

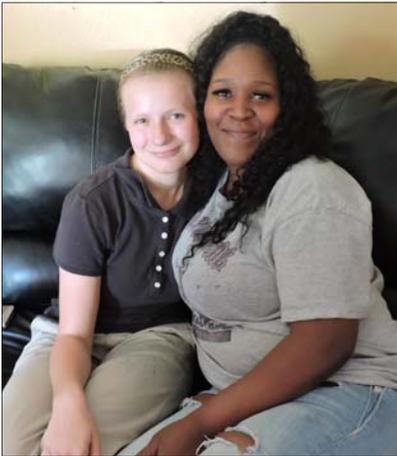
GOOD NEWS

Fall 2016

Creating Loving Homes One at a Time

Bethany didn't know what it felt like to live in a stable, loving home. She was taken into foster care when she was nine years old and placed in a home with two of her five siblings. At first, Bethany was scared and felt uncomfortable living in an unfamiliar home. She lived with her first foster family for two years before they could no longer care for all three girls. Bethany was then moved to a new home.

Living in Greenville, then Vandalia, Peoria, Granite City and finally Belleville, the only consistent part of Bethany's life was change. In 2012, she moved to Belleville and was placed in the home of Teresa Baxstrom. Bethany was 11 years old at the time, and although she had spent more than two years in foster care, she was still uncomfortable moving to another unfamiliar home.



Bethany and Teresa make time for a hug after school.

"It took a while for Beth to get adjusted," Teresa said. "After about a year she started to open up and feel loved and wanted." As the mother of three daughters, a foster parent, adoptive parent and owner of a day care service in her home, Teresa has spent most of her life fulfilling her passion: caring for children. "The hardest part of foster parenting is getting children to adapt. Children just want to feel loved and receive attention," Teresa added.

Teresa became a foster parent six years ago and has since had more than 11 children in her home. Before becoming licensed, Teresa enjoyed her home being filled with the laughter of children. Once her girls were old enough to move out on their own, she missed their

company and decided to begin caring for others' children by operating a day care. Teresa decided to become a licensed foster parent when she heard about the opportunity through her sister who is also a foster parent through Caritas Family Solutions.

"Foster parenting allows me to continue in a parenting role and to be there for the children to raise them the right way," Teresa said. "Some children come from a home with no guidance and it is important to teach them tough love and responsibilities." Throughout the years, Teresa has been a foster parent to children of all ages. She currently has three foster children in her home ages 10, 14 and 20. "The hardest part is letting go of the children when they return home, but we have to do what's best for them," she added. However, returning home isn't always in the best interest of the child.

On August 24, 2016, adoption papers were signed at the Bond County Courthouse and Teresa officially became Bethany's mom. This time around, change has been a positive thing for Bethany who also started her freshman year of high school in August. She enjoys school and spends her free time reading and helping "Momma" with the other children. Bethany hopes to one day own her own book store and has even considered becoming a foster parent. "Being a foster child was difficult, but Momma made me feel comfortable," Bethany said smiling up at her new mom. "I would like to tell other children entering foster care to hang on because things will get better."

If you would like more information about foster parenting, please contact Mary Savage at 618-258-8750 or mary.savage@caritasfamily.org.

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Thank You RETIRING Board Members



Jerilee Hopkins

Two members of our Board of Directors retired at the start of this fiscal year: **Jerilee Hopkins** joined the Board in August 2013 and **Sherry Meadows** joined the Board in September 2013. Both had served on the Planning and Program Development committee, playing an valuable part in implementing the FY2014-2016 strategic plan which led the agency through a period of tremendous growth.



Sherry Meadows

During their tenure, the agency added the CILA and MST programs and decided to purchase three office buildings including the Royal Heights building which houses the St. John Bosco Children's Center and now the Belleville Regional Office. We are grateful for their service and expertise as well as their passionate dedication to the agency.

Welcome NEW Board Members

Caritas recently welcomed five new members to the Board of Directors:

Jeff Hemker joined the Board in January 2016 and was appointed Treasurer in June 2016. He is a tax attorney and CPA and teaches law and accounting at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). Jeff and his wife, Susan, also run a real estate company. Originally from Clinton County, they live in Edwardsville and have two adult daughters and one granddaughter.



Patricia "Trish" Murphy joined the Board in June 2016. She is an attorney with Murphy and Murphy Law in Marion and is also a commissioner in the State of Illinois Court of Claims. An active member of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church in Herrin, Trish lives in Energy with her husband Patrick. They have two adult daughters.

Doris Reynolds-Johnson joined the Board in June 2016. Originally from Southern Illinois, she now resides in Saint Louis with her husband, Gordon. Doris is a retired CPA, having been a senior auditor and consultant with several accounting firms in St. Louis and a director of clinical operations and business manager at Washington University. She is also a dedicated volunteer with The Haiti Orphan Project and Casa de Salud.



Dr. George Paletta, Jr. is an orthopedic surgeon and partner at The Orthopedic Center of Saint Louis. With an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis, he joined the Board in June 2016 through the Olin Fellows program. He has served on the faculty in the School of Medicine at both Washington U. and Univ. of Missouri and was team physician for the St. Louis Cardinals and Rams. George lives in St. Louis with his wife Jacqueline and four young adult children.

Justin Price was appointed to the Board in August 2016. He is a CPA and manager at CliftonLarsonAllen in Belleville. Justin also serves on the Economic Development Committee and the Leadership Belleville Committee for the Greater Belleville Chamber of Commerce and is an Alumni Advisory Board member for the Accounting Dept. at SIUE. He lives in Alton with his wife, Carrie.





Growing the Volunteer Program at Caritas

Recently, Caritas Family Solutions was awarded a grant from the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis. This foundation is a grant-making ministry of several St. Louis area Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod congregations. Their vision is to see the church brought into the lives of hurting people and people into the healing life of the church.

The grant will provide funding to grow our recently created volunteer program. Since October 2015, more than 250 volunteers have provided at least 4,500 hours of service to our agency. These service hours are critical because for every hour a volunteer works it saves the agency almost \$25! Since last fall, volunteers have saved Caritas more than \$110,000. The dollars saved through volunteer work are then invested in strengthening programs that benefit the children and families we serve.

The funds from the grant will be used to build capacity in our volunteer program, providing for growth and improvement through new technology, training, and the means to recognize volunteers for their service. Volunteer Coordinator Kyle Williams said, “Volunteers can change the lives of those in need. It makes a huge difference. They serve as advocates for our agency and are critical to our mission. Through these selfless people, the community becomes more aware of our work and therefore, becomes more involved.”

Caritas offers both long- and short-term volunteer opportunities to accommodate almost any schedule, such as tutoring children after school at St. John Bosco Children’s Center or joining an event committee. We also offer monthly opportunities to help with our foster parent support groups as well as day-long group projects. If you would like to learn more about how you can volunteer for Caritas, please contact Kyle Williams at 618-213-8716 or Kyle.Williams@caritasfamily.org. Current opportunities are also listed at caritasfamilysolutions.org/volunteer.

Gifts of Every Kind

Every nonprofit organization relies on the generosity of donors to provide cash gifts to keep their mission strong, and Caritas Family Solutions is no exception. Cash gifts are the foundation of a forward-moving organization. But there is another kind of gift that builds upon that foundation: *in-kind* gifts.

Over the last couple of months Caritas has sought a variety of in-kind gifts in order to complete renovation projects, provide needed items for foster children, or make residents in our CILA homes more comfortable. Featured here are just a couple examples of cost savings the agency realized because of items that were donated which would have otherwise needed to be purchased.

The Tin Shed, a furniture store in Highland, has been a great partner in the past by providing several couches for the homes in our Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILA) program. Because of this, a request was made to see if they might be interested in helping with the newly renovated living space at St. John Bosco Children's Center. Immediately Josh Kloss, owner of The Tin Shed, responded and said "Absolutely!" Josh told us: "My wife and I recently adopted a child so your organization means a lot to us personally." With the generosity of Josh and Amy Kloss and The Tin Shed, the children's center has a beautiful new couch to make the children comfortable while playing games, watching TV, and sharing stories with each other.

Lissa Johnson, a member of the Caritas Board of Directors, is the Marketing Manager at **IKEA St. Louis**. Last year, when IKEA opened the doors of their new store in St. Louis, Caritas was the recipient of a truckload of IKEA furniture and home furnishings that had been used as samples throughout their opening festivities. These items are being used



The kitchen spaces at St. John Bosco Children's Center are equipped with tables and benches donated from IKEA St. Louis.

around the agency, but in particular, kitchen tables and benches were put to use in the first renovated wing at the children's center. Lissa went to bat for us once again in order to supply dining tables and chairs for the final wing being renovated, so last month, delivery was made of two tables, a bench, and eight chairs to use in the dining room of the south wing.

Our "Back to School" request brought in a staggering response, receiving 40 backpacks from the **Metal Exchange Corporation** in St. Louis, boxes of school supplies from **Westminster Presbyterian Church** in Belleville, and numerous bags and boxes of school supplies from so many generous individuals around the communities in Southern Illinois. We are grateful for each gift received as each one is put to good use to benefit those we serve.

These in-kind gifts provide thousands of dollars in budget relief. If you would like to learn how you can help Caritas through an in-kind gift, please contact Development Manager Ashlee Lambert at Ashlee.Lambert@caritasfamily.org or 618-213-8714.

Generous staff from the Metal Exchange Corp. responded to our "Back to School" drive with 40 backpacks filled with school supplies.



Staff Spotlight: Valari Veteto



Valari Veteto has been an Adoption Specialist with Caritas Family Solutions since September 2014. She felt called to go into adoption work because of her desire to help those experiencing unexpected pregnancies know that there are options available for them and their child. Not only does Valari work with birthparents who are considering an adoption plan for their child, she also helps couples hoping to grow their families through adoption. In a previous role, Valari was the Director of Admissions for a college in Earth City, MO. While working at the college she came across several students who found themselves unexpectedly pregnant. After her daughter Grace was born, Valari decided she needed a change. While reading a scripture from the book of Micah one day that said “seek justice,” Valari decided to go to law school. She studied and took the LSAT and while standing in line at a classroom one day she saw a pro-life flyer. She realized what she really wanted to do was help young people like the ones she encountered at the college. Valari and her husband decided to move back to Southern Illinois and she began looking into volunteer work in the adoption field. She soon stumbled onto a part-time job in adoption at Caritas Family Solutions. The first child adopted through the program after she arrived was named Micah. “I feel like the Lord gave me this opportunity and I’m right where I’m supposed to be,” Valari said. “Going through an unexpected pregnancy can be difficult, but it doesn’t mean things have to stay that way. We are here to help.”

If you are experiencing an unexpected pregnancy please remember:

- There are options for you and your child. If your baby is going to be born substance-exposed, your child does not have to go into the foster care system.
- If you are afraid of the birthfather, there are laws that will protect both you and your baby.
- We offer pregnancy support which includes counseling and resources to help with living expenses and parenting options.



If you are a family or individual seeking to adopt please remember:

- Do your research on the adoption process and the agency you are considering for adoption services.
- Trust your adoption specialist. We want you to receive a child you long for, but we also want you to be ready both physically and emotionally.
- Adoption is a process and it is easy to get overwhelmed or stressed. Confide in your adoption specialist if you are feeling these emotions or consider counseling options.



Caritas Family Solutions pregnancy care services are available 24/7 and are free and confidential. Adoption specialists speak to high schools, hospitals and pregnancy support groups about options for women experiencing unexpected pregnancies. For more information on adoption or pregnancy care services, contact Valari at 618.985.2000 ext. 247 or Valari.Veteto@caritasfamily.org.

Caritas in the Community

► Ally Dyer, a 15-year-old student at Belleville East H.S., organized the **Blessing Belleville Banquet** that took place on Saturday, August 13. The banquet raised \$6,890 to be split among three nonprofit agencies in Belleville: Beacon Ministries, Caritas Family Solutions, and Project Compassion. Ally created this fundraiser to benefit those who cannot help themselves within our community. With the help of other young people, the event surpassed all expectations. Thank you, Ally, for your compassion and love for our community, and thanks to everyone who helped make it a wonderful evening.



◀ The Sixth Annual **Belleville Helping Belleville Day** took place on Saturday, September 10. Nearly 20 volunteers including staff came out to St. John Bosco Children's Center to help with several projects including building a Gaga Ball pit, cleaning up around the retention pond, pulling weeds around the building, putting together a computer cabinet and potting plants for the new entrance. Special thanks goes to Kaskaskia Engineering Group for donating supplies, Dave Orlet for organizing the construction of the Gaga Ball pit, Belleville AmeriCorps and First Presbyterian Church in Belleville for their time and efforts. We are sincerely grateful to the Belleville community for their continued support. ►



► Caritas staff participated in the **23rd Annual Soapbox Derby in East Alton** on Saturday, September 10. A table full of information and giveaways was set up outside the regional office and free hotdogs were given to community members who came out for the event. Case worker Katie Haberberger used her creative talents to face paint for the children, and many staff baked goodies for a cake walk. Thank you to everyone who participated in this fun-filled day to share the mission of Caritas Family Solutions!



Renovations allow for expansion, collaboration

After waiting more than a year for renovations to be complete at the building which also houses the St. John Bosco Children's Center, the foster care and counseling employees from the Regional Office in Belleville, previously located at our office on West Main Street, moved into their new offices at 900 Royal Heights Road. Caritas Family Solutions has grown significantly in recent years as a result of our quality services and unmatched community support. Moving the regional office staff to this new location allows us to accommodate that growth while providing clients with continued high quality care.



But that's not all—St. John Bosco Children's Center has also expanded its services. In addition to providing 24-hour therapeutic care for boys, we now provide the same quality care to girls ages 6-13. Caritas is the only agency in Illinois south of Bloomington to provide residential treatment to girls in this age group.

While working hard to improve and expand our services to the community, we also strive to be a local leader in non-profit collaboration. That is why we are making space available for lease at our Royal Heights facility to other area nonprofits. This collaboration allows our clients to receive services more conveniently and helps build a community of local service providers who are laying the foundation for a more just and caring society. In the words of CEO Gary Huelsmann, "We understand the value of collaboration, and that we can better serve all of our clients when we work together with others."

If you or someone you know would like to learn if a collaboration with Caritas would be beneficial – whether as a donor, tenant, or advocate, please contact Judy Woodruff at (618) 213-8703 or Judy.Woodruff@caritasfamily.org to learn more or to set up a tour of our Royal Heights nonprofit collaborative.

Welcome to our new Events Coordinator



Say hello to our new Events Coordinator, **Kitty Wusstig!** Kitty joined the Development team in September 2016. As the events coordinator, she is responsible for enhancing current agency events, identifying new events and third-party fundraising. Kitty's first event with the agency will be the Annual Lanes of Change Bowling Tournament in Salem, Ill., that will raise funds for the Mt. Vernon regional programs.

"I look forward to learning as much as I can about the organization in the coming weeks, and creating new and exciting events to raise funds for the programs that help so many individuals we serve," Kitty said.

Kitty earned a Bachelor of Science in Marketing and Management from McKendree University and has more than 20 years of professional experience in marketing and event planning. She has volunteered with the Boy Scouts, a children's theatre camp, Scott Air Force Base, and other organizations. Kitty is also a busy military spouse and a mother to an 11-year old son.

A variety of volunteer opportunities within special events are available for individuals or groups looking to make a difference. If you are interested in serving on a fundraising committee or hosting a third-party fundraiser, contact Kitty at 618-213-8717 or Kitty.Wusstig@caritasfamily.org.

For more information on upcoming events, visit caritasfamilysolutions.org.



REGIONAL OFFICES

**Belleville
(NEW LOCATION)**
900 Royal Heights Rd.
Suite 2150
Belleville, IL 62226
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





8601 West Main Street
Suite 201
Belleville, IL 62223



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

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LANES of CHANGE

Bowling Tournament

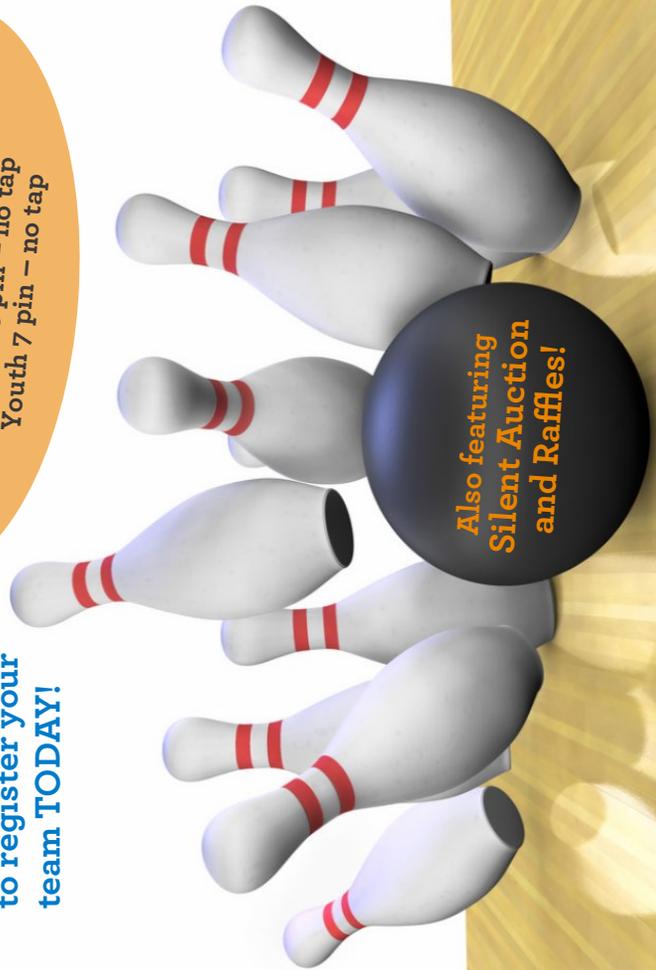
Saturday, November 5, 2016
12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. starts
Registration at 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m.

@Salem Bowl

1620 E. Main Street
Salem, IL 62881

Team Entry: \$100
Includes three games of bowling
and shoe rental for four people
Males 9 pin – no tap
Females 8 pin – no tap
Youth 7 pin – no tap

Call 618-213-8717
to register your
team TODAY!



caritasfamilysolutions.org