

# Unlocking Potential

## 2022-2023 Annual Report



Family Services of NWPA



# Who We Are

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*George Joseph, Board President*

2022-2023 Community Impact

56,568

Lives Touched



# Letter From Leadership

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Family Services of NW PA works diligently to strengthen families and transform lives throughout the year. We are committed to serving children and families in our community and this year we are intentionally focusing on unlocking potential. We recognize the trust placed upon us to be able to serve, and we are grateful for the resources entrusted to us and acknowledge the responsibility to use them to cause the greatest positive impact possible.

We have all been challenged by the growing concerns in our community - increased mental health concerns, increased suicide attempts, increased opiate abuse and accidental overdoses, and an overall increase in substance use disorders. We see more homelessness, families having more difficulty meeting basic needs, and longer waiting lists to access basic services. We also recognize the challenges accessing physical and mental health services and the increase in waiting lists.

We believe that unlocking potential means meeting these needs by collaborating with our community partners, growing our ability to recognize the strengths and resources that exist in our socially diverse community, and developing more creative, inclusive, and integrated strategies that provide better and more sustainable solutions to the challenges our families face. It also means envisioning a future filled with possibilities and solutions that are bigger than our current dreams – a future where all families in Northwest Pennsylvania thrive!

Family Services of NW PA thanks our champions and donors, who continue to partner and contribute to our ability to take care of those around us. We have been able to provide so many important services to our community over the years. This year, as we consider our past and look forward to our future, we are excited to announce the launch of our Legacy Foundation.

The Legacy Foundation helps us plan with our donors in an intentional way for long-term sustainability for these important services that achieve our mission to Strengthen Families and Transform Lives. Legacy Foundation members make a choice to name Family Services of NW PA as a beneficiary in their future planning.

Together, we will achieve our mission, now and into the future - to strengthen families and transform lives. It is uplifting to work alongside all the people who are a part of this great organization. With our collective perspectives, we will move closer to creating a community in which every family thrives.

Sincerely,

Gregory A. Loop  
President & CEO

George Joseph  
Board President

**“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”**

- Nelson Mandela -



# Accomplishments



## BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS RECEIVES DIVERSITY AWARD

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Family Services of NW PA was honored at the 2023 Nonprofit Excellence Awards, hosted by the Nonprofit Partnership, for its Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

The award submission included the following statement: "Big Brothers Big Sisters commits to embedding a DEI-lens into everything that we do, which means taking into account the systemic barriers people and communities face (particularly communities of color, rural communities, immigrant communities, financially-vulnerable communities, LGBTQ+ communities, and communities affected by the criminal justice system) and the assets they bring to our society to co-create and deliver responsive programming with the young people, volunteers, and families that are historically most underserved."

"JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) is embedded in everything we do," said Heather Filson, Program Supervisor for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Family Services of NW PA. "All employees, volunteers, and advisory board members are required to complete JEDI trainings at the beginning of employment or when becoming a mentor."



## INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM LAUNCHES CAREER PATHWAYS

For youth involved with child welfare or juvenile probation, career planning can sometimes take a back seat to permanency plans and court hearings. However, with expanded funding from the Erie County Office of Children and Youth, the Erie County Independent Living Program (ILP) at Family Services of NW PA created a new position to help teens begin the journey to a life sustaining career.

Hired in March of 2023, the new ILP Career Specialist is helping young people from Family Services of NW PA and Bethesda Lutheran Services gain valuable insights about their strengths and build skills toward a fulfilling career. Services include career interest assessments, mock interviews, tours of colleges and post-secondary schools, on-site learning opportunities with local businesses, paid internships, and bridges to ongoing employment.

Recently, youth involved in the Erie County ILP Career Pathways Program had the opportunity to learn about injection molding at Executool Precision Tooling, tour the state-of-the-art facilities at Composiflex, gain hands-on experience from members of our Local 499 Steamfitters, visit Erie County Community College, and learn about healthy eating habits and safe food preparation from Adagio Health.



## NEW FEDERAL REENTRY GRANT AWARDED TO HELP FAMILIES

Family Services of NW PA was awarded a three-year grant totaling \$646,619.00 from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs to fund the implementation of the Second Chance Community-Based Adult Reentry Program in Mercer, Crawford, and Venango counties.

The program encompasses a combination of evidence-based practices and traditional case management to assist individuals in successfully reentering the community after incarceration. Caseworkers will develop individual plans with each reentrant that targets their strengths and needs and seeks to remove barriers to success.

The program will offer a menu of options that can be selected for each person. The services will assist the client with reunifying with their families, address the impact their incarceration has had on their family members, and begin to build their skills to help break the cycle of recidivism.

The goal of Reentry is to strengthen communities by improving reentry outcomes for individuals who have been incarcerated and reducing recidivism. Expected outcomes are improved stability, increased community support, engaged family support, and lowered recidivism rates.



## FAMILY SERVICES EMBRACES DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION

Family Services of NW PA continued its commitment to Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Additional training on Microaggressions and Bystander Empowerment was provided to agency staff. The training was conducted by Dr. Will Koehler and his colleagues from Journey for a Trauma Informed Life, who are also providing ongoing consultation.

The goal of the FSNWPA DEI Team, comprised of a cross section of agency employees, is to create a workplace that celebrates diversity and values unique contributions to build greater understanding of the agency's people, surrounding communities, and agency clients which will enable us to achieve Family Services of NW PA's mission. Family Services of NW PA is committed to creating an inclusive environment where employees can bring their full self to work.



**SCAN HERE**  
to see more news and accomplishments!



# Accomplishments



## NEW PARENT CAFES OFFER SUPPORT TO FAMILIES

Families involved with Family Preservation Services and the Family Reunification program in Erie County were recently offered a new type of support. Be Strong Families Parent Cafés are physically and emotionally safe spaces where people talk about the challenges and victories of raising a family. Through individual deep self-reflection and peer-to-peer learning, participants create strategies from their own wisdom and experiences to improve their lives.

Be Strong Families Parent Cafés are a research-informed practice. The effectiveness of Parent Cafés is supported by over a decade of evidence which shows that Parent Cafés are effective in achieving short-term outcomes that are the foundation for the intended long-term outcomes, such as families experiencing increased well-being.



## FAMILY TEAM MEETING PROGRAM SEES SIGNIFICANT GROWTH

The Family Team Meeting (FTM) program at Family Services of NW PA was created to better engage families and improve service coordination among service providers and the child welfare agency. Last year, 405 Family Team Meetings were provided, an increase of 25% over the previous year.

This strength-based approach uses traditional family problem solving techniques with clients who may not have their own pre-existing social support network. Family “buy in” is enhanced and the likelihood of achieving the long-term safety, health, and happiness of the affected child(ren) is exponentially increased. When used effectively, Family Team Meetings find solutions for both immediate and pressing needs as well as lasting solutions related to safety, well-being, and permanency.

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## FSNWPA OFFERS W.I.S.E UP! TRAINING FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

“Why don’t you look like your mom? Why were you adopted? Where are your real parents?”

These are questions faced by adoptive children and families as they navigate through school, work, and new relationships. To help families prepare to handle a classmate’s probing questions or a neighbor’s insensitive remarks, the Permanency Department at Family Services of NW PA is now offering the W.I.S.E. Up! Training program to help children and teens choose what they want to share about their story. When the questions begin, W.I.S.E. Up! gives kids the tools to answer.

In 2022-2023, the Family Services Permanency Department supported the out-of-home placement of 259 children, moving 102 children to permanency. There were 42 adoptions, 22 subsidized permanent legal custodianships and 38 reunifications.



# Client Success

## MEET JENNIFER AND RYAN

Jennifer started taking pills at the young age of 13 and has battled with addiction issues since then. Her boyfriend, Ryan, was also dealing with his own struggles. "I have kids and I want a good life for them," said Jennifer. "I don't want them to have to live and watch me be on drugs."

After a report was made to Crawford County Children and Youth Services (CYS), Jennifer and Ryan's lives began to change. Jennifer's CYs worker recommended Family Behavior Therapy at Family Services of NW PA to help with coping skills and strengthen her relationships.

Jennifer and Ryan enrolled in Family Behavior Therapy, an evidence-based program that helps treat parents and caregivers struggling with substance abuse by helping accomplish goals that are consistent with a drug-free, healthy, and prosperous life. A therapist visits the family's home weekly to provide services.

Tiffany, the therapist assigned to work with Jennifer and Ryan, was a breath of fresh air for the young family. "I'm really lucky that I got such a cool therapist," said Jennifer. "I love Tiffany." With hard work and consistent support from Tiffany, Jennifer and Ryan were able to make great strides in their journey to a happier and healthier life together.

"It made us aware of what we were doing and how we were doing things so that we were more conscientious of how we were treating one another," said Ryan. "Before, we never gave it any thought and now we think things through and try to treat each other with respect and kindness."

Jennifer and Ryan both agree that the Family Behavior Therapy program at Family Services of NW PA had a positive impact on their family. "It's hard to imagine where we would be without it," said Ryan. "And I don't want to."





# 2023 Award Winners

Legacy Award

**Kirk Hardner**



Kirk Hardner began working at Family Services of NW PA in 1990. He spent his entire tenure working in the Family Based Mental Health program. Kirk started as a therapist and eventually became the Program Director. He retired in 2018 but continued to provide consultation to the program for several years.

Kirk was known for providing excellent support and supervision to his employees. His unique skillset and leadership have impacted countless families and therapists.

Kirk brought attention to self-care, meditation, and yoga. He is well-connected and liked in the community. His impact on staff, clients, and other community providers and collaborators continues to this day.

According to one nomination, "Kirk was synonymous with Family Based Mental Health. The program was strong, large and the teams were engaged and stable. Kirk was well-respected and supportive of his team."

"Kirk is a true champion of Family Based Mental Health and Ecosystemic Structural Therapy," noted another. "He built the program to its greatest capacity as a supportive, compassionate, and approachable supervisor. He was a strong advocate for the agency, program, and his staff."

Philanthropy Award

**Marquette Savings Bank**



Marquette Savings Bank has supported Big Brothers Big Sisters and other programs at Family Services of NW PA for many years. In addition to supporting Bowl For Kids' Sake, Marquette has also supported the agency through Erie Gives since its inception.

Stella LaPaglia, Senior Vice President of Human Resources at Marquette, joined the Advisory Board in 2015 and served as a fierce advocate for many years. When Stella resigned from the Advisory Board in 2021, she recommended a replacement – Erin May, Assistant Vice President at Marquette.

Erin has done an outstanding job connecting Marquette employees with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. Marquette had 58 employees on 11 teams participate in this year's Bowl For Kids' Sake event and all employee donations were matched by Marquette. Overall, Marquette and its employees brought in nearly \$6,000 to support Big Brothers Big Sisters.



  
**SCAN HERE**  
to see photos and videos  
from the Annual Meeting!

Agency Champion Award

## Erie United Methodist Alliance



Erie United Methodist Alliance (EUMA), led by CEO Kurt Crays, is a wonderful partner and strong champion of Family Services of NW PA and the individuals served. In 2018, the Erie County Independent Living Program (ILP) at Family Services of NW PA began a partnership with EUMA to provide housing for the young adults enrolled in ILP.

The project started with three apartment units near EUMA's The Refuge. It has grown to include multiple sites with a total of 10 apartment units that offer two levels of housing support: Supported Living Apartments, which offer an onsite Resident Assistant employed by EUMA, and Transitional Living Apartments, which are a step on the path to independence.

With EUMA's expertise in housing assistance, together with the support of ILP Case Managers, youth learn how to budget, take care of their own apartment, and find employment. Employees from EUMA ensure that the youth are safely housed and are learning valuable skills to maintain their own housing as they transition to adulthood.

The project has served over 40 youth since its inception. Additionally, EUMA sought and was recently awarded a substantial grant from the Erie Women's Fund of the Erie Community Foundation to further enhance these housing opportunities.

Outstanding Volunteer Award

## Kim Normandy



Kim Normandy joined the North Star Mentoring Program in February 2022 and was matched with Makenna. North Star Mentoring is part of the Erie County Independent Living Program (ILP) at Family Services of NW PA.

Kim and Makenna enjoy going out to eat, getting their nails done, cooking, visiting zoos, going to ball games, and just spending time together. Kim has taught Makenna about saving money and knowing the difference between wants and needs. She has helped Makenna every step of the way through some tough times. Makenna is a teen mother, and she loves that Kim loves her son as if he was one of her own. "Kim is like family to me now and we have grown so much together," said Makenna. "I love Kim so much and I'm so thankful to have her in my life."

Makenna recently graduated from high school and brought Kim as her guest. "Kim is truly invested in supporting Makenna and making a positive difference in her life," said Kellie Tate, Mentoring Specialist with North Star Mentoring. "Kim's favorite part of mentoring Makenna has been watching her grow up to be a responsible young adult and mother."

In addition to volunteering for North Star Mentoring, Kim collects socks and coffee for the Upper Room, walks for the American Heart Association, and participates in Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl For Kids' Sake.



# 2023 Annual Meeting

Employee of the Year Award

**Kelly Dahlkemper**



Kelly Dahlkemper began working in FSNWPA's Permanency department in 2016. She is a licensed social worker and is working on achieving the designation as a licensed clinical social worker. Kelly is trained by Voce to use a model that is nationally recognized for expediting adoptions and supporting families. She is also a trained facilitator in the Strengthening Families program and the new W.I.S.E. Up! Program. She serves on the Resource Family Association Board.

Kelly is always described as a model employee and an expert in all Permanency units of service. She regularly exceeds productivity and timeliness expectations, delivering services with high levels of quality and care.

According to one nomination, "Kelly is always looking for ways to make the best of any situation. She is positive, motivating, encouraging, kind, and always willing to help her coworkers when facing new challenges."

Another nomination noted, "Kelly makes herself available to families that are grieving the loss of a placement in foster care. She goes to the home and helps the family process their loss."

"Kelly is dedicated to the families and children she works with, and is a great coworker," noted another nomination. "She advocates for what is best and shows a strong commitment to her job."

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# Client Success



## MEET ADELLE AND DAVE

Adelle and Dave were matched more than 12 years ago through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program at Family Services of NW PA. "As soon as I met Dave, we had an instant connection right off the bat," said little brother Adelle. "I immediately warmed up to him the first day."

Dave got involved shortly after his father passed away. "I was looking for something positive to do," said Dave. "Since he was such a good role model in my life, I decided to reach out to Big Brothers Big Sisters and see if I could do the same for someone else."

Right away, both Dave and Adelle realized they had a lot in common. "We both like sports, we both like video games, and I knew right off the bat that we were going to get along really well," said Dave.

Adelle credits Dave with teaching him many valuable life lessons during their time together. "There have been a lot of times when I was younger where I was eager to do things," said Adelle. "Dave taught me to be patient, be humble, that if it's meant for you it will come to you and, if not, then that's ok too."

Dave praises Adelle for his ability to look for the good in people and be the best person he can. "Adelle is a very humble kid," said Dave. "He never has anything bad to say about anybody or any situation."

Both Dave and Adelle are grateful to Big Brothers Big Sisters. "Without the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, I don't know what type of path I would be on," said Adelle. "I might have been astray and with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, I was kept in line. I'm blessed."

"I would absolutely recommend people becoming mentors," said Dave. "It's been such a positive experience for me and it's a great way to give back to the community."



# Our Programs

Family Services of NW PA provides a comprehensive continuum of care and high quality, innovative programs and services to children and families across Northwest Pennsylvania. Services are available in Erie, Crawford, Mercer, and McKean Counties in Pennsylvania.

**Our talented team provides the following programs and services to Strengthen Families and Transform Lives:**

## **CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

- Brief Services
- Family Group Decision Making
- Family Preservation Services
- Family Reunification
- Family Team Meetings
- Independent Living Program
- Intensive Family
- Permanency Services
  - Adoption
  - Foster Care
  - Kinship Care
- Transportation Aide Services

## **SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES**

- Behavioral Support Program at Penncrest School District
- Communities That Care – Social Development Strategy
- Community Schools Lead Partner at Pfeiffer Burleigh
- Lifeskills Training
- Opioid Misuse Prevention Project
- Project SOAR/ROAR (IBHS)
- Strengthening Families Program for Parents and Youth 10-14

## **MENTORING & SUPPORT SERVICES**

- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Children Cope With Divorce

## **OUTPATIENT PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC**

- Cognitive Processing Therapy
- Counseling for Individuals, Couples and Families
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing
- Psychiatric Services
  - Child and Adult Psychiatrists
  - Medication Management
  - Psychiatric Evaluations
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

## **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

- Family Based Mental Health
- Family Behavior Therapy
- Functional Family Therapy
- Multisystemic Therapy (IBHS)
- Multisystemic Therapy for Problem Sexual Behaviors (IBHS)
- Specialized Family Based Mental Health



## **SCAN HERE**

to learn more about our programs and services!



# Financial Information

## Revenue by Source

Children and Youth	52%
Managed Care Organizations/Medical Assistance	17%
Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN)	10%
Client Service Fees	1%
MH/ID (Erie and Crawford Counties)	1%
Special Events & Contributions	1%
Contracted Services	18%

## Total Expenses

Outpatient Psychiatric Clinic	4%
School-Based Services	19%
Mentoring and Support Services	4%
Child Welfare Services	57%
In-Home Behavioral Health Services	16%

## FAMILY SERVICES CELEBRATES EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

In August, Family Services of NW PA held its annual Joint Staff Meeting for all agency employees at Nick's Place in Edinboro. The nominees for Employee of the Year were announced at the event.

### The following employees received nominations:

Jessica Atwood  
Grace Brace  
Cecilia Buglar  
Christian Burch  
Haylee Catron  
Chelsea Corder  
Cindy Crispin  
Patricia Currington

Kelly Dahlkemper  
Debbe Davidson  
Hannah Ditsious  
Silver Glover  
Leslie Hanaway  
Leah Hardner  
Leanne Keibler  
Deanna Laser

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Melissa Scobey  
Weston Strosser  
Carolyn Tellers  
Amy Umpleby  
Melissa Wilkins  
Courtney Woods  
Maribeth Zimmer





# Program Highlight

## INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

The Erie County Independent Living Program (ILP) is a partnership between the Erie County Office of Children and Youth (OCY), Family Services of NW PA, and Bethesda Services that helps youth ages 14 to 23 years old who are in out-of-home placement make the transition to become independent, self-sufficient, and productive adults.

### **North Star Mentoring**

North Star Mentoring provides an additional support person to the youth enrolled in ILP. "I love my mentor, Kim," says mentee Makenna. "She pushes me to reach all my goals, graduate on time, go to college, and be the best mom I can."

Kellie Tate is the Mentoring Specialist with North Star Mentoring. "Our mentees come into the program and get their case manager, and also have the opportunity to get a mentor," said Kellie. "If they have a mentor, it is because they want a mentor."

Makenna credits Kim and North Star Mentoring with putting her on the right path and getting her head straight. "I look up to Kim because she is such a great role model," said Makenna. "She is respectful and caring."

The mentors also recognize how North Star Mentoring positively impacts their lives. "They come back to me and they say it fills their cup so much more than they ever imagined it would," said Kellie.

### **Snack Shack Food Truck**

The Snack Shack Food Truck is a work training program for the young adults enrolled in ILP. Skip Kenawell manages the Snack Shack and sees the positive impact the experience has on the workers.. "I had an employee this morning do everything necessary to manage the truck and get it all out the door completely on his own," said Skip. "That shows great growth in just a few months on his part."

Michael is one of the original Snack Shack employees. "When I first started here, I was so nervous to talk to people I didn't know," said Michael. "Since I've been here for three plus years, it's gotten a lot better"

The Snack Shack offers a unique experience for youth and young adults looking for real world job experience. "These are opportunities I can give these kids that most other businesses aren't going to give them," said Skip. "It allows me to be more patient with the kids and help them to grow into good competent employees on a day-to-day basis."

### **Youth Media Development**

Youth Media Development (YMD) offers hands-on work experience that provides soft skill development. Through a partnership with Community Access Media, the young adults in YMD learn how to use the equipment to produce a variety of media content. "Community Access Media teaches the original lessons and then we come through with a project that utilizes the skills that were just taught," said Katie Phillips, Career Specialist.

Jevon has been involved with the Independent Living Program for almost four years. "Coming here is pretty awesome," said Jevon. "Getting the chance to work in an open space is really, really incredible."

YMD aims to give the youth and young adults real-life transferable skills they can use once they leave the program. "Youth do get skills that they are able to take away to either start their own business or work in a studio," said Katie. "It definitely gives them skills that unlock a lot of potential, especially in the Erie area."

## IN MEMORY OF THOSE WE LOST



*North Star Mentoring - Makenna, Mentee and Kellie Tate, Mentoring Specialist*



*Snack Shack - Skip Kenawell (pictured far right) and food truck employees*



*Youth Media Development - Jevon, YMD Participant and Katie Phillips, Career Specialist*



**Albert Russell**  
1968 - 2022  
Building Maintenance



**Mary Jo Shea**  
1959 - 2023  
Fiscal Department



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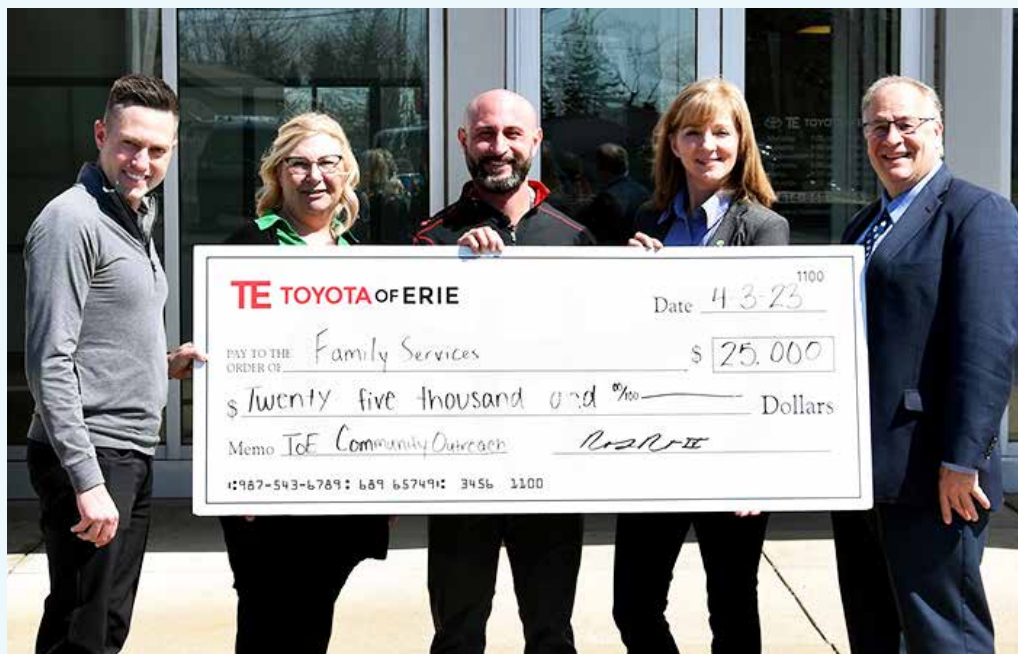


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 Erie Downtown Partnership  
 Erie Seawolves  
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 Jumpin' Jungle  
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 Stumpy's Hatchet House  
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Michele Koszegi

Tammie Krolicki

Christina Lachica

Cara Laird

Deanne Laser

Mary Grace Light

Shannon Lofton

Michele Lombard

Greg Loop



Eleni Loukaides

Jessica Maldet

Rob Matz

Louise McLaughlin

Chrystal Miller

Steve Minick

Tammy Mook

Matt Morgan

Troy Morrison

Tammy Mott

Julia Nichols

Billie Ann Pamula

Stephanie Pope

Ruth Rawlins

Jennifer Renick

Jenna Reynolds

Lee Rohan

Anne Rydzewski

Yarikza Santiago

Heather Sayers

Melissa Scobey

Julie Slagle

Daniel Stone

Jordan Stevenson

Danielle Szklenski

Shannon Szymanski

Carolyn Tellers

Julie Thorpe

Amy Umpleby

Alyssa Velez

Tammie Wadding

Lori Walker

Heather Williams

Mary Winters

Jeff Wittmann

Carole Yaple

Diane Zaczyk



### Memorial Gifts

#### In Memory of Mary Jo Shea:

Dolores Bebeko

James & Nancy Hornyak

Patricia Joint-Lipchik

Sherry Maxwell

Patrick Shea

George & Cathy Streff

Judith & David Tome

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



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5100 Peach Street | Erie, PA 16509

## 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**

#### AHN Behavioral Health Office:

Yorktown Center  
2501 West 12th Street  
Erie, PA 16505  
**814.866.4578**

#### Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary:

235 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Erie, PA 16503  
**814.866.4578**

#### Union City Elementary School:

91 Miles Street  
Union City, PA 16438  
**814.866.4578**

#### Union City Jr. Sr. High School:

105 Concord Street  
Union City, PA 16438  
**814.866.4578**

### **Crawford County**

#### Meadville Office:

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

### **Mercer County**

#### Sharon Office:

7 West State Street  
Suite 208  
Sharon, PA 16146  
**724.704.7227**



  
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