

OUR CHALLENGES BRING BLESSINGS...

Bonnie Floro, Executive Director

Approaching the close of another year is a good time for all of us to reflect on our struggles and our accomplishments. As the executive director, I get very busy each December - projecting end-of-year finances, tallying people served, evaluating program effectiveness, and most importantly - looking back on all of the good (and not so good) things that happened throughout the year.

2021 brought numerous challenges and countless blessings to Children's Aid Society. Along with the rest of the world, we had difficulty recruiting and retaining staff. Through this struggle, we focused on appreciation, flexibility and improving benefits. We ended up with many quality employees joining our organization and managed to retain our most dedicated staff.

The close of a state prevention grant brought uncertainty regarding our Triple P – Positive Parenting Program, but we were able to sustain Triple P in Centre, Jefferson, and Clearfield Counties with vital county support. We decided to end our after-school Child Care program at Clearfield Elementary due to staffing shortages, but we devised a plan to serve those children at our Center. We also celebrated completion of the first year of our fourth federally-funded relationship education project – *Together*. Couple recruitment was challenging, but we met our target goals just in time. The need for Adoption and Foster Care services increased this year along with staff caseloads, but our strong team persevered and made it through.

With the resurgence of COVID-19 it was difficult to plan ahead for staff and board meetings, but Zoom and Microsoft Teams kept us all connected and greatly improved our technology skills.

As for the long-term forecast, I predict 2022 to be both a transformation of our programming and transition back to a familiar way of serving families. I for one, count myself among those who are fortunate to work at a place I love, one that faces challenges head on, and one that really makes a difference in the lives of children and families.

FAMILIES AND FOSTER CARE

Jennifer Teats, Foster Care Program Manager

It is that time of year again when most people begin thinking of spending time with their families. However, for the 13,000 -15,000 children in foster care across Pennsylvania, their holidays may look a little different this year. They may not be able to spend time with their birthparents, their siblings, or other close family members. They may not be able to participate in traditions (i.e. of opening a present on Christmas Eve) as in the past years. In contrast, some children may come from homes where there was no celebration of the holidays. There was no Thanksgiving dinner, no Christmas presents or tree, no holiday joy or love and no hope. For children in foster care, being part of a new family may mean participating in new traditions and making new memories and experiencing the joy and magic of the holidays for the first time. Some foster children may struggle to accept the foster family's traditions, while others may readily accept them. Either way, foster families have the ability to give each child that comes into their home a safe, warm, and loving environment and the opportunity to engage in new traditions and make new memories that could last them a lifetime.

Children's Aid Society has been fortunate this year to increase the number of families who are willing to foster and even offer permanency to children/youth who are in need. Many of those families have found themselves taking in children/youth shortly after approval due to the ever-increasing need for foster families. Unfortunately, the predictions are that the need for foster families will continue to increase in the upcoming year. If you have ever considered becoming a foster parent, there is no better time than now to take that first step in opening your heart and home to a child in need. If you are interested in learning more about becoming a foster family, please contact the Foster Care Program Manager at (814) 765-2686 ext. 249 or fostercare@childaid.org.

"There are no unwanted children, just unfound families"

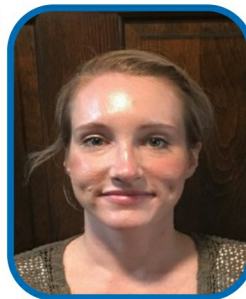
MEET OUR ADOPTION TEAM!

◆ Shannon Kelly - Adoption Manager

All across the United States, there is a shortage of employees in all sectors. Businesses and agencies are feeling the effects throughout Pennsylvania and our own county. Within the Adoption Program of Children's Aid Society, we have been fortunate and blessed to have an amazing, dedicated group of women who are passionate about serving the children, youth and families in our program. Please meet our team!



Shannon Kelly is the Adoption Program Manager. She has been with Children's Aid Society for over 12 years, serving as the program manager for many of the Agency's programs. Shannon began as the Adoption Program Manager in 2016 and has been dedicated to the program's success and children, youth, and families served since then.



Brandi Billotte, Permanency Worker, has been with the Agency since 2020. Brandi's positive energy, attention to detail, and excellent writing skills are some of her many talents that are much appreciated within the team. Brandi has had the opportunity to provide many of our Adoption services since she began, but has excelled at completing Child Profiles, Family Profiles and Finalization services.

Brittany Blackburn, Permanency Worker, has been with the Agency since 2011. She worked within the relationship education programs for many years, but joined the Adoption team in 2019. Brittany is caring, professional and develops a wonderful rapport with children, youth, and families.



Korynn Gallaher, Permanency Worker, began in early 2021. Korynn has previous experience working with children, and her love for children is evident as she works with them through the Adoption Program. Korynn is creative, fun and a very valued member of our team.



Kate Wood, Permanency Worker, began her time with the Adoption Program in 2019 as well. Kate excels at working with youth through our Child Preparation and Child Specific Recruitment (CSR) services. She provides a safe, non-judgmental space for youth to participate in services and uses her creativity to individualize services and engage youth.



Ashley Kelly and Cailyn Leskovansky, Permanency Workers, are our newest additions to the team. They began with the Agency in August 2021. Both have already shown their passion and dedication to all that our program does for children, youth, and families. They are both fantastic additions to the program.



Taylor Park, Permanency Worker, joined the Adoption team from our Child Care Center in 2020. Taylor's bubbly, happy personality and experience working with children makes her a great asset to the team and the children that she works with through many of our Adoption services.



Last but by far not least is Amanda Clark, our program Administrative Assistant. Amanda's caring, positive personality, and her desire to support and help the Permanency Workers and Adoption Program in any way shines through each and every day!



There are several ways to help Children's Aid Society serve children and families

- You may donate to a specific program, remember us in your will, or decide to offer an annual gift.
- Consider making a donation through the Clearfield County Charitable Foundation. Call (814) 765-7682 or visit www.clearfieldcharitablefoundation.org for more information.
- Businesses can donate through the EITC tax credit program by calling 1-866-466-3972.

- ☐ I have enclosed _____ to assist in Covid-19 related expenses
- ☐ I have enclosed \$1,000 as a one-time Youth Mentoring match sponsor
- ☐ I would like to sponsor a Youth Mentoring match annually
- ☐ I have enclosed _____ as a one-time gift
- ☐ Please contact me about naming Children's Aid Society in my will
- ☐ I would like the funds to specifically benefit the _____ program
- ☐ I would like more information on volunteering

Name: _____

Address: _____

Mail to: Children's Aid Society
1008 South Second Street | Clearfield, PA 16830

The official registration and financial information of Children's Aid Society in Clearfield County may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999.

You can also donate online at www.childaid.org

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

◆ *Kara McGary - Family Support Services Manager*

Family Support Services (FSS) has gone through a lot of different changes over the last few months. Kara McGary has been named as the new program manager. Kara comes to Children's Aid Society from many years of experience in the mental and behavioral health field. She will continue to deliver support to Parents as Teachers, Triple P, In-Home Services, and Nurturing programs.



We would also like to introduce new staff, Alora McGovern. She is a recent Penn State graduate eager to help families within the community. Alora will be working with the Parents as Teachers, In-Home services, Triple P, and Nurturing services. She has been a wonderful addition to our programs.

Missy Sloppy is also new to FSS. She comes to us from Adoption and has been a wonderful asset to the program as she will go above and beyond to serve our families.

A lot has been going on within our programs. The PCCD grant that helped Fund Triple P has ended this year. Since this has taken place we have been able to sign contracts with Jefferson and Centre County to offer Triple P services within those counties. Our providers are currently maintaining full caseloads. Our Parents as Teachers program is continuing to grow in Clearfield and Jefferson Counties. For PAT, we have upcoming Group Connections monthly at 6:00 pm as follows:

December 15, 2021 – Christmas Spirit

January 12, 2022 – New Year, New Goals

February 9, 2021- Love Languages

Please Call Kara McGary at 814-765-2686 ext 250

LOCAL CITIZENS SHOW GREAT SUPPORT OF YOUTH MENTORING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

◆ *Dan Kennard - Youth Mentoring Coordinator*

It is no surprise for anyone to hear that the past 2 years have been highly irregular for the Youth Mentoring Program. We have made many adjustments to be able to continue to reach out to our local youth. Despite these challenges, our communities' support for our program has been put on full display in 2021!

The first way we have seen this is through the influx of volunteers we have had for our Community Based program this summer and Fall. We have been very busy interviewing and matching new mentors into our program. Mentoring is more important than ever, and it has been so exciting to see so many residents step up to that call.

Another way is through our School Based Mentoring Program. This program was on hiatus for the 2020-2021 school year due to COVID concerns. This year, we have not only brought back the program, but have added a second program. We now have programs at both Wasson Elementary and DuBois Christian Schools in DuBois.

Finally, but certainly not least, is through our fundraising. This year, we held our 18th Annual Denny Merrey Memorial Shoot for the Magic Sporting Clays Competition on June 11th. This year, we had a total of 19 teams compete in the event. Through the support of our sponsors, teams, donors, and committee members; we raised over \$48,000! We certainly continue to see great things coming for Youth Mentoring.

For any further details regarding our program and/or fundraisers, please call (814) 765-2686 EXT: 202 or email us at danielk@childaid.org

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 2022
SHOOT FOR THE MAGIC EVENT
JUNE 10, 2022

WARRIORS MARK WINGSHOOTING LODGE
HOUTZDALE (GINTER), PA



NINE WEEKS TO A BETTER TOGETHER!

◆ *Leighanne Hutton - Together Project Manager*

Together, our newest healthy relationship and marriage education program wrapped up the first year of workshops in September. The second year is off to a strong start with four workshops currently taking place!

Enroll in Together to learn how to improve positive communication skills, stress management techniques, skills for handling conflict and issues in relationships, and how to strengthen connections. In addition, Together offers additional services including parenting education, money management workshops, as well as assistance with other identified needs. Meals and gas cards, in addition to other great incentives such as child care for weekly classes are provided at no cost to participants.

Planning is underway for the next series of Together workshops for 2022! Be on the lookout for information about these fun and interactive relationship education programs.

Contact Together Staff at (814) -765-2686 or togetherproject@childaid.org for more information or to enroll now!

Together Workshops are free and are designed for all adult couples, from people in committed relationships, to newlyweds, and couples married for 50 years! It's never too late or too early to focus on your relationship and invest the time into creating a future TOGETHER!



GRATITUDE

Teresa Guaglianone - Assistant Director

Gratitude, the readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness, is something that is often overlooked due to the business of life. Gratitude is one of many positive emotions. It's about focusing on what's good in our lives and being thankful for the things we have. Gratitude is pausing to notice and appreciate the things that we often take for granted, like having a place to live, food, clean water, friends, family, even computer access. Research reveals gratitude can have these seven benefits:

- Opens the door to more relationships.
- Improves physical health.
- Improves psychological health.
- Enhances empathy and reduces aggression.
- Improves sleep.
- Improves self-esteem.
- Increases mental strength.

At this time of year, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who supports Children's Aid Society and our mission of providing services to improve the quality of life for children and their families. Specifically, I would like to thank our: Board of Directors for supporting us in all we do for the children and their families we serve.

- Funders for seeing the benefits of the services we provide in local communities.
- Partner agencies for working with us to help provide our services as well as their services.
- Families for entrusting us to care for their children, giving us the opportunity to strengthen their relationships and allowing us to help them expand their families.
- Staff for dedicating themselves to the mission of Children's Aid Society.



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Call us at 814-765-2686 or email us at marketing@childaid.org



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