Children’s Aid Society will recognize staff for their years of service on May 27th. I feel blessed to work beside these staff every day. This is not just a job to them. They are committed to the children, parents and families they serve. Each of them would do anything they could to improve their quality of life.

Please join with me in congratulating and thanking them for all they do for Children’s Aid Society. Monica Smal: 31 years \ Janet Bisco: 29 years \ Rhonda Carley: 24 years \ Lynda Saggese & Nancy Stone: 22 years \ Bonnie Florio: 21 years \ Teresa Guaglianone: 19 years \ Carole Posansky: 14 years \ Amanda Clark, Tara Lansberry & Missy Sloppy: 13 years \ Shannon Kelly: 11 years \ Jim Mattern, Christina Woodel & Tammy Young: 8 years \ Jasmine Klett & Joyce Stubbis: 7 years \ Brittany Blackburn & Jennifer Teats: 6 years \ Lisa Buchwitz, Sarah Hale, Danielle McKnight, Stefanie Richtsche & Marsha Shimmel: 4 years \ Cortney Hildebrand & Colleen Rumsey: 3 years \ Danielle Boyles, Megan Fannin, Bethany Folmar, Brittany Graham, Krista Kolesar, Jordan Luzier, Taylor Park & Caitlin Turner: 2 years \ Cindy Babcock, Lori Baronak, Valerie Beers, Rhonda Dressler, Rachel Dunlap, Sherry Hess, John Jacob, Dan Kennard, Jessica Kling, Jessika Mann, Mandy McCracken, Harry Myers, Alyssa Palmer, Timothy Pleacher, Aleah Schwiderske, Jynell Smeal, Tracy Thack, Veronica Wendel & Kate Wood: 1 year \ Kayla Curry: 3 months \ Caitlin Anderson: 2 months

Thank you to the Glenn and Ruth Mengele Foundation and Brad & Lynnanne Baumgardner for making our sidewalk paving project a reality!

Make it Through, a Second Time Around
Bonnie Flora - Executive Director

Being in the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic and spending weeks overlooking an empty playground from my office window turned into a time of reflection for me on the long history of Children’s Aid Society. My office closet contains hidden treasures – books of handwritten minutes dating back to 1891. Knowing of the role our agency played in another pandemic, I found this entry from October 1918 -“Special Executive Meeting was held at Mrs. Biddle’s as the regular monthly meeting had been omitted because of the Flu. Plans for moving into the new home were discussed. It was unanimously voted to postpone moving until spring”. During the previous meetings, the members talked about touring the wonderful new Children’s Home and making plans for furnishing the home as they prepared to open it up to for children. The opening was delayed as we became an emergency site to house patients during the devastating Spanish Flu outbreak. Despite disappointments and setbacks, and dealing with the Board of Health to get the building back into its original condition following its use as a hospital, the agency continued its work and carried on, eventually opening the home to children the next year. There is hope in this history – things may be postponed, but we will once again make it through.

National Foster Care Month
Krista Elensky - Foster Care Program Manager

In May, we get to celebrate National Foster Care Month! Each and every day we strive to be an agency that is able to help all children in need of a loving and caring home. During this month, we would like to send our appreciation to the families that are currently working with children and also want to reach out to families that may be looking for more information about becoming foster parents themselves. Our agency is looking to expand to families that are able to work with all children, but families that are willing to take in older youth are especially needed. To help celebrate, we have compiled a list of tips for new foster parents to help them get through the initial transition.

Rally the troops and get your support system ready.

Being a foster parent isn’t easy. When they say it takes a village they weren’t kidding. Make sure you have prepared yourself and your supports for the incoming kiddos that could be coming your way!

Brush up on your technology skills.

Kids are smart! Make sure you do your research on the new apps and schooling techniques that kids are using. You will also want to look into parental controls for your devices.

Know what you can handle.

There are plenty of times when your caseworker might call to talk to you about a possible placement that does not really fit your ideal fostering situation. Know what you can handle and what would just be too much. Don’t be afraid to pass on a situation that you aren’t comfortable in.

Stick to a routine.

Like all children, kids that are in foster care do best with structure. Make sure that you make a daily routine that you follow pretty closely. Knowing what your next step is each day, can make a world of a difference.

Don’t be afraid to show some love.

For some children, being in foster care is brand new and they aren’t going to be accepting of new things. Being able to show the kids that you care about them and won’t give up on them is the key to a successful placement. Sometimes it is as simple telling them you care and other times it is showing them you care through your actions multiple times. Don’t be afraid to work with kids on basic emotions and how to handle feelings appropriately.
Coronavirus has changed and will continue to change the way that our health interacts and operates. The closure of many businesses, including our childcare, was a blow to our small community. It is heartening to know that everything is different right now, and that we are working on our own reflection, one thing that really stood out is what we do on a daily basis in our childcare to prevent the mass spread of illnesses. Granted, in close quarters and group settings, illnesses do spread quickly; however, we have many measures in place that limit and stop the spread of illness and disease.

Every child is given a hand wash with us clearance from a physician to be in the group setting. Next, we ask that ill children be kept at home or have alternate care when recovering from reentering our group. We do know that some families have a hard time with this rule, so we have other means to cut the spread of unwanted germs. We wash our hands and the children’s hands all the time: after eating, before and after meals, after using the restroom or changing each diaper, before and after water/sand play, after any messy crafts or play, after outdoor play, after handling body fluids, and any other time we need to remove germs. That is a lot! We also have fresh sanitizer and disinfectant made daily for each classroom. Staff clean with soap and water and then must either sanitize or disinfect. Sanitizer is used for any mouthed toys, sanitizing surfaces after sneezes and sneezers, cleaning tables, and other general sanitizing in the classroom. The disinfectant is used on restroom surfaces, handles, and after every diaper change. We also teach children about personal space. With this also comes teaching about coughing and sneezing and keeping your hands to yourself.

Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP)

Are you raising your grandchild or the child of a relative? You’re not alone. Grandparent-headed households are the fastest growing type of family in the United States with more than 6 million children nationwide living in a household headed by their grandparents or other relatives. If you are raising a child from your extended family in your home, you are doing an important and challenging job. Fortunately, you don’t have to do it alone. Children’s Aid Society has the Relatives As Parents Program, also known as RAPP, to provide support to grandparents and other relatives care providers can share their struggles, successes and backings of parenting a second time around; learn, receive and provide support to and from families similar to theirs; and gather information about available community resources.

Support group meets the third Monday of every month at 6 p.m. at Children’s Aid Society. Child care is available and a light dinner is provided.

If you are or know of any grandparents or relative caregivers that could benefit from RAPP, please contact Children’s Aid Society at (814) 765-2686 ext. 204 or rapp@childsaid.org.