



2019-2020

# ANNUAL REPORT

# OUR MISSION

We strengthen families & transform lives.

# OUR VISION

Every family thrives.

# OUR LEADERS

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2019-2020  
AT A GLANCE

25+

Programs and services  
available to families  
and individuals

6

Evidence-based  
programs available

8,371

Families and individuals  
received services

# LETTER FROM OUR LEADERS

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It goes without saying that this past year has presented many unique challenges to us all. Family Services of NW PA was designated as an essential service back in March, and we have remained operational. Prioritizing the health and safety of our staff and clients, we initially transitioned to a telehealth format for all but the most emergent services.


As information continued to emerge, we developed protocols, obtained personal protective equipment, and by June we were again able to provide services face to face. We are proud to report that our team has remained committed to keeping people connected as we work hard to fulfil our mission to Strengthen Families and Transform Lives.

Despite these many challenges, we are excited to share some of our successes over the past year. From our efforts to become a trauma-informed agency to new program expansions, our commitment to keep people connected has not wavered.

We greatly appreciate all our donors, sponsors and supporters who have stuck with us.

We look forward to seeing you all in person soon.

Sincerely,



Gregory A. Loop  
President and CEO



George Joseph  
Board President



## COMMUNITY IMPACT

# 14,796

## lives touched

# MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS



## BECOMING A TRAUMA-INFORMED AGENCY TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

Thanks to a Violence Prevention Grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), Family Services of NW PA was able to intensify efforts to become a trauma-informed agency. The result will be a better client experience and treatment environment, which will result in better outcomes.

The grant allowed us to contract with the National Council for Behavioral Health to assist in this process. This included a comprehensive evaluation of current practices and an agency-wide trauma training for all employees. Our management team also received training on trauma-informed supervision.

Out of this process came the creation of a cross-sectional employee-driven team called SEEDS, Supporting Empathy and Engagement to Drive Success. This team is leading the implementation of efforts to improve the use of trauma-informed principles across the agency. Most recently, the SEEDS team identified the need for training about historical trauma and social equity.

## NEW WEBSITE OFFERS MANY NEW EXCITING FEATURES

After more than a year of hard work, Family Services recently launched a brand new website. This newly redeveloped site comes with new, exciting features and must faster load times.

The new website includes many new features, including:

- Faster loading of content on all pages
- Program-specific contact forms on each page that are sent directly to the program supervisor
- Updated Careers portal with full job listings and ability to apply directly through the website
- Ability to register for events, make payments, and donate online
- A robust media page featuring videos and print materials
- A mobile experience similar to desktop for easy navigation on all devices

Check out the new website at [www.FSNWPA.org](http://www.FSNWPA.org).





## ERIE COUNTY ILP EXPANDS HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

The Independent Living Program (ILP) at Family Services of NW PA recently expanded its partnership with Erie United Methodist Alliance (EUMA) to provide additional supported housing opportunities for youth transitioning out of placement and into adulthood.

This past summer, EUMA purchased and renovated a six-unit apartment building in downtown Erie. The property is called Journey Home and recently held an open house. Funding was used to lease the property from EUMA for youth enrolled in the program.

Journey Home includes four furnished apartments for ILP youth, an apartment for a live-in resident assistant, and a staff office. The resident assistant will be available to assist the youth with day-to-day support, while program staff will be on-site during scheduled office hours to provide additional support.

*The Erie County Independent Living Program is a collaboration of the Erie County Office of Children and Youth, Bethesda Lutheran Services, and Family Services of NW PA.*



## 2020 FSNWPA EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

In August, Family Services of NW PA held its first Virtual Joint Staff Meeting for all agency employees. The nominees for Employee of the Year were announced at the event.

The following 45 employees received a total of 61 nominations.

- Martine Barclay
- Barb Benedict
- Erin Blashock
- Grace Brace
- Thelma Brown
- Cecelia Bugler
- Daniel Carr
- Cindy Crispin
- Kelly Dahlkemper
- Amanda DiCola
- Denise DiGiacomo
- Kathryn Duberg
- Meghan Easter
- Danielle Fahey
- Hilary Fritts
- Doug Golembiewski
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- Anna Haller
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- Leah Hardner
- Breanne Hillen
- Leanne Keibler
- Stephanie Keller
- Brigid Kennedy
- Amanda Kessner
- Deanna Laser
- Tyler Lassman
- Lorene McGuire
- Louise McLaughlin
- Tammy Mook
- Rebecca Morrison
- Tammy Mott
- BillieAnn Pamula
- Kayla Parker
- Erin Phelps
- Ruth Rawlins
- Jenna Reynolds
- Yari Santiago
- Heather Sayers
- Melissa Scobey
- Stacey Sprong
- Julie Thorpe
- Heather Williams

# OUTPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC

## OUTPATIENT THERAPY (OT), TRAUMA-FOCUSED COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (TF-CBT), AND PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic Services assist and support individuals, couples and families dealing with a variety of common mental health and family-related problems. The goal of these services is to improve individual (personal wellbeing), interpersonal (family, close relationships), and social (work, school, friendships) functioning and to elicit positive solutions to these common problems.

Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), which helps children ages 4 to 18 years old, and their caregivers, overcome the negative effects of traumatic life events, is also available. Additional services include psychiatric care and medication management.

- **629 individuals** received Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic Services
- **2,486 individual counseling sessions** were held
- **90% of participants** reported a decrease in trauma symptoms



## EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS CREATED TO REDUCE IMPACT OF TRAUMA

Family Services of NW PA received a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to develop an educational trauma informed video series. The goal was to educate the public about resiliency and protective factors that reduce the impact of trauma in our community.

In partnership with the Erie Coalition for a Trauma-Informed Community (ECTIC), Family Services of NW PA created a series of four short videos that highlight the real experiences of people in our community.

The videos premiered at the 7th Annual Trauma-Informed and Resilient Communities Conference and received much positive feedback. The video series is now available online and continues to serve as a training tool for families, individuals and organizations.



# SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES

## 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.

- **711 evidence-based groups** were offered in areas including peer mediation, anger control, and moral reasoning
- **10,362 meetings** were held with a Behavior Intervention Specialist and a student needing support
- **91% of students** showed a reduction in referrals for identified behaviors as a result of working directly with a Behavioral Intervention Specialist

## PROJECT SOAR/ROAR (SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND RESILIENCY/ REINFORCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND RESILIENCY)

Project SOAR/ROAR helps children with emotional and/or behavioral difficulties whose behavior may be interfering with their learning by helping them to develop a healthy foundation in the educational environment and help them to develop a sense of belonging. Services are available at Cambridge Springs Elementary School, Cambridge Springs Junior High School, and Maplewood Elementary School.

- **35 students** received services in Crawford County
- **92% of students** were able to maintain school placement

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS LEAD PARTNER AT PFEIFFER-BURLEIGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Community School model is an evidence-based strategy for organizing school and community resources around student success. Family Services of NW PA is the Lead Partner at Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary, a United Way Community School.

- **1,669 children and parents** received services at Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School

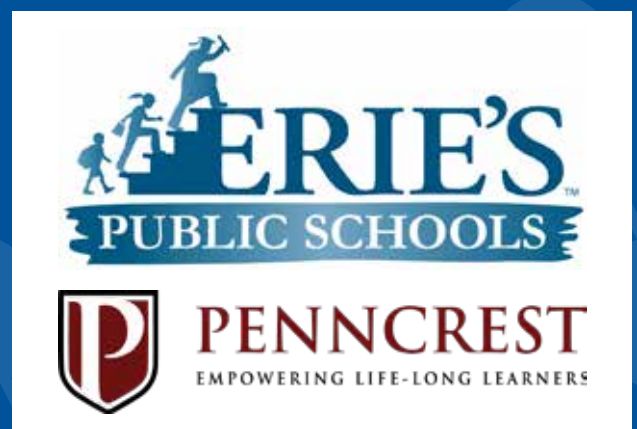
## STUDENT ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (SAIP)

SAIP is a school-based program offered at McKinley Elementary and Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary Schools that helps increase school attendance by supporting families with the tools they need to obtain educational success. The program provides case management, community collaboration, and outreach to identify and alleviate barriers to school attendance.

- **380 students** were served during the 2019-2020 academic school year

## SCHOOL-BASED WORKERS RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

Our Behavior Intervention Specialists working in Erie's Public Schools and Penncrest School District went above and beyond to assist students with reductions in behaviors that interfere with academic success. Despite school closures that prevented face-to-face interaction, workers were able to maintain connections with students and families. During a time of uncertainty, workers utilized the relationships they had already developed with students to offer additional support.



# CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

## BRIEF SERVICES (BS)

BS works with Children & Youth Services agencies to help at-risk families cope with problems and improve childcare practices.

- **100% of families** had no new instances of abuse and/or neglect

## FAMILY GROUP DECISION MAKING (FGDM)

FGDM is a decision-making process that draws on the strengths of the family unit to develop a plan addressing concerns related to child safety, well-being, and overall development.

- **100% of families** in Erie reported that upon completion of the conference, a plan was accepted by the referral source

## 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** had no new instances of abuse and/or neglect

## FAMILY REUNIFICATION (FR)

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

- **76% of families** showed improvement in parenting capabilities as a direct result of services

## FAMILY TEAM MEETINGS (FTM)

FTM is a strength-based service that helps engage families and find solutions for both immediate and long-term needs related to safety, well-being, and permanency.

- **100% of families** reported that upon completion of the conference, a plan was accepted by the referral source

## 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.

- **228 youth** received services in Erie County
- **100% of youth** received safe and stable housing as a result of the program

## 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 family reunification, and prevent unnecessary changes in placement.

- **93% of children** in Crawford County had no new instances of abuse and/or neglect

## PERMANENCY SERVICES

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

- **50 children** were provided with permanent homes
- **839 individuals** received services
- **232 children** received Child Preparation services



## Meet Amy and Nikki

The Permanency Department at Family Services of NW PA recently started providing foster care services to children who need temporary care. The children involved in the foster care program can be any age and have been removed from their homes by the Office of Children and Youth due to issues of abuse, abandonment and neglect.

Amy and Nikki met two years ago and quickly decided they wanted to have children. Amy's parents took in foster children throughout her childhood, so she was very familiar with the process and had always thought about doing it herself. Nikki also knew she wanted a family one day.

At first, Amy and Nikki thought about adoption. But, after speaking with the Foster Care Recruiter at Family Services of NW PA and learning more about the program, they decided that becoming foster parents was the right path for them to take. "There are so many kids out there who need a living home," said Amy. "We just wanted to be able to help someone else."

After becoming licensed foster parents, Amy and Nikki took in a five-year-old boy. "On the first day, after he saw his new bed and toys, he sat on my lap and told me he loved me," said Amy. "That just melted my heart."

Amy and Nikki recently found out they had the option to adopt their foster son. "We definitely had our ups and downs, but we took to it really well and instantly became a family," said Nikki. "We know that he completes our family and we love him."

The two women also recently welcomed a newborn baby into their home. "We are very connected with the baby and we love him," said Nikki. "We also know there is a good chance he will go back home at some point, and we really hope things work out."



Amy and Nikki both credit Family Services of NW PA with helping to complete their family. They credit all the caseworkers involved with being informative and supportive throughout the entire process. "Family Services has been wonderful," said Amy. "Without them, we wouldn't have the joy of having children in our home 24/7."

"This is a great program and I hope more people become involved," said Nikki. "It is heartbreaking to see so many kids that need a place to go."

*Family Services of NW PA is a licensed Adoption and Foster Care agency. If you'd like to learn more about becoming a foster parent, please call Martine at 814-866-4608.*

“Family Services has been wonderful. Without them, we wouldn't have the joy of having children in our home 24/7.”

# IN-HOME BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

## 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.

- **227 individuals and families** received services
- **90% of clients** in Crawford, Mercer and Venango Counties remained in the home and out of placement
- **87% of clients** in Erie County remained in the home and out of the hospital

## FAMILY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (FBH)

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

- **100% of families** in Venango County had no new instances of child abuse and/or neglect

## FAMILY BEHAVIOR THERAPY (FBT)

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

- **57 clients** received services in Crawford County

## FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY (FFT)

FFT helps families with at-risk youth change problem family and relational patterns. FFT can be provided in a variety of contexts, including schools, child welfare, probation, parole/aftercare, mental health, and as an alternative to incarceration or out-of-home placement.

- **100% of youth** in Erie County remained in an educational program
- **95% of youth** in Erie County had no new violations

## 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.

- **100% of families** enrolled in Crawford County reported success in a school setting
- **94% of families** enrolled in Erie County remained in the home and out of placement
- **91% of families** enrolled in Mercer County remained in the home and out of placement



## “REUNIFICATION HEROES” RECEIVE AWARD

Two caseworkers in the Family Reunification Program, Amanda DiCola and Denise DiGiacomo, received the first annual “Reunification Hero” awards, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Child Resource Center. Criteria for the award include an exceptional attitude and positivity with colleagues and families, dedicated years of service, and a true champion for families.

# MENTORING, SUPPORT & EDUCATION

## BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS (BBBS)

BBBS is a mentoring program that helps children realize their potential and build their futures by creating and supporting one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

- **148 children** received services in Erie and Crawford Counties
- **100% of youth** enrolled reported they were able to avoid drug use as a result of the program
- **7 youth graduated from high school** during the 2019-2020 academic year

## 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.

- **309 individuals** attended classes
- **98% of clients** served reported that the seminar was helpful

## RE-ENTRY

Re-Entry is a support service that helps people who have been incarcerated make a successful transition to community life and reunite with family members.

- **46 individuals** in Mercer County received services
- **100% of families** completed a plan that was accepted by the referral source



## BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS GOES VIRTUAL TO HONOR VOLUNTEERS

With the cancellation of the annual Bowl For Kids' Sake fundraiser, Big Brothers Big Sisters launched a new digital campaign called Connect For Kids' Sake. The campaign focused on the importance of maintaining mentoring relationships, even while providing services virtually. The creation of a new landing page allowed us to continue to collect donation to support Big Brothers Big Sisters and also provided us the opportunity to recruit new mentors. Thank you to everyone who supported Big Brothers Big Sisters through Connect For Kids' Sake.

In August, Big Brothers Big Sisters held it's first ever Virtual Volunteer Appreciation Event. Volunteers received a Certificate of Recognition in the mail thanking them for their continued efforts to defend the potential of children. The Virtual Event, which can be viewed on our new website, celebrated our volunteers, sponsors, supporters and donors.





# 2020 VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

Presenting Sponsor:

## UPMC HEALTH PLAN

Collaborating Sponsor:



Greg Rubino

### Legacy Award: Janet Bergkessel

Jan served as both a board member and a volunteer in our Mother-to-Mother program. This unique mentoring program worked with low-income women who faced challenges with parenting skills and relationship development. Jan mentored two young mothers and was a strong advocate for the program during her time as a volunteer.

One of Jan's mentees reached out to us a few years ago to report she had moved out of state and was doing very well. Her experience with Jan and the Mother-to-Mother program had been so positive that she was trying to create a similar mentoring program in Columbus. She credited much of her continued success and inspiration to her mentor Jan.

Jan served on the Family Services Executive Board for six years. During that time, she also served as the President of the Mother-to-Mother Advisory Board. One nomination noted her strong ability to facilitate meetings. Her engaging personality and ability to focus on what needed to be accomplished was recognized by everyone in the room. Jan made sure everyone felt welcomed and comfortable, and ensured each person had a voice in the discussion.



### Philanthropy Award: Ainsworth Foundation

At the end of last fiscal year, we were thrilled to learn that the Ainsworth Foundation had awarded Family Services a grant for operational support in Meadville and Crawford County. Although services were being provided using telehealth, many of our clients were still struggling to overcome the countless new challenges associated with the pandemic. Several of those families turned to Family Services for help and additional support.

While our team in Meadville worked hard to support these families, the requests for assistance continued to increase. It was then that we received notification of the grant from the Ainsworth Foundation, which will be used to support families in need in times of crisis or emergency by covering costs for a concrete item or service that families were unable to purchase on their own.

This funding to support our families in Crawford County could not have come at a better time. We are incredibly grateful to the Ainsworth Foundation for supporting Family Services and giving us the opportunity to provide additional support to those we serve.



## Outstanding Volunteer Award: Molly Fritts

Molly was the first mentor to join North Star Mentoring and was matched with Angeleena. Although the program was brand new, Molly took a chance and joined with an open mind and a true willingness to help. Despite many challenges faced by Angeleena, Molly continues to stand by her side and provide guidance and support. The relationship they have is uniquely special, and Molly shows up for Angeleena in ways that no other person could.

Despite the pandemic, Molly made sure to acknowledge Angeleena's birthday by creating a video montage of people who are significant in her life. She presented Angeleena with the video, flowers, candy and cupcakes. On this particular birthday, Angeleena was sitting alone on the front step waiting for a ride when the birthday presents arrived. If not for Molly, Angeleena's birthday would have gone largely unacknowledged.

In her nomination, Molly was acknowledged for always going the extra mile. She encourages Angeleena to value herself and her body, especially when it comes to her relationships with men. According to the nominee, Molly is the type of mentor that any person would be extremely lucky to have.



## Employee of the Year Award: Doug Golembiewski



This year's Employee of the Year is Doug Golembiewski. Doug is a member of the MIS department and received multiple nominations for this award.

According to one nomination, "Doug has been a wonderful help and is always kind and patient with staff. He has assisted me for hours during the pandemic to get connected, stay connected, and more."

Another nomination noted, "Doug has been nothing but short of amazing with how responsive he has been and continues to be with the agency's technological issues. Prior to COVID-19, Doug was always willing to immediately help us in the conference room with our technology issues. During COVID-19, Doug and the MIS team continued to go above and beyond to immediately respond to any ongoing issues."

One nominee said, "Doug even made himself available during the weekend to help a clinician with computer issues for her to deliver the much-needed telehealth session to her clients. Every single issue I have had during the past year has been acknowledged immediately and is usually fixed on the spot."

# DONORS



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In Memory of Mark Jane Simkins:  
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Jean Peterson and Trudy Rydzewski

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## RE-ENTRY PROGRAM

Farrell VFW Post 5286

## MEMORIAL GIFTS

In Memory of Helen Smolinsky:  
Carolyn Tellers

In Memory of Robert Smolinsky:  
Carolyn Tellers

In Memory of Dale Ardent:  
Paula Hayes

## HONOR GIFTS

In Honor of Judy Boboshko:  
Lorine Boboshko

## IN-KIND DONATIONS

Atlantic Development Corporation of  
Pennsylvania/Pizza Hut  
Erie Art Museum  
Pennsylvania Speech-Language-  
Hearing Association

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

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## Revenue by Source

Children and Youth	40%
Managed Care Organizations/Medical Assistance	20%
Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN)	13%
Client Service Fees	1%
Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities	1%
United Way	1%
Special Events & Contributions	1%
Contracted Services	15%
PPP Loan Income	8%

## Total Expenses

Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic	6%
School-Based Services	17%
Mentoring, Education & Support Services	5%
Child Welfare Services	52%
In-Home Behavioral Health Services	20%



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## Family Services of NW PA Office Locations

### Erie County

Main Office:  
5100 Peach Street  
Erie, PA 16509  
**814.866.4500**

Downtown Erie:  
240 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 402  
Erie, PA 16501  
**814.871.0903**

Booker T. Washington:  
1720 Holland Street  
Erie, PA 16503  
**814.866.4500**

Robert Wiley Charter School:  
1446 East Lake Road  
Erie, PA 16507  
**814.866.4500**

Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary:  
235 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Erie, PA 16503  
**814.866.4500**

Union City:  
38 North Main Street  
Union City, PA 16438  
**814.866.4500**

Union City Elementary School:  
91 Miles Street  
Union City, PA 16438  
**814.866.4500**

Union City Jr. Sr. High School:  
105 Concord Street  
Union City, PA 16438  
**814.866.4500**

### Crawford County

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

### Mercer County

Sharon Office:  
7 West State Street, Suite 202  
Sharon, PA 16146  
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