

## Caritas achieves Excellent Outcomes in Foster Care Permanencies

Foster Care is one of our largest programs, with the goal always being "permanency". **Permanency** is reached when a child moves out of the state foster care system and into a loving, safe and stable home. This could mean returning home to their biological family or being adopted by their foster or another adoptive family.

For fiscal year 2014, Caritas Family Solutions had high performance rankings (compared to other agencies in Illinois) in Foster Care permanency rates. The number of foster children statewide who achieved permanency

in FY14 averaged 28.8% whereas the Caritas rate of permanency was 37.5%! We had 229 permanencies of which 91 were adoptions. We congratulate our caring and professional Foster Care Team for working so hard to secure forever families for so many abused and neglected children.

Did you know that nationally, there are over 100,000 children in foster care waiting to be adopted? For more information about becoming a foster and/or adoptive parent, please visit [www.caritasfamilysolutions.org](http://www.caritasfamilysolutions.org).



8601 West Main Street  
Suite 201  
Belleville, IL 62223



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

November is National Adoption Awareness Month

# GOOD NEWS

Fall 2014



## Three Families Bonded Forever

In 2007, three Belleville families embarked on a journey that would bond them together forever. Marisa and Roger Albers, Joelle and Mark Hines as well as Kay and Everett Caldwell were all preparing to adopt their baby boys from the same orphanage in Guatemala. Although the families lived

within five minutes of each other and shared the same ultimate goal, they were complete strangers until a case worker from Caritas Family Solutions introduced the families, and a support system was formed.

Throughout the summer the mothers met at a different park every Wednesday to have lunch and let the boys play. The families also share birthday parties and holidays each year. "The boys' birthdays are all so close together - January, February, and April," Kay explained, "so it creates a special time each year for celebrations."

The seven-year-olds are so close that Kay's son, Benjamin, calls Mateo and Cole his brothers. "They were born in the same country and they've grown up together, so he just assumed they were his brothers," Kay explained. All the mothers agree that having each other as a support system is a tremendous help for them and their children. As the ladies reminisced about the past and talked about plans for the future, the boys played with Legos in Mateo's room. The adoptions have been final for a while now but the bond among the families will remain strong forever.

Each family had experienced infertility problems and reached out to Caritas wanting to expand their family by adoption. Kay Caldwell said that she and Everett were aware of the agency and the great community reputation and were overjoyed with their overall experience. Marisa Albers added, "Our worker was instrumental in the adoption process."

Not only was the worker from Caritas instrumental in the adoption process but she also played an important role in connecting the families and creating a forever bond. At one point in the adoption process the families needed to have paperwork submitted to an agency in Chicago. When all the families were not able to make the drive the case worker suggested they all meet and work together as a team. "It seems like just yesterday we met in the kitchen," Kay said. "We had never met each other but we instantly clicked," Marisa added.

Seven years have gone by since the families first brought their boys home and they are better friends than ever.



November is Adoption Awareness Month

Please visit our website or follow us on social media to read more stories about our amazing adoption staff and the beautiful families they serve.



## Save the Date!

"Heart and soul, I fell in love with you heart and soul".....like the song says, fall in love with Caritas Family Solutions and our mission of helping those most vulnerable in Southern Illinois, by attending our second Annual Gala.

The evening will open with cocktails and a silent auction where you can bid on a fabulous selection of items ranging from a one-of-a-kind art piece created by the children at St. John Bosco Center to field box seats at a Cardinals' game next summer. Then enjoy a delicious dinner, live auction, special guest performance, and the love that is a result of your support. Your participation allows us to strengthen and expand programs, and the proceeds from the gala directly benefit those served by Caritas.

For more information and to reserve tickets, visit [www.caritasfamilysolutions.org](http://www.caritasfamilysolutions.org) or contact Ashlee Lambert at 618-688-1162.



Saturday, February 7, 2015  
6:00 p.m.  
Regency Conference Center  
O'Fallon, Illinois



BLACK FRIDAY. CYBER MONDAY.

# #GIVINGTUESDAY™

## DECEMBER 2, 2014

The simple act of giving not only helps others, but also fundamentally connects you to the human family and nourishes a generous community spirit.

Please remember Caritas Family Solutions on #Giving Tuesday.

DONATE ONLINE at  
[www.caritasfamilysolutions.org](http://www.caritasfamilysolutions.org)

### 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."



Front L to R: Joelle Hines, Marisa Albers, Kay Caldwell  
Back L to R: Cole, Mateo, and Benjamin

## BOARD of DIRECTORS

Barbara Calandro  
*Chairperson*

Matt Rakers  
*Vice-Chairperson*

Erin Prest  
*Treasurer*

Beverly McCormick  
*Secretary*

Mark Cruse  
Jerilee Hopkins  
Roberta Lynch  
Sherry Meadows  
JoAnn Pisel  
Julie Reed  
John A. Reichert  
John Sloser, Jr.  
Stephen Telken  
Fr. David Uribe, OMI  
Jill Wenzel  
Simone Wheeler  
Ella York

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Gary Huelsmann, MSW

*When shopping online this holiday 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.*



## Caritas Names Three New Board Members

Caritas Family Solutions recently welcomed three new members to the Board of Directors:



**Stephen Telken** is an attorney and partner with Schoen Walton Telken & Foster, LLC in East St. Louis. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis in finance and economics from Rockhurst University in Kansas City, Mo. He also holds a Juris Doctorate from St. Louis University School of Law and a Master of Business Administration from St. Louis University School of Business. Stephen lives in Belleville with his wife and two children.

**Father David P. Uribe, OMI** is the Director of Pilgrim Services at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville. He holds a Master of Science in Divinity from the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas, and a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership and Ethics from St. Edwards University in Austin. Father David is a member of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.



**Jill Wenzel**, a community volunteer, is a sustaining member of the Junior Service Club of St. Clair County, a Tocqueville Society Member of the United Way, and a member of the Mother's Club at Saint Louis Priory School. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Business and Marketing from the University of Illinois, Champaign, and she served on the committee that planned and implemented the first Caritas Gala in February this year. Jill lives in Belleville with her husband and four children.

## Year-End Considerations

With the holidays just around the corner, everyone at Caritas Family Solutions would like to take a moment to express sincere thanks for your generosity throughout 2014 by helping keep our mission of helping those most vulnerable strong and growing. As we approach December 31, please give some thought to supporting Caritas when designating your year-end, philanthropic dollars. Here are a few ideas to take into consideration as 2014 comes to a close.

- Make a tax-deductible donation to Caritas through a gift of appreciated stock.
- Surrender an unneeded life insurance policy to Caritas.
- Surrender low-yielding CDs in order to establish a charitable gift annuity with Caritas that produces income to you for life.
- And, as always, a gift of cash is most welcome!

The deadline to take advantage of tax benefits for the current tax year is December 31, 2014. For more information, contact Judy Woodruff, chief development officer, at 618.688.1168 or by email at [judy.woodruff@caritasfamily.org](mailto:judy.woodruff@caritasfamily.org).

## AT&T Volunteers Landscape New CILA Home

Employees from AT&T in St. Louis volunteered last month to landscape the first Caritas Family Solutions Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA) home in Caseyville. CILA homes serve the needs of adults with developmental disabilities, giving residents the opportunity to live on their own and to live as independently as possible within the community.

The trees, shrubs and grass were planted as a result of AT&T's "Employee Giving" campaign. The company holds this campaign each year from mid-September to mid-October when employees volunteer for a United Way sponsored organization within the community. AT&T Assistant Vice President and Caritas Family Solutions board member, Matt Rakers, heard about the need for volunteers to help landscape the CILA at a recent board meeting. He decided to recruit his co-workers to help.

"We were looking for an employee giving opportunity and it just so happened the need was at Caritas," Rakers said. "What better way than to do a project in the local area and show people what we do." Rakers has been a member of the Caritas Board of Directors since 2012. His passion for the organization stems from the adoption of his two children from the agency when they were infants. Rakers' children are now teenagers, and one of his sons participated in the landscaping project along with his dad's co-workers.

Materials for the project were donated by Mike Endres of Jerry's Nursery in Breese, Ill. The official opening of the CILA home will be celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony on November 20, 2014.

## A New Look for the Development Office



*Clockwise from left: Kelci, Laurie, Judy and Ashlee*

Chief Development Officer Judy Woodruff has announced the reorganization of the Caritas Development Office in order to better meet the needs of the agency. Ashlee Ritchie was named development specialist and Kelci Jones as marketing/communications specialist. Laurie Lindauer serves the department part-time, along with her duties as executive assistant to CEO Gary Huelsmann.

Ashlee's new role at Caritas is focused on development and encompasses grant writing, annual fund, and special events. As the marketing/communications specialist, Kelci is charged with developing and overseeing the agency's marketing plans including media and community outreach, website, social media, and publications. Laurie serves as the department's graphic designer, database manager, and communications assistant.

Woodruff explained, "By specifically focusing each position—development, marketing/communications, and support—we will realize a consistency in our efforts to brand the agency throughout the 42-county service area. The team has already been busy creating processes to move forward quickly in fund raising, marketing, social media, and database integrity."



*Volunteers from AT&T spend a day together landscaping a new home for developmentally disabled adults.*

## Fox River Resident: "Feels Like Home"

Vietnam veteran Lester, 72, has called Fox River Senior Assisted Living apartments home for the past year and a half. He came to Fox River in February 2013 after his sister decided to sell her home, where Lester was living. Lester's neighbor's daughter recommended that he inquire at Fox River after he mentioned to her that he would like to move into a senior assisted living community in Olney, Ill.

One of Lester's favorite things about Fox River is the helpfulness of the staff. "The staff and management are wonderful," he said. "They take good care of us. If we need something, there's always someone here to help. It's like one great big family."

Fox River Manager, Sarah House, said Lester is like a big brother to the other residents. "On Thursday there was a tornado warning and the residents had to take precautions and go into a safe hallway. Lester stayed back to help the other residents, who don't get around easily, out of their rooms to the safe hallway. He watches out for everybody and helps in any way he can." House said.

Lester is a six-year Army veteran who served in the Infantry and has worked construction all his life. His experience in construction ranges from roofing and siding to welding and laying concrete.

He enjoys spending his evenings playing bingo in the dining hall, joking that he is saving the quarter per game he wins for his grandson's college fund. Lester also appreciates the variety of food choices offered by Chef Nada. If there is a certain food the residents don't like, they can fill out a slip and request that it be replaced with another item. His favorite food served is liver and onions. "It's just like being home," Lester said.

The 30-unit apartment community is located on five acres north of Olney Central College, and provides housekeeping, meals and social services to those needing daily living assistance and who are 60 years of age and older. Caritas Family Solutions is currently working with Fox River investors to transition ownership of the apartments to Caritas so that the needs of low income seniors can continue to be met. Individuals within the community receive assistance through a contract with the Illinois Department on Aging.



*Fox River resident, Lester, helps in the garden.*

## 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

