



Family of NWPA Services

Strengthening Families · Transforming Lives



2016-2017 Annual Report

Our Mission:

We strengthen families and transform lives.

Our Vision:

Every family thrives.

Our Leaders:

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2016-2017 At a Glance

6

Evidence-Based Programs offered
across five counties in NW PA

21

Programs and services available
to families and individuals

211

Individuals volunteered for
Big Brothers Big Sisters

3,888

Individuals received Counseling
and Education Services

12,216

Hours of service provided by volunteers

Photography by Martine Barclay Holquist

Community Impact

10,500 lives touched



Dear Friends & Supporters,

Since Family Services of NW PA opened its doors in 1882, the definition of family has changed dramatically. In fact, modern families come in so many shapes, sizes, and structures that there is no consistent definition.

Many of us tend to believe that, historically, most families consisted of a hard working husband and a stay-at-home wife, and that family life was easy. This is simply not the case. Domestic violence, mental health issues, and single parenthood are not new phenomena. Families throughout history have had to overcome these and other obstacles, and were often forced to come up with creative ways to adapt.

The only thing consistent about families, throughout history, is the need for constant change and adaptation. Family roles continue to change on a daily basis, and recent changes in family life are only the latest in a series of major familial transformations.

For the last 135 years, Family Services of NW PA has been here, in northwestern Pennsylvania, assisting families as they continue to face new obstacles. As families have continued to evolve, we too have adapted to meet the changing needs of families, and we have assisted families to do the same. Although our mission has changed over time, our emphasis on strengthening families has not.

We are so thankful for the ongoing community support that permits us to be able to take care of those around us. That's how Family Services of NW PA got started, and that's the mission that we still see for ourselves today. We believe that helping others is really at the heart of what it means to be part of a community and we believe we have been called to serve our community. We are proud of the work we've accomplished and the many families, big and small, of all definitions, that we have helped along the way.

As we look to the future, it is our goal to continue to adapt and transform to continue to meet the changing and challenging needs of the families that make up our community. We intend to continue to strengthen families and transform lives, no matter what it takes, and we hope you will continue to stand by our side.

Thank you to all those who have helped us continue to serve our mission over the past year. We look forward to another year of strengthening families and transforming lives.

Sincerely,

Gregory A. Loop
President and CEO

George Joseph
Board Chair

Major Achievements



Family Services of NW PA receives COA Accreditation

In July 2017, Family Services of NW PA received an expedited accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA), an achievement only received by roughly 30% of organizations seeking accreditation. COA accreditation ensures that Family Services of NW PA is providing the very best possible services to clients and is a mechanism that enables the agency to continually improve and evaluate the way it delivers services.

Founded in 1977, COA is an independent, nonprofit organization that partners with human service organizations worldwide to improve service delivery outcomes by developing, applying, and promoting appropriate best practice standards.



Family Services of NW PA Partners with the Erie Bayhawks

In January 2017, Family Services of NW PA partnered with the Erie Bayhawks to celebrate National Mentoring Month. Matches in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program and agency staff were able to attend a free game on January 7th to celebrate Mentoring Night, which was sponsored by Family Services of NW PA and MCPc. The month-long partnership brought much attention to the need for local mentors.

The following month, as part of a continued partnership with the Erie Bayhawks, Family Services of NW PA hosted Family Night. Agency clients and their families were offered free tickets to the game on February 25th. Youth from the Independent Living Program even had the opportunity to view the game from a private skybox. As host of Family Night, Family Services of NW PA was able to increase program awareness and offer complimentary tickets for clients to attend this family-friendly event.

BOWL
FOR KIDS' SAKE

Bowl For Kids' Sake Sets Two New Records

Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl For Kids' Sake, in both Erie and Crawford Counties, had record-breaking years. In Erie County, bowlers raised nearly \$105,000 while bowlers in Crawford County brought in close to \$28,000. Bowl For Kids' Sake is the signature fundraising event of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Family Services of NW PA. All money raised helps match children with volunteer mentors and provide professional match support.

Family Services of NW PA Partners with Erie's Public Schools

In August 2016, Family Services of NW PA welcomed sixteen new Behavioral Intervention Specialists (BIS) as part of a contract to provide Behavioral Support Services (BSS) to students in Erie's Public Schools. Each BIS functions as a member of a team to observe, interact, and provide comprehensive interventions to assist in the development of prosocial skills, self-regulation, peer mediation/conflict resolution and the enhancement of coping strategies aimed at creating positive changes in student's lives. Currently, there are 20 BIS working across 13 schools.



Office Locations

Family Services of NW PA has offices located throughout northwestern Pennsylvania to meet the needs of our clients.

Erie County:

Main Office
5100 Peach Street
Erie, PA 16509
814.866.4500

Union City Office
38 North Main Street
Union City, PA 16438
814.438.7341

Crawford County:

Meadville Office
18360 Technology Drive
Suite 200
Meadville, PA 16335
814.724.4800

Venango County:

Oil City Office
206 Seneca Street
Suite 43, Fourth Floor
Oil City, PA 16301
814.670.0524

Mercer County:

Sharon Office
7 West State Street
Second Floor, Suite 202
Sharon, PA 16146
724.704.7227

Empowering Families

Goal: Empower families to make life-long positive changes

Family Based Mental Health (FBMH)/Specialized FBMH

FBMH is intensive in-home therapy, case management and crisis intervention that helps parents with children who are seriously mentally ill or emotionally disturbed. Specialized FBMH helps parents care for their children who have been victims of sexual abuse or demonstrate sexually reactive behaviors.

- **88%** of clients in Erie County remained in the home and out of the hospital
- **94%** of clients in Crawford County remained in the home and out of the hospital
- **95%** of clients in Mercer and Venango counties remained in the home and out of the hospital

Family Behavioral Health – Enhanced Mobile Therapy (FBH-EMT)

FBH-EMT is a behavioral health rehabilitative program that provides mobile therapy, with an emphasis on working with the parents to treat the entire family.

- **92%** of families with parenting concerns in Crawford County made an improvement

Family Behavior Therapy (FBT)*

FBT utilizes family therapy to help treat substance abuse, conduct disorders, mood disorders, family dysfunction, and other problem behaviors.

- **100%** of families in Crawford County improved coping skills as a direct result of the program

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)

FGDM invites families and others to come together as the best people to plan and make decisions for family members.

- **100%** of respondents in both Erie and Mercer Counties reported that, upon completion of the conference, a plan was accepted by the referral source

Functional Family Therapy (FFT)*

FFT helps families with at-risk youth change problem family and relational patterns.

- **97%** of youth in Erie County were enrolled in an educational/vocational school program or working

Intensive Family (IF)

IF is an intensive in-home counseling program that provides crisis intervention and family treatment to keep children and families safe, prevent out of home placement, assist in reunification of families, and prevent unnecessary changes in placement.

- **100%** of children in Crawford County either remained in the home or were returned home as a result of services

** Evidence-Based Program*

“ The coping skills and sessions we received were vital. My son and I are communicating so much better now. ”

Brittany, Family Based Mental Health

Promoting Achievement

GOAL: Help at-risk children avoid destructive behavior and reach their full potential

Independent Living Program (ILP)

ILP helps youth ages 14-21 years old who are in out-of-home placement make the transition to become independent, self-sufficient and productive adults.

- **207** youth received services in Erie County
- **82%** of youth were either working and/or enrolled in an education program

Multisystemic Therapy (MST)/MST for Problem Sexual Behavior (MST-PSB)*

MST utilizes intensive in-home therapy to help youth ages 12-17 years old decrease and prevent anti-social and delinquent behaviors. MST-PSB helps youth ages 10-17 years old to decrease sexually offending behaviors.

- **95%** of youth enrolled in Mercer County improved peer relations
- **88%** of youth enrolled in Erie County improved family relations
- **100%** of youth enrolled in Crawford County had no new arrests during treatment

Project SOAR/ROAR

Project SOAR/ROAR helps children with emotional and/or behavioral difficulties. Services are available at Cambridge Springs Elementary School, Cambridge Springs Junior High School, and Maplewood Elementary School.

- **37** students received services in Crawford County
- **98%** of students were able to maintain school placement

Behavioral Support Services (BSS)

BSS is a school-based behavioral support service that assists students in Erie's Public Schools with eliminating or replacing distracting behaviors and supports students in becoming more academically successful.

- **2,440** skill groups were offered in a variety of areas, including bullying, disruptive behavior, school safety, and weapons.
- Teachers reported a decrease in problem behavior and a significant increase in the utilization of positive skills/behaviors as a direct result of the program.

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS)*

BBBS is a mentoring program that helps meet basic developmental needs of youth ages 6 to 14 years old by providing caring, non-judgmental adult mentors.

- **211** children received services in Erie and Crawford Counties
- Volunteers provided a total of **12,216** service hours (\$291,840 value)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Family Services of NW PA receives significant financial support from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, the LocalEdge, and the United Way of Erie County.

** Evidence-Based Program*

Big Brothers Big Sisters Receives Gold Standard Award

As a result of timely and consistent match support over a period of three years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America recognized Big Brothers Big Sisters of Family Services of NW PA in Erie County with a Gold Standard Award. The purpose of the award is to recognize the hard work of agency leadership and staff in providing high-quality programming for the children and families served. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Family Services of NW PA is one of only 16 agencies across the United States to have achieved this elite distinction.



Meet Tasha

Tasha was just 12 years old when she entered the foster care system. She was removed from her home due to issues of abuse and neglect, and spent the next six years of her life moving between three different foster homes. She was first placed in an abusive foster home, where she spent more than four years. By this point, she was unable to trust anyone, and, as a result, started acting out and getting into trouble.

Tasha moved to her next foster home when she was 16 years old, and lived there for just a few short months. It was during this time that Tasha was introduced to the Independent Living Program (ILP) through Family Services of NW PA. ILP is a program that helps youth between the ages of 14 and 21 in out-of-home placement make the transition to become independent, self-sufficient and productive adults. Tasha was paired with Shannon, an ILP caseworker with a long history of helping youth succeed in life.

At first, Tasha was quiet and didn't interact much. "It took me a while to realize that Shannon and the ILP program were really there to help me," said Tasha. "Once I was able to fully trust them, really positive things started happening."

During her senior year in high school, Tasha moved to her final foster home. She graduated at the age of seventeen, despite continued challenges and criticism from others. She attributes much of this success to the support and guidance of Shannon and the ILP program. "I was very headstrong and thought I knew everything," said Tasha. "If it wasn't for Shannon, I probably wouldn't have graduated."

Shortly after graduating high school, Tasha became pregnant with her first son. Soon she found herself without a place to live, and reached out to Shannon for support. Shannon helped her find a transitional apartment, create a resume, and obtain her first job. While living in transitional housing, Tasha knew she was unable to provide for her kids, and made the tough decision to put them in foster care. "It's hard to make the decision when you're younger to admit that you're wrong, especially when you grew up not trusting anybody," said Tasha.

At that point, Tasha vowed to turn her life around. With the help of Shannon and the ILP program, Tasha started saving money, moved into a new apartment and bought a car. Shannon even convinced her to apply for college. "I wouldn't have made it through without Shannon. She helped me make one of the hardest decisions of my entire life, and supported me the entire time," said Tasha.

After just four months, Tasha was reunited with her kids. "If Shannon hadn't helped me get through that part of my life, I wouldn't have understood how to be a parent," said Tasha. "I don't think I would have my kids today without Shannon's support."

Tasha is now married with four kids and a loving husband. They own a home and Tasha is enrolled in college courses at Mercyhurst University. Tasha credits much of her success to Shannon and the ILP program at Family Services of NW PA. "Shannon is my role model. I never had a role model before and she stuck by me when I had nobody. She is very special," said Tasha.

Tasha hopes to one day work with kids in situations similar to her own. She wants to make a difference by helping others the same way that Shannon helped her. "Shannon is still my main support," said Tasha. "I hope to be just like her one day."



Meet the Prezioso Family

Cari and Rodney Prezioso started their journey shortly after marrying in 2005. Unable to have children of their own, the couple first adopted Josh, one of Rodney's cousins. Josh needed somewhere to live and moved in with Cari and Rodney right before his 5th birthday. In 2009, their family expanded when they were granted legal custody of six-month-old Tyler. "Before we started fostering, it was just me, Rodney, Josh and Tyler," explains Cari. "Josh and Tyler were newly diagnosed with Autism and we decided to try and have one more child."

At that point, Cari and Rodney began to research foster care and began working with Mercer County Children and Youth Services. They had a child placed in their home only weeks later. Within three months, they already had three additional children in and out of their home. "We just more than anything wanted children and this was the route we decided to take," said Cari. "When we started, we just knew it was right."

The Preziosos were referred to Family Services of NW PA to receive Child Preparation Services during the process of adopting Levi. Child Preparation Services are offered to help children better understand and process their permanency journey. The caseworker meets with the child twice a month and addresses five goals: honor the child's past, answer questions, give the child a voice, create connections, and look to the future.

Levi came from a home of abuse and neglect where both parents passed away suddenly. Before meeting Cari and Rodney, Levi did not know how to play like a kid and was unable to spend more than a few hours in school due to his aggressive behaviors. Throughout the entire process, Cari and Rodney worked to help Levi process and cope with the grief of his parents' death. "After just a few months in the home, Levi was almost completely off all his medications," explained Anna Shoaf, the Family Services of NW PA Caseworker assigned to work with the Prezioso's. "He is now in first grade in a regular classroom."

Finding Forever Homes

GOAL: Provide the permanent home and loving family every child deserves

Adoption and Kinship Services

A variety of child placement services are offered for both children and families in Erie, Crawford, Mercer and McKean Counties. Services include adoption searches, kinship care services, child profiles, and home study services.

- **59** children were adopted
- **210** children received Child Preparation services
- **272** children were supervised in **179** homes
- **98%** of families reported satisfaction with services

Adoption Department Hosts Art Show to Celebrate National Foster Care Month

In May 2017, the Adoption Department at Family Services of NW PA partnered with five other local organizations to celebrate Foster Care Month. In cooperation with the other five agencies, Family Services of NW PA hosted an art exhibit at the Millcreek Mall. Children in placement, and adoptees up to age 21 from northwestern Pennsylvania, submitted artwork depicting his or her definition of family. Nearly 30 entries were submitted and over 700 people voted for their favorite. This art exhibit was made possible thanks to a grant from the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN).



“Anna really helped us to understand the process,” said Cari. “She was so kind, answered every question, explained why we were there, and made everything very easy. It was a good experience all around.”

Anna worked with the Prezioso’s to create a lifebook for Levi. Lifebooks are used to help children retain connections to their past. Although Levi’s parents were deceased, Anna was able to find pictures and help to understand where he came from.

Anna also offered support when Cari and Rodney had James placed in their home. Initially, James was non-verbal, did not make eye contact, and had countless sensory issues. After just nine months in the home, James was speaking in full sentences and calling every family member by name. “Cari and Rodney love James as if he was their own child,” said Anna. “They are willing to go the extra mile to make sure James has the best life with the most possible people to love him.”

Cari and Rodney currently have six children, all with sensory needs. They attribute much of their success to the support provided by Anna and Family Services of NW PA. “Through Family Services, we were able to make connections with some of the children’s relatives,” said Cari. “Being able to communicate with them made a huge difference.”

“ We just more than anything wanted children and this was the route we decided to take. When we started, we just knew it was right. ”

Cari Prezioso

Preserving Relationships

GOAL: Provide guidance and expertise to help solve family-related issues

Brief Services (BS)

BS helps at-risk families cope with problems and improve childcare practices.

- **100%** of families in Crawford and Venango Counties had no new instances of abuse and/or neglect
- **92%** of families in Mercer County had no new instances of abuse and/or neglect

Children Cope With Divorce (CCWD)

CCWD is a four-hour parent/caregiver training that provides information about helping children adjust to the changes associated with the divorce or separation of their parents and other family transitions.

- **97%** of participants in Erie County felt their knowledge about families and the ending of a relationship was increased

Family Preservation Services (FPS)

FPS helps strengthen the families of children at risk of placement by improving family functioning and preventing unnecessary placement of children.

- **100%** of families in Venango County maintained and/or increased their overall parenting abilities
- **100%** of families in Crawford County had no new instances of abuse and/or neglect
- **96%** of families in Erie County had no new instances of abuse and/or neglect
- **95%** of families in Mercer County had no new instances of abuse and/or neglect

Office-Based Counseling (OBC)

OBC provides individual, family and couples counseling to help with relationship concerns, parenting challenges, adjustment issues, depression, anxiety, anger management, etc.

- **80%** of clients in Erie County reported improvement 'as well as or better than' the average client in treatment

Time Limited Family Reunification (TLFR)

TLFR helps families that have had children removed from the home achieve safe reunification.

- **66%** of families in Erie County showed improvement in parenting capabilities as a direct result of services

Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)*

TF-CBT helps children ages 4 to 18 years old, and their caregivers, overcome the negative effects of traumatic life events.

- **98%** of clients in Erie County reported a decrease in symptoms of traumatic stress

** Evidence-Based Program*

Family Services of NW PA Aims to Reduce Impact of Trauma

Family Services of NW PA is proud to play a lead role in the Erie Trauma Coalition, a newly formed community partnership that aims to reduce the impact of trauma in Erie, PA. The Erie Trauma Coalition, a collaboration of local agencies and organizations, was formed to help create and support a trauma informed community. Members of the coalition's steering committee include representatives from Family Services of NW PA, the Achievement Center, Sarah Reed Children's Center, the Martin Luther King Center, the Booker T. Washington Center, and Mothers Against Teen Violence.

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 Fastenal
 Firehouse Tap and Grille
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 Serafini's Restaurant
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 Three B Saloon
 Valerio's Italian Restaurant
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 Paige (Little Sister)
 Paula Hayes
 Peggy Popeski
 Ray (Little Brother)
 Stacy McClure
 Summer (Little Sister)
 Taryn Pryor
 Tina White
 Tyler (Little Brother)

Any omission from these lists is purely accidental. If you should have been included and were not, please accept our sincere apology.

Financials

Revenue by Source

Children and Youth	40%
Managed Care Organizations/Medical Assistance	29%
Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN)	13%
Client Service Fees	.7%
MH/ID (Erie & Crawford Counties)	2.5%
Donated Services	2.5%
United Way	2.5%
Investment & Miscellaneous Income	.3%
Special Events & Contributions	1.5%
Contracted Services	8%

Total Expenses

Counseling/Education	69.31%
Adoption	27.54%
Volunteer Support	3.15%