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**Council on Accreditation**

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December 15, 2009

Dear Colleague:

I am delighted to inform you that Family Services of Northwestern Pennsylvania, located at 5100 Peach Street, Erie, PA has been reaccredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA). COA's commitment to maintaining the highest level of standards and quality improvement is designed to identify providers that have set high performance standards for themselves and have made a commitment to their stakeholders to deliver the highest quality services. COA is proud to recognize Family Services of Northwestern Pennsylvania as one of these outstanding providers.

Founded in 1977, COA is an independent not-for-profit international accreditor of the full continuum of community-based behavioral health care and social service organizations. Today, over 1800 organizations—public and private—are either COA accredited or are in the process of seeking accreditation. These organizations serve over 7 million of our most vulnerable individuals each year!

COA accreditation is an objective and reliable verification that organizations such as Family Services of Northwestern Pennsylvania qualify for your confidence and support. The COA accreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of both an organization's administrative and management operations as well as its service delivery practices. All are measured against international standards of best practice. These standards emphasize services that are accessible, appropriate, based in the community, coordinated, culturally competent, evidence-based, individualized, outcomes-oriented, provided by a skilled and supported workforce, respectful of individual rights, strengths-based, supportive of partnership, child and family focused, treat all people with dignity, and involve family and provider collaboration.

Because COA reviews and accredits the *entire* organization, not just specific programs, you can have confidence in the credibility, integrity and achievement of the *entire* organization.

An endorsement of COA and the value of its accreditation process is reflected in it being named by the US State Department as the sole national independent accrediting body under the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption to accredit intercountry adoption service providers. In addition, COA is the only national accreditor designated by the U.S. Department of Defense to develop accreditation standards and processes for human service programs provided to military personnel and their families.

To achieve COA reaccreditation, Family Services of Northwestern Pennsylvania provided written evidence of compliance with our standards. Thereafter, a group of specially trained volunteer Peer Reviewers confirmed adherence to these standards during a series of on-site interviews with trustees, staff and clients. Based on their findings, our volunteer-based Accreditation Commission voted that Family Services of Northwestern Pennsylvania had successfully met the criteria for reaccreditation.

I know that you will join me in congratulating Family Services of Northwestern Pennsylvania for their hard work and wonderful achievement. We are extremely proud to have them as part of COA's Community of Excellence.

Sincerely,



Richard Klarberg  
President and Chief Executive Officer

