home Study Services
- Expectant and Birth Parent Counseling
- Resource Family Management
- Emergency Assessments
- Child Day Care
- Family Group Decision Making
- Family Preservation and Reunifications Services

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## Board of Directors



### Families United Network, Inc. Board of Directors

#### Ashler Manor Advisory Board

Chris Smith, Woody Shaner, & Paula Miller

#### Foster Care & Adoption Program Offices

##### South Central

2 Market Plaza Way  
Suite 4  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

##### North Central

33 Ashler Manor Drive  
Muncy, PA 17756

##### Scranton

1006 Pittston Avenue  
Suite 200  
Scranton, PA 18505

##### Western Office

One Rodi Plaza  
655 Rodi Road,  
Suite 300  
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

##### Mount Joy

412 South Angle Street  
Mount Joy, PA 17552

##### Administrative Office

276 Ashler Manor Drive  
Muncy, PA 17756

##### Harrisburg

2090 Linglestown Road  
Harrisburg, PA 17110

##### North Western

3939 West Ridge Road  
Erie, PA 16505

#### Residential Programs

##### Arborvale Manor

2016 Millersville Pike  
Lancaster, PA 17603

##### Ashler Manor

276 Ashler Manor Drive  
Muncy, PA 17756

##### F.U.N. Academy

77 Musser Lane  
Muncy, PA 17756

Visit us Online@  
[www.families4kids.org](http://www.families4kids.org)

Let us know how we are doing!  
Please take less than a minute  
to give us your comments  
on our Feedback Survey.



*Referrals and placements have remained consistent, in the foster care programs, and the residential programs have been at full capacity.*

*Clients leaving foster care achieve permanency by 60%, and clients leaving the residential program complete the program by 71%.*



2016 Member Agency

