

New Therapy Model Helps Children After Trauma

Before being removed from his home, James* was severely neglected by his parents. At bedtime, he was locked in a small room in the basement with only a thin blanket and pillow. The loud noises of his parents arguing throughout the night scared him and kept him awake. During the week, he was only let out of his room to go to school, and on the weekends he was rarely allowed out of the room at all. A neighbor soon became aware of the treatment and called the Department of Children and Family Services who removed James from the home.

James was a frightened, timid, seven-year-old when he arrived at St. John Bosco Children's Center (SJBCC), a residential treatment center for children, ages 6-13, in Belleville, Ill. He felt uncomfortable in his new home and began acting out. Because of the traumatic experiences he had at home, James would especially act out at bedtime and throw a tantrum when the lights were turned off.

Treatment specialists at the center were unaware of James' home life, but had recently received therapy training in Trauma Informed Care that helped them identify and work through behaviors like James was experiencing. Trauma Informed Care focuses on treating the child's trauma rather than reacting to the child's behavior. This therapy model was introduced to the staff at the Children's Center in May 2015.

"When a child is acting out, instead of taking the time to discipline their behavior, we sit down with them and do emotional regulation drills to get to the bottom of the behavior," Residential Director Terence Pleasant said. "We treat the trauma by turning a negative experience into a positive one."

By using the new therapy model to work with James' behavior, staff members discovered that bedtime was traumatic for James, reminding him of the way he was treated at home. In an effort to reconstruct the way James felt, staff asked James to describe what his ideal bedtime routine would consist of. James replied that he would like to read his favorite book, brush his teeth and sleep with his favorite stuffed animal.

Specialists at St. John Bosco arranged the schedule so that James could perform his routine each night. By allowing James to perform his routine, he was able to turn his negative experience at bedtime into a positive one. Therefore, his trauma, rather than his acting out, was addressed.

The Trauma Informed Care model has helped the children at the Children's Center heal and grow from the traumas they have experienced in the past. "Since implementing the new therapy model we have seen improvements in the children's behaviors. They are learning how to implement the tools learned through the model into their daily lives," said Pleasant. "They are not only using these tools at SJBCC but also at school and while playing with other children. It has helped significantly across the board."

In the past month, two children who had been at SJBCC for an extended period of time "stepped down" into the specialized foster care program. Knowing the need, staff members at our regional office in Mt. Vernon worked diligently to find homes for the boys with families that are currently foster parents for other specialized foster children in the agency's program.

"When a potential home is found for a child living at SJBCC, we begin the process with transitional visits to make sure it is a good fit for both the family and the child," Case Manager Rachel Kissner said. "The transitional visits start with the family visiting the child at our facility for a few hours a day and eventually reach the point of overnight and weekend visits with the family."

Although the new therapy model has helped the children deal with their trauma, SJBCC is not meant to be a forever home for them. The center is designed to help children work through their trauma and then be placed back into a foster home or into their own home. Once the children receive the therapy they need but still remain at SJBCC, over time they begin to regress. "We see children regressing when other kids leave, and naturally, it is hard for them to understand why they are still here. These emotions tend to lead to acting out behaviors due to emotional stress," Pleasant explained.

"It is important for the children to leave SJBCC after successful therapy and to live with a family. Children are not meant to grow up in residential care," Pleasant said. "The biggest issue we have is finding homes for these children to reduce the time they are here at SJBCC."

If you have considered sharing your home with a foster child please visit www.caritasfamilysolutions.org or call 618-258-8778 for more information.

**Name changed to protect confidentiality.*



8601 West Main Street
Suite 201
Belleville, IL 62223



Save the Dates!

Looking for an excuse to hit the town in your favorite dress or suit? Join us at the Annual Heart & Soul Gala on **Saturday, February 20, 2016**. The gala is the agency's largest fundraising event of the year and promises to once again be full of excitement! You won't want to miss the chance to win a trip to your choice of Ireland, Costa Rica, or even South Africa! The event, taking place at the Regency Conference Center in O'Fallon, Ill., brings together more than 20 community partners and 300 participants. Check out our website for more information and mark your calendar today! We hope to see you at this entertaining evening that directly benefits those most vulnerable in our communities. To make reservations or to put your skills to use on our planning committee, contact Ashlee Lambert at 618-688-1162 or Ashlee.Lambert@caritasfamily.org.



Giving Tuesday is an annual event that anyone, anywhere can get involved and give back in a way that is meaningful to them. The purpose of this annual day of giving is to show that the world gives as good as it gets. Last year more than 30,000 organizations in 68 countries came together to celebrate Giving Tuesday. Caritas Family Solutions is proud to be part of the global day of giving once again and we encourage you to join the movement with us! On **December 1, 2015**, visit our website and click "Donate" to be part of Giving Tuesday.

Visit www.givingtuesday.org to learn how you can make a difference.

Mission Statement

"As a visible expression of God's loving community and consistent with the example of Jesus Christ, Caritas Family Solutions provides direct services to persons of all backgrounds with social and emotional needs across the continuum of life."

Visit us online at
www.caritasfamilysolutions.org

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit 4678
St. Louis, MO

November is National Adoption Awareness Month

GOOD NEWS

Fall 2015



Adoptive Families Bond at Picnic

A group of adoptive families in the Metro East joined together on Saturday, August 1st, to host a potluck picnic at Tri-Township Park in Troy, Illinois. Seven families who adopted through Caritas in the last ten years bonded over good food, games, and similar experiences.

"The picnic was a way for families to connect and meet people who have been through the adoption process," Adoption Specialist Kady Darr said. "There are issues that come up and it's easier to talk to someone going through the same situation than it is a case worker or adoption specialist."

The picnic was coordinated by the adoption focus group that began meeting in April 2015. The focus group allows adoptive families, birth moms, and adoptees to make connections among each other and reach out to the community about adoption and pro-life options.

"We had been talking about starting a focus group for a while, so when we had enough people interested in being a part of the group we began meeting and developing ideas to reach out to others in the community. It's a great way for the families to bond and share experiences," Darr said. "If we can garner enough interest, we are hoping to expand the focus group to our Carterville Region."

Adoptive mom, Kristi Hofferber, attended the picnic with her husband, Mark, and 11 year old son, Nate. Kristi and her husband were both adopted as children and are in the process of adopting a second child. Kristi became familiar with Caritas when she began working at the agency as an intern this spring.

"I have a passion for adoption because it has always been a part of my life," Hofferber said.

"My husband and I made a connection with an adoptive family at our church, but the picnic was a fun way to meet other families who have adopted and talk about our experiences. It's always helpful to know someone who has walked in those shoes and to be a mentor to those who are going through the process."

Aside from planning engagement activities, the adoption focus group speaks at trainings and creates baskets to deliver to hospitals and pregnancy centers for Adoption Awareness Month in November. Caritas celebrates Adoption Awareness Month by hosting an awareness campaign featuring the faces of Caritas adoptions and telling stories of how families were completed through adoption. For more information or to support our adoption program please visit www.caritasfamilysolutions.org.



Top left: Kent and Kelly Hayes with their children at the park playground. Top right: David Hoehler playing washers with his daughter. Bottom: Adoption Specialist Kady Darr (far left) joined several families who have adopted and wanted to get together to share that common experience.

BOARD of DIRECTORS

Matt Rakers
Chairperson

John Slosar, Jr.
Vice-Chairperson

Erin Prest
Treasurer

Jill Wenzel
Secretary

Barbara Calandro
Mark Cruse
Jerilee Hopkins
Vikas Kaveti
Lissa Johnson
Sherry Meadows
Julie Reed
John A. Reichert
Stephen Telken
Fr. David Uribe, OMI
Simone Wheeler
Ella York

Chief Executive Officer
Gary Huelsmann, MSW

When shopping online this season, try using the following sites and remember to designate Caritas Family Solutions as your charity of choice to receive a percentage of your total purchases.

 goodshop

 amazon smile
You shop. Amazon gives.



Greetings from the CEO



Dear Friends,

As many of you know, the Illinois state budget crisis has been a major concern for nonprofit agencies like ours with legislators and the governor refusing to come to an agreement. In recent months we asked for your support by reaching out to your local legislators and supporting the United Way Crowdrise Campaign to help sustain our vital services. The support we received during that time was wonderful and we appreciate every effort made to advocate for the individuals we serve across Southern Illinois.

While some of our services are threatened by the budget impasse, Caritas is currently experiencing only minor issues with our various state funding sources. The services we provide are very much essential to those most vulnerable. Many state and federal courts have agreed on the importance of the majority of our services and are forcing the state to pay us despite the lack of an approved budget. Though we may experience a delay in payments and some programs are not being funded at this time, we are not yet experiencing the worst aspects of this budget battle. However, many of our clients are suffering as a result of budget cuts in other areas.

We continue to be a beacon of hope for many. We are also a part of the solution for many of the state's issues. Research has shown that the right type of interventions in the lives of those in need have a tremendous return on the investment in cost savings down the road in such areas as medical costs, law enforcement costs, and many other social costs. The essentialness of what we do is a great strength for the agency and we will continue to advocate for the vulnerable and provide assistance to those who need help for a better, more productive life.

Looking ahead, we are seeing more opportunities to serve our clients and even expand those services to more people. In fiscal year 2016, we are planning to expand our program for developmentally disabled adults by adding two new CILA homes in the Metro East. As part of the renovations at St. John Bosco Children's Center, we will also be expanding to include a wing on the second floor for up to ten girls, ages 6-12. This facility will be the only residential treatment center for girls in Southern Illinois.

As always, your continued support of our mission is greatly appreciated. I thank you for standing behind the agency and advocating for the thousands of individuals we serve as we experience uncertainty in state funding.

With gratitude,

Gary Huelsmann, MSW
Chief Executive Officer

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please send your name, mailing address and email address to outreach@caritasfamily.org. Newsletters are also available at www.caritasfamilysolutions.org.



Thank You to our VOLUNTEERS

On Saturday, September 12th, nearly 40 volunteers came out to participate in a landscaping project at St. John Bosco Children's Center as a part of Belleville Helping Belleville Day, an annual one-day event that brings people from the area together to take on volunteer projects to help those in need in our community. We are grateful to have been a part of this year's event and would like to sincerely thank everyone associated with Belleville Helping Belleville Day. We appreciate the time that was spent to make the new entrance to St. John Bosco Children's Center beautiful and welcoming. The dedicated volunteers worked diligently throughout the day landscaping, which made for sore backs and muscles. These wonderful volunteers coming together to support the neediest is truly an expression of God's loving community. It is very humbling that so many people took time out of their busy lives to come out on a Saturday to help with this project. Also thanks to Home Nursery in Albers, Sandy's Back Porch, Effinger's Garden Center and ACE Hardware in Belleville for donating trees, shrubs, and landscaping materials.



VOLUNTEERS are always needed!

Would you like to volunteer with Caritas Family Solutions? Please complete our **Volunteer Survey** at www.caritasfamilysolutions.org so that we can match you with available opportunities! Volunteers assist with everything from tutoring to fundraising events. Check it out!

Caritas in the Community



Right: Regional Director Michelle Bradley (center) and staff from our Carterville office participated in the DuQuion State Fair on Saturday, August 28th. They decorated a truck, gave away balloons, and handed out information regarding our services.



Left: Foster Care Caseworker Cindy Thomas and Adoption Specialist Kady Darr handed out balloons at our regional office in East Alton for Derby Day 2015, an event held in conjunction with the annual Alton Soapbox Derby on Saturday, September 12th. The community came out to enjoy hotdogs and soda while learning about the services we offer to the most vulnerable in Southern Illinois. Children's activities included face painting and a cake walk!

You're Invited!

Caritas opens the doors of hope to thousands each year who experience abuse, neglect, and other emotional hardships and challenges in their lives. In order to continue our mission of serving persons of all backgrounds across the continuum of life while offering high quality services and programs by an outstanding staff who truly care about those they serve, we have created the Caritas Society.

The Caritas Society is made up of individuals, companies, and organizations who support Caritas with a gift at the \$1,000 level or above. These leadership gifts help us maintain the capacity to respond to those with social and emotional needs who are unable to help themselves. Gifts to the Caritas Society ensure that no matter the state of the economy or how severe cutbacks are in state and federal funding, we will not turn away those who desperately need services that are critical to their daily wellbeing.

We invite you to become a founding member of our newly created major donor society and invest in helping individuals most at risk in your community. You can positively affect someone's life today! For more information about becoming a founding member of the Caritas Society, contact Judy Woodruff at 618-688-1168 or judy.woodruff@caritasfamily.org.

Staff Spotlight

Hope Carbonaro, LCSW
Director of Foster Care and Clinical Services



Hope Carbonaro began her journey with Caritas in 2005, but she has been working in child welfare for 26 years. Hope enjoys her work because child welfare is clearly a top priority in her life. She enjoys the challenge of enhancing the agency's programs and assisting staff in providing the best services possible. "This is a tough job for our direct service staff and my favorite part is helping provide them with the advocacy and motivation they need to continue in such a necessary role," Hope said.

As the Director of Foster Care and Clinical Services, Hope's role is to consult with employees to ensure quality performance in our foster care and clinical programs and oversee the efficiency of those programs, conduct policy research to direct staff appropriately, and represent the agency on state-wide committees regarding foster care issues.

The primary goal of foster care is to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children in care. According to Hope, the biggest challenge of the foster care program is finding foster homes for children, especially specialized foster homes. Specialized foster children have needs that extend beyond common behavioral or emotional issues. These children have suffered severe trauma and have extreme behavioral or medical issues that require extra support, time, and attention. The number of children in specialized foster care is growing and the need for specialized foster parents is more critical than ever. If you have considered sharing your home with a foster child please contact Mary Savage at 618-258-8778 or visit www.caritasfamilysolutions.org for more information.

SERVICES

Adoption

Foster Care

Counseling

Residential Treatment
for abused and neglected children

Multi-Systemic Therapy
for at-risk youth

Assisted Living and Employment Training
for low-income seniors

Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILAs) for the developmentally disabled

REGIONAL OFFICES

Belleville
8601 W. Main St., Ste. 201
Belleville, IL 62223
800-997-9703

Carterville
10286 Fleming Road
Carterville, IL 62918
800-997-9381

East Alton
645 Berkshire Blvd.
East Alton, IL 62024
618-258-8750

Mt. Vernon
219 Withers Dr.
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
877-277-3773

